



5/31 MEMORIAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES ~ FEBRUARY 2022

Day 1: February 23, 2022, 4 – 8 p.m.

Location: The HIVE, 4636 Columbus Street, Virginia Beach, VA 23462

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: George Alcaraz, William Almond, Michael Berlucchi (Council liaison), Sharon Felton, Kurtis Hooks, Lawrence “Duff” Kliewer, Cosette Livas, Jason Nixon, Tara Reel, Shelby Slutzker (ex officio), Sylvia Strickland, Sabrina Wooten (Council liaison), Charlotte Zito

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Brian Ricardo

Of note, Ervin Cox, brother of Ryan Keith Cox, also participated in the 5/31 Memorial Committee meeting.

Larry Schooler, 5/31 Memorial Committee Facilitator, opened the meeting by reading the names of the victims of the 5/31 tragedy. Councilmembers Wooten and Berlucchi then made opening remarks, welcoming the Committee, and thanking them for their participation.



We remember

- LaQuita C. Brown
- Ryan Keith Cox
- Tara Welch Gallagher
- Mary Louise “Mary Lou” Crutsinger Gayle
- Alexander Mikhail Gusev
- Joshua O. Hardy
- Michelle “Missy” Langer
- Richard H. Nettleton
- Katherine A. Lusich Nixon
- Christopher Kelly Rapp
- Herbert “Bert” Snelling
- Robert “Bobby” Williams

Dr. Schooler then reviewed the 5/31 Memorial Committee meeting objectives and proposed discussion agreements. He asked the Committee for input on the proposed discussion agreements and there were no objections or additions to agreements as read below.

Our Objectives

- Build trust, cultivate relationships, and understand each other’s perspectives.
- Share information about similar memorial work done elsewhere.
- Discuss and come to preliminary consensus on a vision for the 5/31 memorial.
- Share ideas about elements that could be included in the 5/31 memorial.

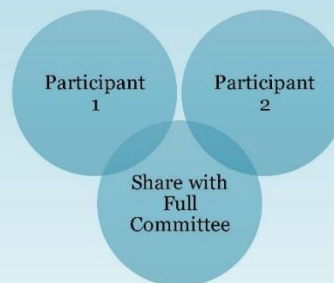
Proposed (Draft) Discussion Agreements

- **Open-mindedness:** Listen to and respect all points of view.
- **Acceptance:** Suspend judgment as best you can.
- **Curiosity:** Seek to understand rather than persuade.
- **Discovery:** Question old assumptions, look for new insights.
- **Sincerity:** Speak for yourself about what has personal heart and meaning.
- **Brevity:** Go for honesty and depth but don't go on and on.
- **Others?**

Dr. Schooler facilitated an exercise where Committee members introduced themselves to a partner and then shared with the group what their partner shared with them.

Who are we, and why are we here?

- Turn to your neighbor and ask:
 - Who are you?
 - What made you decide to serve the community in this way?
 - Complete this sentence: "When I think about the events of 5/31..."
- *Be prepared to share what your partner shares with you.*



Deputy City Attorney, Rod Ingram, covered the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Virginia FOIA), the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act, and the 5/31 Committee Remote Participation Policy. The Committee made a unanimous vote in favor of the Remote Participation Policy.

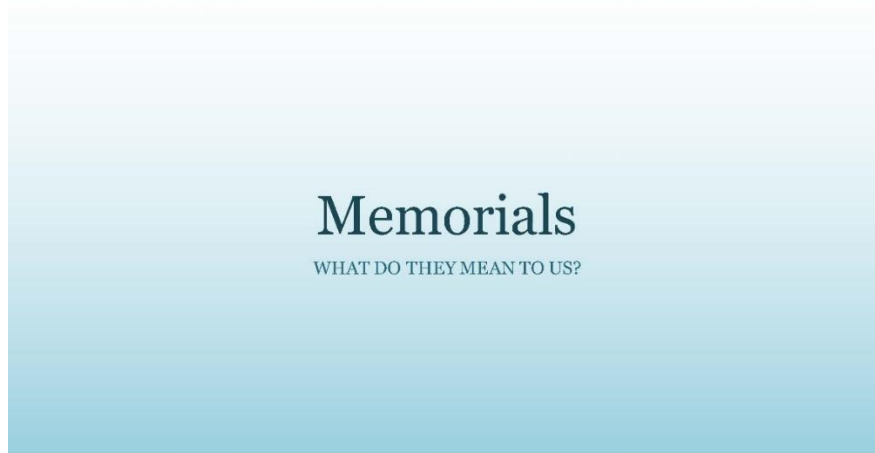
Committee members put together a list of "feelings" and "thoughts" that they've experienced at a memorial they've seen or visited.

