



Arts and Humanities Council of Falls Church Meeting

April 15, 2021
Virtual Meeting
Minutes

Members Present: Corey Jannicelli, Letty Hardi, Mary Sellers, Ellen Gross, Ed Henderson, Marybeth Connelly, Laura Hull, Maureen Budetti, Katharine Stewart

Guests: Keith Thurston (CATCH Foundation), Marty Meserve (Falls Church Women's History Group)

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Laura Hull at 9:35 am.

Receipt of Public Comments

- No comments were received

Minutes: Minutes from March 2021 meeting were approved

Roll call and Council Member Changes

- Welcome to Friends of Cherry Hill Foundation Representative, Katharine Stewart

New Business:

Recommendations for incorporating portraits celebrating our City's diversity into City Hall Chambers

- Recommendation made to create a policy for accepting artwork with a basic set of criteria.
- Freddie Foote Jr.
 - Born into slavery in 1840s, after emancipation started a grocery store Leesburg Pike and South Washington St. in Falls Church and was elected as town constable 1875 then to Town Council in 1880. The first African American on Town Council. His house was not part of the area gerrymandered out of the Town of Falls Church.
 - There was general consensus within the group that Freddie Foote Jr. is a strong candidate.
 - Keith Thurston presented the following resolution to recognize Frederick Foote Jr
 - Mr. Frederick Foote Jr. was born into slavery and became free due to the Emancipation Proclamation, which took effect January 1, 1963. He was a landowner of his home in Falls Church and a business owner with a grocery store located near the crossroads of Washington Street and the Leesburg Turnpike. He was very well respected in the community. After Falls Church was recognized by the State as an independent Town in 1875, "Freddie Foote" entered service to the town by becoming the Town Constable from 1876 to 1880. In 1880 he became the first

African-American to be elected to the Town Council in Falls Church and served until 1889. For his courage and leadership in being the first person of color to serve prominently in the community and for the Town of Falls Church, he should be recognized by having his portrait placed on the walls of City Hall.

- Maddie Gundry
 - Was appointed to the Falls Church school board but was unable to serve because she was a woman. Join the suffrage movement and became one of the first two women elected to the Falls Church Town Council in 1921 and served three terms. Is considered a forward thinker and to have a love for all people.
 - Gundry in 1899 established the Virginia Training School for children and adolescents in Falls Church with intellectual disabilities; which was the first and largest in the south and ran the school until 1947 located in an area where the Harris Teeter is today.
 - She also had a sanatorium that was located on Little Falls St. and was on the board of the Falls Church Bank.
 - She was awarded architectural prizes for her work
 - Concerns raised around the history of Virginia Training Schools which included segregation and separation of individuals from communities and families along with inhumane conditions. Request made to research more into Gundry to make sure her school is not associated with the negative history documented across the state.
- Other names discussed but not raised as a candidate
 - Carol DeLong
 - First female Mayor for the City of Falls Church, raises the question on whether to accept recommendations of living individuals
 - Mary Ellen Henderson
 - Principal of the “Colored School” in Falls Church for 32 years, school advocate, Namesake of the Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School in the City of Falls Church.
 - Jacob DePutron and Roger Wollenberg are examples of change makers in the community’s history
 - Joseph Riley Styles
 - Played a major role in achieving town status for Falls Church in 1875. He served as the chairman of the school board for the first public school in Falls Church.
 - Does not meet our guideline of diversity and
 - Dale Dover
 - Mentioned for being the First African American Mayor in Falls Church in 1990
- Conversation highlighted the challenges of memorializing individuals
- Suggestion made to consider murals for Chambers that may show people in their fullness with strengths and weaknesses
- Knowledge of individuals from the past is limited, this limits the group’s ability to present more recommendations.

Founders Row II Special Exception and Rezoning Town Hall

- Member Mary Sellers represented the Arts & Humanities Council at the town hall
- Project located at intersection of W Broad Street and S 5 West St, on approximately 2.07 acres of land.
- Developers are requesting to create a mix-use building with a maximum height of 85 ft.
- Would include 319 residential rental units above ground floor rental with 431 underground parking spaces
- Residential is currently allowed up to 35ft, requesting rezoning B1 to match the rest of the Founders Row project.
- The project promises 12% affordable housing but no other contributions however, the developers are flexible to change amount of affordable housing if the City has other priorities
- Retail will include office space, work space, outdoor rental pavilion and public green space
- Some rentals will be townhome style units and will be built LEED Gold certification
- Developers had not considered public art for the project yet but encourage by Mary Sellers to incorporate art into the design and think beyond murals
- Conversations this early into the process with developers is a new process being piloted by the planning department. Council has had one work session and no referrals have gone out yet to boards and commissions.

Old Business:

Comp Plan Amendment: Enriching Falls Church Art and ordinance to establish an Arts and Cultural District

- Both the Comp plan amendment and Arts & Cultural District were approved by City Council on Monday April 12
- Corey Jannicelli and Emily Bazemore are meeting to discuss next steps

George Mason Commemorative Bust

- Corey Jannicelli is currently collecting information on the creation and dedication of the commemorative work to share in discussion with the group

Digital Inventory and Self-guided

- Corey Jannicelli and Mary Sellers are working with four student liaison to compile a digital inventory of public art around the city.
- We are using google pages to compile the information

Roundtable Discussions

- Falls Church Gallery is now open Sat 11 am – 6pm and Sun 11 am – 4pm showing A Woman’s Journey
- Falls Church Arts is hosting mostly virtual and outdoor programs with an online talk on Frida Kahlo Thursday April 29 at 7:00 PM
- Falls Church has scheduled Plein Air for the fall
- VPIS is working with the City on new plantings
- VPIS is looking forward to hosting a table this summer at the Farmers Market

- VPIS will be hosting Thursday Summer Concerts at Cherry Hill Park with a reservation system to allow for social distancing
- Aug 21 - Tinner Hill Music Festival in Cherry Hill Park
- May 18 - Ed Henderson is a presenter at a community conversation through the MRSPL on African American History in the school which will be livestreamed
- May 2- Women History Walk from 11 am – 2 pm with three starting spots. Grand Marshall Ceremony will take the night before virtually
- Creative Cauldron has a new 10-minute play series, working to bridge the divide, playwrights are women of color.
- Creative Cauldron will be hosting “Always Patsy Cline” in Cherry Hill Park along with a summer cabaret series
- Friends of Cherry Hill Foundation approved research on previous enslaved and freedmen who may have worked or lived at Cherry Hill
- Cherry Hill will also offer once a month children’s talk in the barn this summer along with virtual Girl Scout programs and summer camp
- Reminder that all members of the Arts & Humanities Council qualify for the vaccine as part of continuation of government.

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 11:19 am

Next Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 20, 2021

Submitted: By Corey Jannicelli