



STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF FORT BEND
CITY OF RICHMOND

The Monument Ad Hoc Committee for the City of Richmond, Texas met on September 17, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

Committee Chairman Alex BeMent proceeded to call the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. via video conference pursuant to Texas Government Code, Section 551.125, as amended, and as modified by the temporary suspension of various provisions thereof effective March 16, 2020, by the Governor of Texas in accordance with the Texas Disaster Act of 1975, all as related to the Governor's proclamation on March 13, 2020, certifying that the COVID-19 pandemic poses an imminent threat of disaster and declaring a state of disaster for all counties in Texas. All members of the public may participate in the meeting via video conference call.

A quorum was present, with the following members in attendance:

Alex BeMent, Committee Chair (City Commissioner, Position 4)
Terri Vela, City Manager
Rob Quarles, Representative of Vincent Morales, County Commissioner Precinct 1
Keely Knipling, Vice President of the Fort Bend History Association
Gary Smith, City Attorney
Roy Cordes, County Attorney

Agenda item A2, Discuss Rules of Procedure and introduction of Chair of the Committee. Committee Chair Alex BeMent inquired if the Rules and Procedures needed to be read aloud to the Committee. All committee members stated they had read them. Committee Chair BeMent introduced himself and provided his background and then requested all board members introduce themselves. The agenda item was closed.

Agenda item A3, Elect the Vice Chair. Committee Member Terri Vela nominated Rob Quarles to hold the office of Vice Chair. Committee Chair BeMent seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous to approve. Rob Quarles will serve as the Vice Chair of the Monument Ad Hoc Committee.

Agenda item A4, Discuss charge provided by the City Commission. Committee Chair BeMent proceeded to read the charge which provided the guidelines and tasks assigned to the committee by the City of Richmond City Commission. The charge stated a report would be provided to the City Commission of its findings and recommendations by September 25, 2020. Committee Chair BeMent stated the deadline may be difficult to adhere to but would strive to act swiftly and resolve the issues as soon as possible. Committee Member Quarles echoed that statement stating the County Commissioner is highly motivated to find a resolution. With no further discussion, the agenda item was closed.

Agenda item A5, Discuss information needed to fulfill charge for possible recommendations to the City Commission. Committee Chair stated the charge takes two options off the table; destruction of the monument and doing nothing. Committee member Vela stated her position is to move the monument to an historical location. This would free up the space if perhaps the City needed to increase the footprint of the current building. The options that have been reviewed are the Morton Cemetery which requires some allowances and a cemetery not within the city limits but still in Fort Bend County called Hodges Cemetery. The Fort Bend Historical Association has stated it does not have a location available. Committee member Knipling stated the monument should now be considered an artifact, it is no longer a monument. Committee Member Knipling stated her opinion would be to move the artifact to another location and provide it as an education artifact tool. Committee Member Quarles stated he was in agreement with both committee members and stated it was, "refreshing to know they are all on the same page". Committee Member Vela reviewed the potential costs of relocating the artifact which was a range of \$45,000 to \$75,000. Committee Member Vela stated she was not in favor of using citizen tax dollars to relocate. Committee Member Quarles stated the County is reviewing other funding sources and trying to be creative. Committee Chair BeMent inquired if a *Go Fund Me* account would be an option. Committee Member Knipling inquired if Wessendorff Park would be an option. Also, it was stated that three private citizens had offered locations. One private citizen had attempted to claim ownership. The question of the ownership issues and how that should be determined was discussed with comments from the City Attorney Gary Smith. Attorney Smith stated in researching the county records that there is no record of conveyance to the county, no conveyance to the City and in 1940, the artifact was on the property when the City purchased the property. The easement (not the artifact) was deeded to the City by Fort Bend County. Publishing in the newspaper a Public Notice to the unknown owners was suggested. County Attorney Roy Cordes stated that he was not authorized to release his conversations with the County. Committee Member Knipling stated the results of the monument survey should be used as a starting point or foundation for discussion. There were 617 responses from the survey that provided suggestions as to what should be done with the monument. Some of those suggestions were as follows; Decker Park, Austin, and out of the state. Committee Chair BeMent stated his preference would be for the artifact to stay in Fort Bend County. In

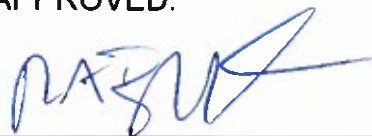
discussing the costs, Committee Member Vela stated the costs estimates previously provided were to relocate locally. There are more costs involved such as the base which is very heavy. The relocation should be paid for by non-taxable revenue and use the Fort Bend Historical Association as the entity to whom donations may be made. The debate has brought awareness to the other individuals that were involved, Arizona Fleming and Willie Melton. Committee Chair BeMent provided a recap stating the next meeting will have the draft for the notice in the paper to claim ownership and citizen input. Also, funding options will be discussed. City Attorney Smith stated a draft for a Public Notice to solicit input for location suggestions would be provided. Committee Chair BeMent stated as custodian of the artifact it is our obligation to act upon it.

Agenda item A6, Set Future Meeting date(s). Committee Member Vela made the motion for the next meeting was set for September 24, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Quarles.

Agenda item A7. Discuss Future Agenda Items. Financing the movement or relocation of the artifact/monument. Publishing notices for intent to move and citizen input will be reviewed. Committee Member Vela inquired as to the time frame of the input. Committee Member Knipling stated it should include the responses from the first survey, letters received by City staff and responses received from the future request for input.

With no further business to discuss, Committee Chairman BeMent declared the meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

APPROVED:



Alex BeMent, Committee Chairman

Attest:

Laura Scarlato, City Secretary