

FINAL MINUTES

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL STATUES IN THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL

JULY 1, 2020, 5:30 P.M.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Dr. Ed Ayers

Dr. Colita Fairfax

Senator Louise Lucas

Delegate Jeion Ward

Julie Langan, Ex Officio

ATTENDEES:

Governor Ralph Northam

Secretary Matthew Strickler

Deputy Secretary Joshua Saks

DHR STAFF:

Jennifer Pullen

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Langan called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. She reminded the members and attendees that the meeting would be recorded, that it had been properly noticed, that it was being held virtually and that minutes would be taken. Attendance was taken by roll call. Delegate Ward joined the meeting at 5:42 p.m.

WELCOME

Governor Ralph Northam welcomed everyone and thanked Ms. Langan, Secretary Strickler and Deputy Secretary Saks for their leadership. The Governor acknowledged Dr. Ayers and Dr. Fairfax for their many contributions to the Commonwealth and willingness to serve on the Commission. The Governor reflected on the day's events by noting that he had been with Delegate Ward and Senator Lucas earlier in the day in Portsmouth signing a bill to increase minimum wage. The Governor also noted that the Stonewall Jackson monument had just been removed from Monument Avenue in Richmond and that the

Robert E. Lee statue will be removed in the future. The Governor then went on to summarize the legislation that created the Commission and referred to its responsibilities in regard to the Robert E. Lee statue at the U.S. Capitol. The Governor stated his hope that the Commission will have a report for the next General Assembly session in January.

ELECTION of CITIZEN COMMISSION MEMBERS

Ms. Langan thanked the Governor for his remarks. She stated that the goal of the meeting was to add three new members to the Commission. Ms. Langan explained that suggestions had been solicited from the four appointed Commission members and others and that the list of suggested candidates attempted to offer geographic diversity, as well as a variety of expertise and perspective.

Ms. Langan asked if any members wished to speak in support of an individual candidate.

Dr. Ayers nominated Chief Anne Richardson. He stated the importance that the Commission include representation of the First Virginians.

Dr. Fairfax and Sen. Lucas agreed.

Sen. Lucas made a motion, Del. Ward seconded the motion, that Chief Anne Richardson be elected to the Commission. Ms. Langan called the roll for a vote. Dr. Ayers, Dr. Fairfax, Senator Lucas, Delegate Ward voted in the affirmative.

Dr. Ayers suggested that, given the Commission's charge, it was important to have someone from the art community. Sen. Lucas agreed.

Dr. Fairfax made a motion to nominate Dr. Fred Motley. Senator Lucas seconded the motion. Ms. Langan requested the vote by roll call. Dr. Ayers, Dr. Fairfax, Senator Lucas, Delegate Ward voted in the affirmative.

Dr. Ayers asked if geographic representation was a factor to consider. If so, Northern Virginia should be considered and he stated that Danville really doesn't count as Southwest Virginia. He went on to point out that another candidate, W. Tucker Lemon, resides in Roanoke.

Dr. Ayers stated his knowledge of Tucker Lemon and stated his connection to history and humanities.

Senator Lucas stated her opinion that while the Commission needs diversity, that geography should not be a priority.

Ms. Langan reminded the Commission that there were five other candidates. Senator Lucas stated her familiarity with Daniel Guzman. Delegate Ward remembered Margi Vanderhye from her term as in the House of Delegates.

Senator Lucas made a motion to nominate Margi Vanderhye. Delegate Ward seconded the motion. Ms. Langan took the vote by roll call. Dr. Ayers, Dr. Fairfax, Senator Lucas, Delegate Ward voted in the affirmative.

Julie Langan stated that all of the candidates would be contacted and informed of the Commission's election of members, after which the full Commission will be contacted in order to schedule the next meeting, when the Commission will vote on a Chair and Vice Chair. The primary focus of the next meeting will be the question of whether or not to remove the Robert E. Lee statue from the U.S. Capitol and to cover the steps in the process as well as the timeline. Materials will be sent to members prior to the meeting.

Secretary Strickler thanked everyone for their service and their willingness to undertake this important work.

Ms. Langan asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Ayers offered a motion, which was seconded by Dr. Fairfax. Ms. Langan called the meeting adjourned.

MEETING ADJOURNS at 6:03 p.m.