



Minutes
Architectural Review Board
September 25, 2023
3rd Floor Conference Room
Executive Plaza, 601 Caroline Street

Members Present

Karen Irvin (Chair)
Adriana Moss (Vice Chair) (Virtual)
Laura Galke
James Jarrell IV
D.D. Lecky
Kelly Penick
Helen P. Ross

Members Absent

None

Staff

Kate Schwartz
Ellie Dauernheim
M.C. Morris, EDT

Chair Irvin called the Architectural Review Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

OPENING REMARKS

Chair Irvin started the introductions for the Joint Session with the Arts Commission. The Arts Commission members that were present are as follows: Sophia Constantine, Melanie Johnson, Kenneth Lecky, Jon McMillan, Pete Morelewicz, and Alma Withers. The presenter for the meeting was Dr. Gaila Sims, Curator of African American History and Special Projects, from the Fredericksburg Area Museum.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS

None.

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

DISCUSSION

Dr. Gaila Sims' presentation was named "Building a Memorial: A Proposed Plan for Fredericksburg's Auction Block Site" and gave an overview of the plan for the Auction Block Site including the description of the idea and execution of the project. The plan developed by Dr. Sims and the Auction Block Group included the following concepts:

- Embedding text blocks into the sidewalk
- A mosaic or art installation
- Light element
- Accessibility concerns with material, material not being slippery
- Use of primary sources and connections to actual people
- Ability to opt out from engagement at the site
- Community involvement and input in the project
- Project is dynamic and ever-evolving

Dr. Sims' presentation concluded at 7:23 pm.

Members of the Architectural Review Board and Arts Commission voiced their overall support of the project and appreciation to Dr. Sims for the presentation. Members suggested the following ideas and concerns for the project:

- Vandalism concerns and making the space graffiti proof
- Including a space for people to comment or reflect, such as a bench
- Light element showing the depth of the excavation for the Auction Block
- Consideration of where the path will start on the sidewalk, and traffic concerns for volume of people on the sidewalk
- Discussion about how to approach names, blank spaces, and the broader Fredericksburg area
- Concerns on if there is enough information and research to have a sole Fredericksburg focus
 - Dr. Sims confirmed that there was information to work with, but also did not want to put the story back on slave traders by accident.
- Consider materiality, brass or bronze could be better than brick for the idea of embedding text in the sidewalk, ages better than brick or stamped concrete
- Evocation of emotion in the space
- Possibility of including oral histories and storytelling in the interpretation
- Addition of a non-visual element, such as a texture, smell, or audio element
- Inclusion of technology, QR Codes, digital exhibit, story maps, could be an additional element to advance the project
 - Dr. Sims said she was considering incorporating AR/VR into the project
- Emphasis on the number of people sold/enslaved as an important point
- Concerns over amount of ideas and elements, suggested a more simplified approach
- Some members of the Arts Commission suggested specific examples of artwork to base idea off of, and specific artists to include, expressed inclusivity and idea of included primarily black artists

Dr. Sims noted that the team for the project is going to be modeled on the team for a similar project done at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia. Dr. Sims also said that the goal is to install all of the elements at once, but there is the potential to have more projects down the line that would coordinate with this one, and noted that the goal was for this site to open at the end of 2025.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Ross noted that October 9th was not a holiday for the ARB. Ms. Schwartz confirmed that the ARB meeting would be held as usual on October 9th.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Irvin adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.



Karen Irvin, Chair