

# CHARLES HOUSTON MEMORIAL PUBLIC ART PROJECT

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

APRIL 24 AND 29, 2008

Suggestions/ideas gathered a community meetings held on Thursday, April 24 at the Dr. Oswald Durant Memorial Center, 1605 Cameron Street; and, Tuesday, April 29 at the Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe Street.

1. Plaque with/for Parker Gray School
2. Concern – not to take the creativity away from Artist
3. With proximity of site – with Black History next door developing stronger ties with/Recreation now; interpreting more opportunities within building that the site should be interpreted; tie Charles Houston with Parker Gray Alumni – help and provided resources for Black History in Plaza – interpretation along plaza; tie both together
4. Street and relationship to Black History Museum – and Reading Room/education
5. Library first started by Samuel Tucker and Charles Houston interconnection between Library/Charles Houston
6. Walking timeline across the front of the Plaza
7. Since this is a historical landmark, has this gone through National Register?
8. Construction Question on Jobs. What was allowed? What was done? Community did not get to see Architects work.
9. Have the “History Story”
10. Before Charles Houston there was Parker Gray – Relocated to Madison Street. Old Parker Gray was changed to Charles Houston, now no place is named Parker Gray – promoting Charles Houston in place of Parker Gray. direction should be toward both histories – Parker Gray – 2 principals – separate girls/boys schools combined both principals’ names. 2 schools for Black Children ; Parker Gray important to this City.
11. Something should represent both – want something there to honor Parker Gray as well as Charles Houston; Councilman Ludwig Gaines told of both important elements; equal pay and desegregation. Feel that Parker Gray is very important, Charles Houston great in his work – want these combined; Parker Gray central to community.

12. Parker Gray Alumni Association President; Charles Houston Rec. Center – that is where it needs to be; reference to teachers and principals. Something large enough to see (don't need bifocals); exhibit and reflect.
13. Equal emphasis on both Charles Houston and Parker Gray stories.
14. Two stories should be incorporated
15. Issue – not able to place Parker Gray – Vocational ethnically – now have MLK, Jr. memorial; want \*3 dimensional; Parker Gray shows evolution of Charles Houston full story. Should continue Parker Gray name.
16. Still have small sign on Wythe St. – but need more. MLK, Jr. Mem – may take few more years
17. Resident now knows about Charles Houston; advocate something like Roosevelt Memorial Plaque shows his life –something educational. Now knows about Parker Gray – Advocate for more education in the Art Space – to take about local History and Parker Gray Educational
18. A lot of Educational opportunities with both stories of Charles Houston and Park Gray School. Education!
19. Proposed future Memorial MLK – component of some presence – interactive to be placed here at Black History Museum
20. Emphasize theme of equality of all races and all people – like the one sculpture 3 figures leaning (Bali figures) interactivity and interdependence on one another– traditional with same interdependence.
21. Contemporary vs traditional
22. Related search for achieving equality
23. Howard University students to be involved with proposing ideas for the memorial; mindful that children are interacting with center
24. Very thoughtful that it has to be near children
25. Afro centric images, different – that no one else has thought of.
26. Permanent sculpture is very expensive, extensive. Commemorate what is alive, not memorize what is dead

27. Children should be the audience, teach and educate – to focus on the next generation
28. Memorial should represent black peoples struggle for education
29. Instructional part – will there be space on the interior?
30. Vestibule – Charles Houston’s life; Black History Museum with Charles Houston
31. Multiple connections between Charles Houston to bring Samuel Tucker into the picture – the R. Robinson library; with Charles Houston right next door – to help people understand Black History Museum; educational; Walk across street to be able to talk and teach about Charles Houston and Parker Gray also. Charles Houston Recreation Center/Black History Museum; Interpreting library next door; Education and Reading significant struggle; Resources – larger way to interpret Black History Museum; Physical and intellectual – interpretation.
32. Need to know the first names for those individuals – Parker and Gray
33. Another significant event in Alexandria and Virginia; 1967 decision; While man can marry a black woman – Memorial plaque at lawyers, 110 North Royal Street. Charles Houston’s life – opportunity to do something in addition. PC process in dealing with James Bland. Public Park could communicate this event.
34. Fundraising effort – need to remember strong Art oriented with educational component; students need to participate; interactive; tie past into creativity of the future; History seeing History memorialized. Historical tie in to the future for the Children; Artsy/Educational “Ah Ha” moment. “High Art” not Artsy.
35. Annual reoccurring event – Adapt this educational component; caulk for peace – designed for children; free draw – annually and globally.
36. Consider temporary public art installations such as luminaries, or consider annual festivals.

Comments from index card:

Bricks that were removed from Charles Houston – salvage

Install bricks again w/medallions “Donor Willie” as fundraiser naming people on bricks, “in memoriam. (Vonda Stanford)