

*Adopted July 24, 2008*

**AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND COMMITTEE**

**APRIL 5, 2008**

**PORTSMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**9:00 A.M.**

Present: Vernis Jackson, Chair; Mary Bailey, Vice Chair; Valerie Cunningham; Councilor Christine Dwyer; Jack McGee; Steve Parkinson (Ex-officio); Suzanne M. Woodland (Ex-Officio)

Absent: Councilor Laura Pantelakos

Also Present: Cindy Hayden, Deputy City Manager; David Moore, Assistant Community Development Director and Robbi Woodburn of Woodburn and Company (Consultant)

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Chairwoman Jackson opened the meeting and asked for a motion on the minutes from February 20, 2008. Mr. McGee moved to accept the minutes as presented and Ms. Dwyer seconded the motion; all voted in favor. Chairwoman Jackson then recognized Mr. Moore to give a summary of the Committee's action to date and the purpose of the day's meeting. Mr. Moore indicated that the City, working with the Burial Ground Committee, moved forward with a Request for Qualifications and received qualifications packages from 30 artists. The committee then invited three artists to participate in a proposal process; this winter the committee reviewed the proposals and at the February 20, 2008 meeting the committee chose to interview the three short-listed artists.

Mr. Moore then explained the format of the interviews. Mr. McGee moved to enter non-public session for the purposes of conducting the procurement process by interviewing the three finalist artists. Ms. Dwyer seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Following the non-public session, Mr. McGee made a motion to emerge from the nonpublic session and the motion was seconded by Ms. Bailey. All voted in favor.

At the conclusion of the interviews and discussions of artists' proposals, Councilor Dwyer moved to seal the minutes of the non-public portion of the meeting in order to preserve the integrity of the procurement process and to protect the reputation of the artists; the motion was seconded by Mr. McGee; all voted in favor.

As the committee could not reach a consensus on the artist to be chosen, Mr. McGee moved that the committee schedule a subsequent meeting in the next week to conduct follow-up phone interviews with two of the three artists. Ms. Bailey seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Chairperson Jackson adjourned the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

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**APRIL 5, 2008 MINUTES CONTINUED  
SEALED ON APRIL 5, 2008  
UNSEALED ON JULY 24, 2008**

**SEALED MINUTES FOR CONSIDERATION OF ARTIST PROPOALS  
IN RESPONSE TO RFP #29-08**

**DRAFT**

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These minutes are for that portion of the meeting which was held in non-public session.

Chairwoman Jackson recognized Mr. Jerome Meadows to present his proposal. Mr. Meadows reviewed his concept for the site with the Committee and discussed how material choices and other elements would need to be informed through the Committee process and input. Mr. Meadows indicated that he had visited the site and that he would suggest a new entry element which would include larger versions of the vertical cut-outs proposed for the site's interior. Other materials Mr. Meadows noted included the use of decorative tiles, which could be done by school children as well as cobbles for the paving surface and colored concrete. In response to questions, Mr. Meadows expressed interest in incorporating the Committee's ideas and noted that additional content could be incorporated through signage, which he would recommend be designed as part of the overall project space. Members inquired about the inclusion of local iconography, like the Black Heritage Trail Markers or other Portsmouth related visual images in the site. Mr. Meadows expressed a willingness to alter his design based on community and committee input, but indicated that maintaining a consistent overall conceptual approach is important.

Chairwoman Jackson then recognized Mr. Ed Dwight and Sue Francis to begin their presentation. Mr. Dwight began his presentation by discussing his personal interest in the African Burial Ground. He indicated his belief that the memorial should be celebratory. He reviewed several previous projects he has worked on to illustrate the type of project elements he could execute for the African Burial Ground. He then reviewed his proposal by each element. He indicated he did not visit the site. He did not provide a response to the committee's question provided prior to the interview about how he would distill his proposal to his recommended elements.

Chairwoman Jackson then recognized Ms. Fern Cunningham to begin her presentation. Ms. Cunningham reviewed her past experience on the Harriett Tubman bronze relief which is in Boston. She also reviewed the process of creating a bronze sculpture. Ms. Cunningham then reviewed her proposal with the committee, which included new elements that were not in the original proposal. In response to the committee question provided prior to the interview, Ms. Cunningham created a new element which included a version of the doorway at Goree Island through which many slaves passed on their way to the Americas. A new element at the Court Street end of Chestnut Street was also proposed, which included a wall in which the doorway was repeated.

The committee then discussed Mr. Meadows presentation and noted his responsiveness to their concerns, his overall professional demeanor, his commitment to a site concept and design cohesiveness, and willingness to work with the committee. The Committee also discussed Ms. Cunningham's ideas and her interest in the project. Further discussion took place about these two artists. No consensus was reached as to whether Ms. Cunningham or Mr. Meadows should be chosen. The Committee determined that Mr. Dwight would not be a finalist.