

Interim Activity of the Commission for Historical Statues in the U.S. Capitol

Date of Report: December 1, 2024

Author: Department of Historic Resources

Enabling Authority: HB 1406, Chapter 1099 Virginia Acts of Assembly

Executive Summary: Pursuant to the powers and duties authorized under Chapter 1099 of the 2020 Virginia Acts of Assembly, The Virginia General Assembly created the Commission for Historical Statues in the United States Capitol and tasked it with studying the removal and replacement of the Robert E. Lee statue in the Capitol’s National Statuary Hall Collection, where each state is entitled to have two statues. Virginia’s other statue is of George Washington.

Commission Members: The commission consists of eight members. Governor Ralph Northam appointed Dr. Edward Ayres and Dr. Colita Fairfax. The Virginia Senate appointed Senator Louise Lucas, and the House of Delegates appointed Del. Jeion Ward. Three citizen members were elected at the Commission’s first meeting: Dr. Fred Motley of Danville, Chief Anne Richardson of the Rappahannock Tribe and a resident of Indian Neck, and Margaret “Margi” Vanderhye of McLean. Julie Langan, Director of the Department of Historic Resources, serves as an *ex-officio* member.

Summary of Commission Meetings: The Commission has held a total of ten meetings since its inception, all of which were publicly noticed as required by the *Code of Virginia § 2.2-3707*. Between July 2020 and July 2022, seven meetings were held virtually due to the State of Emergency declared by Governor Northam as authorized by and in compliance with § 4-0.01 of the 2020 Appropriations Act (HB 30, Chapter 1289) that was previously in effect. All meetings were recorded, and minutes were prepared and posted to the Commission’s webpage. Since the last report dated December 19, 2023, a virtual meeting was held on February 24, 2024.

Budget: The project remains within the budget established by the Commission.

Milestones:

On January 9, 2024, Julie Langan and Margaret Vanderhye, along with members of the Johns family, visited the Weitzman Studio to inspect the full-scale model.

On February 24, 2024, during a virtual meeting, the Commission approved the full-scale model.

On March 7, 2024, Julie Langan, on behalf of the Commission, submitted photos of the full-scale model to the Joint Committee on the Library for approval.

On May 3, 2024, Julie Langan was informed, via email, by the Curator’s Office of the Architect of the Capitol, that the Joint Committee on the Library had approved the full-scale model.

With formal approval of the full-scale model, the foundry, Laran Bronze, Inc. in Chester, PA began casting the sculpture.

On August 29, 2024, DHR submitted a Decision Brief to the Department of Planning and Budget, to carry forward \$275,000 from the appropriation for the project into the current fiscal year.

On September 7, 2024, Julie Langan received notice that Governor Youngkin had approved the request to carry forward the unexpended appropriation.

On October 14, 2024, Julie Langan, accompanied by Steven Weitzman and members of the Johns family, visited Laran Bronze Inc. to view the assembled bronze pieces to approve prior to welding.

Next Steps:

Complete statue, including application of patina/Julie Langan to visit foundry for final time, along with Steven Weitzman and members of the Johns family.

Transport finished statue from the foundry in Chester, PA to Weitzman Studio in Brentwood, MD. Sculpture will be placed on finished granite pedestal and photographed. Julie Langan to visit studio to view assembled components.

Julie Langan will schedule a meeting of the Commission to approve the completed statue and pedestal.

Julie Langan, on behalf of the Commission, will submit photos of the completed full-scale model and pedestal to the Architect of the Capitol for approval by the Joint Committee on the Library.

Upon receipt of final approval, the Commonwealth of Virginia will request the Speaker of the House to schedule an unveiling ceremony.