



Richland County Council

CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM AD HOC COMMITTEE

November 16, 2017 – 4:00 PM

Administration Conference Room

2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Livingston, Chair; Greg Pearce, Dalhi Myers, and Calvin “Chip” Jackson

OTHERS PRESENT: Yvonne McBride, Norman Jackson, Bill Malinowski, Nancy Stone-Collum, and Michelle Onley

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Mr. Livingston called the meeting to order at approximately 4:02 PM.

Mr. Livingston stated in the current budget there was a motion made regarding a gateway/private park and Civil Rights Museum which will be looked at later in the year to figure how to proceed.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. April 20, 2017 - Mr. C. Jackson moved, seconded by Mr. Pearce, to approve the minutes as distributed. The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Mr. C. Jackson moved, seconded by Mr. Pearce, to adopt the agenda as published. The vote in favor was unanimous.

4. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

- a. **Introductions** – Mary Skinner Jones, Angela Hannibal, and Bob Coble were in attendance.
- b. **Historical Overview** – Ms. Jones stated they would have been able to complete the building in 2015 if they had received the \$2.6 million in new market tax credits.

Ms. Jones stated the building has been stabilized and the windows have been restored and are in storage. The plans have been drawn and everything is ready to go once the funding is available. In addition, they have \$2.4 million in tax credits they will be able to draw down. The requested funds are only for the construction phase.

- Reestablished the board and included younger persons on the board.
- Introduced the “Green Book”, which was started in 1939 and lists all of the places across the country where African-American would be comfortable visiting
- Rebranded
- Planning to conduct a strategic plan
- Performing Arts Venue to showcase local talent
- Civil Rights Museum, which will include the history of the faith community and showcase African-American doctors who has served the community
- Only Civil Rights Museum in SC
- Potential to bring tourists into the area

- Have visited museums across the country: Charlotte, NC; Atlanta, GA; etc.
 - Since the museum in Washington, DC has opened it has increased interest
- c. **Funding Request** – Ms. Jones stated they are in need of \$3 million. The funding need is a result of them not being able to obtain \$2.6 million in new market tax credits because of the change in the census track.

Mr. Pearce inquired if the museum would focus beginning with the 1950s.

Ms. Jones stated they are in partnership with the USC Civil Rights Research Library. The museum does not have the capacity to house all of the history. They will be rotating collections.

Mr. Pearce stated at one time it was mentioned to tie this in with the remaining physical structures in the Lower Richland area and the Rosenwald Schools.

Ms. Jones stated the City and the County have been approached to provide the \$3 million, each would contribute \$1.5 million.

Mr. Pearce inquired if they needed all the funding at one time.

Ms. Jones stated they had thought about getting a loan and paying it back over time or the funding could be received all at one time.

Mr. Livingston stated they needed to look at the different scenarios.

Mr. Malinowski inquired about what the previously received \$1 million was used for.

Ms. Jones stated part of it was designed for staff. Approximately \$1 million was put into the building to stabilize the structure and restoring the windows. She further stated she could provide the committee with the construction budget. The building was recently reassessed and the value increased by about \$200,000.

It was suggested to partner with Charlotte during the CIAA Tournaments to bring tourists to Columbia, which would help to cut costs.

Mr. Coble stated there is an effort to get private sector funding into the project and will be modeled after the efforts with Chappelle Auditorium at Allen University. From the historical standpoint, the Civil Rights Museum could even surpass the Chappelle Auditorium. He further stated although this is not tourism just for African-American, African-American tourism is an extremely important part of tourism in the community.

Ms. Jones stated she went and met with Charleston's Mayor Riley. He expressed his excitement over the endeavor. Charleston will market Columbia and Columbia will market Charleston.

- d. **Discussion** -- Ms. Jones expressed the importance of working together. She saw the vision in Charlotte with their Cultural Campus. When she attended the conference in Charlotte all of these other museums hosted receptions for the conference attendees. The conference in Memphis was similar and they opened up the city. The same thing could be accomplished here in Columbia.

Mr. C. Jackson stated the issue that needs to be cleared up is whether the emphasis is on the museum of the cultural arts center.

Ms. Jones stated it is both. The museum is within the cultural arts center. At first they looked at the task force that did research in 2003 and the #1 need was for an art venue, but they got more traction when they started talking about the historical aspects of the building. The museum will be a driving force and the cultural arts center will be utilized by the community.

Mr. C. Jackson stated the confusion is in terms of raising money though. There is a mindset for supporting a Civil Rights Museum that is different than a cultural arts center. He stated he is not sure the County has a clear understanding of what they are supporting and backing. He is not opposed to what is being suggested, but if the funding is for improving the construction and infrastructure it needs to be written out more clearly so people understand. The more it can be delineated between what is going in the cultural arts center and what is going in the museum part. Charleston and Atlanta have museums. He thinks it is important to engage the Historic Columbia community.

Ms. Jones stated they are a part.

Mr. C. Jackson stated that may need to be revisited because he had a discussion with the Executive Director recently and she expressed her desire to be a part of the development, design and construction of it.

Ms. Jones stated in the museums in Memphis, Birmingham, and Charlotte they have space that is rented out to the community. The rental space generates the additional funds for the museum. They receive a lot of calls regarding the rental of the space. The historical aspect has to be kept because the building is on the National Register. They have to keep the name Bethel in the title so they have suggested the Renaissance Foundation at Historical Bethel.

Mr. C. Jackson stated there is no question what Ms. Jones is doing makes sense. He admonished her to look at the civil rights museum as the focal point and add on the cultural arts center, but the way it is being described is as if they are equal.

Mr. Pearce stated he is not worried about building the project, but one of the mistakes the County made with EdVenture Children's Museum deals with their operating budget. He stated he would like to see the pro forma on the construction, as well as the long range operational plan.

Ms. Jones stated the pro forma is being updated because the projections were based on the rental fees when the original pro forma was generated.

- e. **Recommendations** – Mr. Livingston stated the construction plan, the pro forma, operational plan, and projections about potential utilization based on historical experiences needs to be provided to the committee.

Ms. McBride echoed what Mr. Pearce said about the operational costs.

Mr. Malinowski stated we have projects that come forward and want funding for startup. We always hear the same type of promotion, "This is going to be so great. It is going to equal or rival Birmingham, Atlanta and Charlotte" but 20 years later the County is still footing the bill because they cannot pay their own way. He would like to see a projection of when the project will be able to handle their own finances.

Mr. Livingston stated he feels that if this is great for our community and requires some operational funds from the County he would be willing to support that.

Mr. Pearce stated he would rather deal with this upfront.

Ms. Jones stated for clarification that the committee is requesting the construction budget, construction plan, operational budget and pro forma.

5. **ADJOURNMENT** – The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:39 PM.