



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
AFRICAN BURYING GROUND MEMORIAL PARK COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 5, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.
Conference Room A
City Hall Complex, 1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801

1. **Welcome and Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.
2. **Introduction and Roll Call:** Assistant Mayor JoAnna Kelley welcomed the group and gave a brief history of the Committee and a reformatting of the committee by inviting stakeholder groups from the City order to represent the community and also be able to meet the quorum requirement.

Rollcall: Assistant Mayor JoAnna Kelley (AM), Suzanne Woodland, Deputy City Manager and Regulatory Counsel (DCM), Corin Hallowell (Hallowell), Parks and Forestry Foreman, Jill Minot-Seabrook (Minot-Seabrook), Seacoast African American Culture Center (SAAC), Joyce Patterson (Patterson), Seacoast African American Culture Center (SAAC), Dee Dee Forte (Forte), Co-Chair, Portsmouth Cemetery Committee, Susan Sterry (Sterry), Co-Chair, Portsmouth Cemetery Committee, Dariya Steele (Steele), Black Heritage Trail New Hampshire, Gina Bowker (Bowler), Black Heritage Trail New Hampshire. Assistant Mayor advised that the Black Lives Matter NH organization will also be involved but were not able to attend today. Also in attendance via phone was Jerome Meadows (Meadows), artist who was commissioned to design the memorial. Chris Dwyer (Dwyer) joined the meeting a few minutes later.

3. **Repair / replacement of vault cover:** DCM gave an overview of the need for maintenance of the memorial due to exposure to the elements and specifically of the vault cover which needs attention at this time. Hallowell gave an update of many of the small tiles popping out of the Sankofa and a possible solution of replacing the area with some powder-coated stainless steel. Meadows added that powder-coated option is a good option for weathering outdoor environments and maintenance purposes, along with color choices and other details. Hallowell presented a sample of the metal painted with an orange hue. Discussion ensued regarding the color tone, stamping into the metal, an epoxy sealant in order to keep the small tiles of the Sankofa intact and many other ideas were discussed including using bronze (that the statutes were created of). Dwyer, a member of the Portsmouth Public Art Committee (PARC), shared that there were many different materials used in proposals of public art which were reviewed for an upcoming commission for an outdoor art installation, and she could share this information. Patterson stated that the color is a very important aspect to all Africans and the color would need to be more vibrant or have some gold interest, otherwise it would give a different message. DCM Woodland

suggested a site visit to the memorial, and this was scheduled for Monday, August 12, 2024 at 3:30 p.m. DCM asked Meadows about this time frame for an expedited solution due to winter approaching and advised that he would report to the Committee by the end of the week. Hallowell stated that would be unrealistic, but with the goal of installing it before Juneteenth, 2025 to make sure all decisions and research was completed and to build the replacement.

4. **Public Comment:** Dwyer, representing PARC, as part of the committee's charge, they anticipate a goal to look at the public art in Portsmouth annually or bi-annually and review for maintenance and repairs, along with expanding their knowledge of processes and materials and become a resource.
5. **Slave Cemetery on Lafayette Road:** AM stated that it is believed that there is a slave cemetery on Lafayette Road behind Episcopal Church. Sterry stated that there is a small number of headstone and probably more that were probably buried. AM asked if this should fall under the purview of this Committee as a combined project with the Cemetery Committee. AM and DCM will discuss further and bring back to the committee for further discussion.
6. **Organizational matters:**
 - a. Agenda items for future meetings: Further discussion of African Burying Ground Memorial Park and collaboration with slave cemeteries with the Cemetery Committee.
 - b. Dates and times: It was decided that the committee will meet on the first Monday of the month at 4:00 p.m. The next meeting of the committee will be on Monday, September 9, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.
7. **Adjournment: Minot-Seabrook made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Patterson. All in favor.** Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes prepared by:
Barbara Zulkiewicz

Minutes approved: October 21, 2024