

24 January 2017

**MEETING NOTES**

**RE: STRATFORD HISTORIC COMMITTEE MEETING #1**  
**STRATFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA**  
**31406600**



2121 WARD PLACE, NW, 4TH FLOOR  
WASHINGTON, DC 20037  
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**Meeting Date & Time:** 11 January 2017, 7:00-9:00 PM  
**Location:** H-B Woodlawn Library

**Attendees:**

**Historic Committee**

Drew Costley (via Phone)  
Susan Cunningham  
Saundra Green  
Michael Jones  
Joan Lawrence  
Sharon Monde  
Karen Nightingale  
Avis Robinson  
Craig Syphax  
Frank Wilson

**Staff**

Dr. Patrick Murphy – APS Superintendent  
Jeffrey Chambers – APS Director of Design and Construction  
Ben Burgin – APS Assistant Director, Design & Construction  
Bill Herring – APS Project Manager, Design & Construction (Project Point of Contact)  
Theresa Flynn – APS Library Supervisor  
Rebecca Ballo – Historic Preservation Program

**Design Team**

Carl Elefante – Quinn Evans Architects  
Devon Hogan – Quinn Evans Architects

WASHINGTON, DC  
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This was the first meeting of the Stratford Historic Committee. The Committee has been constituted by Arlington Public Schools to assist in the interpretation of the historic events that took place at Stratford.

Discussion points are summarized below. This summary presents Quinn Evans Architects' understanding of discussions, decisions, and recommended actions. We request that all attendees review these Meeting Notes and notify Quinn Evans with recommended revisions or questions within seven days of issuance.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- a. Dr. Patrick Murphy introduced the project team to the members of the Committee, and provided an overview of the School Board's intentions in formulating the Committee.
- b. Committee members introduced themselves and their connection with the work of the Committee.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF COMMITTEE PROCESS

- a. QEA provided an overview of the interpretive development process and Committee workflow.
- b. The School Board's intent is to use opportunities presented in the renovation and addition project to acknowledge and celebrate the historic events associated with Stratford, particularly the desegregation of public schools in Virginia.
- c. The interpretive planning and design process will be undertaken in three steps:
  - i. The exploration and discovery stage, during which the historic events and associated topics are researched and documented. Arlington's Historic Preservation Program (HPP) will serve as historian and curator.
  - ii. The analysis and evaluation stage, during which the significance and meaning to the community is established and prioritized. What stories will be told? An interpretive planning and design consultant will facilitate the analysis and evaluation process with the Committee providing guidance and preferences.
  - iii. The expression and design stage, during which interpretive approaches are illustrated through concept design proposals prepared by the interpretive planning and design consultant. What is the expression that best captures the stories? Options may be integrated into the architecture and site, stand apart, or be implemented through other programs.
- d. As Dr. Murphy noted in his introduction, the School Board has budgeted \$250,000 for interpretation. The Committee is charged with determining how the history would best be expressed within limits of available resources or if additional funding must be sought.
- e. The building permit process and renovation timeline must be respected during the process of defining the historic commemoration.
- f. An overview of the Stratford Middle School project is presented, specifically:
  - i. The new accessible path added from Old Dominion Drive to the school and how it relates to the sidewalk the students took on Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1959. The walk has been re-engineered to provide accessibility. Plans indicate a "placeholder" commemorative concept for the pathway.
  - ii. The atrium that links the existing Stratford school to the addition, which is planned to be an energized public space. The atrium is an opportunity for commemoration and historic interpretation.

- g. Discussion included:
  - i. Details of the process
  - ii. Roles of the Committee, County personnel, and consultants
  - iii. Potential commemorative elements including artifacts and manuscripts

### **3. OVERVIEW OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE**

- a. A brief overview of the history of the school and key events associated with desegregation of public schools in Virginia is presented to the committee.
- b. The property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004 as an outstanding example of the international style by a famous local architect (Rhees Evans Burket Sr).
- c. The events that took place on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1959 signaled the beginning of the end of the Massive Resistance movement to school integration.
- d. The Stratford site and building are subject to a protective overlay historic district designation intended to preserve the character defining historic features of this site, without hindering the sites function as a school.
- e. Historic guidelines influenced the architectural design and must also be considered when proposing the commemorative elements on the exterior.
- f. The challenge is how to make the history understandable, meaningful and relevant to the students and people in Arlington, the state, the nation and around the world.
- g. Discussion included:
  - i. The school integration process took time, Theresa Flynn's kindergarten class was one of the first to be integrated in 1968, which was 9 years after the integration of Stratford Junior High School.
  - ii. Artifacts that show history such as in a museum should be considered, as having artifacts in the space allows the students to live within the context.
  - iii. Commemorative elements that would be visible to drivers passing on Old Dominion Drive should be considered.
- h. Committee members were requested to provide examples of design elements and commemorative exhibits that they like or don't like.

### **4. ADMINISTRATIVE**

- a. Meeting notes will be prepared by QEA. Generally, comments will not be attributed to individual Committee members.
- b. Public comment will be accommodated at the beginning and/or end of Committee meetings similar to BLPC meetings.
- c. Ben Burgin requested that Committee members interested in serving as Committee chair contact him for consideration.

### **5. INTERPRETIVE PLANNING & DESIGN CONSULTANT**

- a. The interpretive planning and design consultant should be in place by the next Committee meeting. Three candidates will be interviewed. Committee members are welcome to participate in the selection process. Ben Burgin requested that Committee members interested in participating in the selection of the interpretive planning and design consultant contact him.





## 6. DISCUSSION

- a. There was discussion about the process working with an interpretive planning and design consultant and the flow of ideas between the Committee and consultant. Who comes up with ideas? Generally, the Committee will express interest in the historic themes and stories presented from the research. The interpretive planner is responsible for proposing interpretive approaches. The Committee will then express its preferences.
- b. There was discussion about the Committee's responsibility over the budget and allocation of resources for planning and design versus expenditures on interpretive site and building elements. Dr. Murphy's opening comments were reiterated.
- c. There was discussion about the value of looking at other commemorative spaces in Arlington as precedents, such as the newly announced public square outside of Drew elementary.
- d. There was discussion about opportunities for accepting donations of money and/or artifacts and manuscripts. APS will look into the process needed to accept donations.
- e. There was discussion about the design process and whether any workshops/charettes are planned. The design process will be developed further once the planning and design consultant is in place.
- f. The Committee members will play a role in collecting information about the historic events at Stratford. Materials will be provided to HPP staff. Long term archiving will be addressed later in the process.

## 7. NEXT STEPS

- a. Next Committee meeting is 2/21 – 7 pm at HB Woodlawn.
- b. Ben Burgin noted that if anybody is interested in becoming a chair, or participating in selecting the interpretative planner, to please email him.
- c. APS also noted that everybody should keep their eyes open for things they like or don't like, and to please provide examples at the following meeting.
- d. The design team will provide a list of interpretative planners to be interviewed to APS.

END OF MEETING NOTES