Feelings included:

- Calm
- Peaceful
- Healing
- Meditative
- Hurt
- Clarity
- Connection to those memorialized
- Curiosity
- Inspiration
- Educational
- Perspective
- Small and humbled
- Gratitude
- Confusion
- Remembrance
- Emotional – loss and grief

Thoughts included:

- Quiet reflective place
- Contemplation
- Abstraction
- Simplicity and impact
- Opportunity to learn
- Ability to touch, read, walk
- Importance of the story told
- Continuing legacy
- Reminder that life is precious
- Importance of space and place



What do you remember feeling or thinking at memorials you have visited or seen?

INDIVIDUAL WORK TO SHARE WITH THE GROUP

Feelings

Thoughts

The Committee broke into small group discussions on the purpose of memorials and monuments. They were prompted with the following questions:

Why a memorial?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- What is the purpose of memorials and monuments?
- What impact do they have on us and the way we think about history?
- How can individuals and communities shape public memory and influence people's beliefs and attitudes through the creation of memorials and monuments?

The Committee reconvened and produced a list of purposes memorials and monuments serve in addition to messages conveyed by memorials and monuments.

Purposes included:

- Celebrate
- Remember
- Heal
- Connect
- Share a story
- Recognize survivors
- Place to pause
- Sympathy and love

- Accessibility
- Physical architecture
- Abstraction
- Reflection
- Capturing time and legacy
- Bringing the community together
- Gathering spot
- Honor
- Sharing stories
- Education
- Generational
- Sense of moving forward
- Continued awareness

Messages included:

- Deliver what took place
- Resilient community
- Reflection of all
- Reflect untold stories
- Tribute that honors each story
- Honoring the work and service of the individuals impacted
- Reclaiming the event
- Self-identity
- Unity
- Legacy
- Authenticity
- For the next generation

Dr. Schooler reviewed several memorials and asked the Committee to consider the following questions:

Understanding memorials:

CONSIDER ONE OF THE MEMORIALS FROM THE GALLERY AND CAPTURE YOUR INDIVIDUAL THOUGHTS TO SHARE WITH THE GROUP

- Who is the intended audience for the memorial?
- What, specifically, is the memorial representing or commemorating?
- What story or message do you think the artist was trying to convey to the intended audience? What might the memorial be leaving out?
- How does the memorial convey its intended story or message? What materials did the artist use? What experience did the artist create for the audience?



FDNY Battalion 9 Memorial

This memorial commemorates the New York City firefighters of Battalion 9 who lost their lives on September 11.



Vietnam Veterans Memorial

This memorial in Washington, D.C. contains the names of Americans who fought and died in the Vietnam War.



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial

This memorial to King depicts a 30-foot carving of King on a feature called the "Stone of Hope" that is being moved out of a feature called the "Mountain of Despair," a reference to a line in the "I Have a Dream" speech called back in the inscription on the side of the statue. King is represented standing firm, resolute, and thoughtful, holding a rolled stack of papers. Quotations from speeches and writings are engraved on the arced "Inscription Wall" on the flanks of the memorial.



The Lincoln Memorial

The Lincoln Memorial, which overlooks the National Mall in Washington, D.C., honors the life and death of the 16th US president.



Stolpersteine

Stolpersteine (stumbling stones) in Sušice, Czech Republic, mark the site where the four members of the Gutmann family lived before they were murdered in the Holocaust.

Sandy Hook



Three primary elements, the circle, the path, and the tree are the hallmarks of a design that achieves these goals.

A circling network of paths takes the visitor through a woodland, across ponds and meadows.

The paths connect to one another and allow the walker to experience the space in their own way and at their own pace before arriving at the center. This honors the process of grieving and remembrance.

The Memorial Clearing is framed by two low stone walls with wood tops and two low stone seatwalls.

In the center, a water feature sits in a granite basin. The edge of the feature is engraved with the names of the victims.

Water flows spiral inwards towards a planter at the center, where a young sycamore is planted to symbolize the young age of the victims. The motion of the water embraces the tree and captures the energy, form, and cycle of the landscape around it.

Visitors are encouraged to give a candle or a flower to the water, which will carry the offering across the space in an act of bridging the deceased and the living.

El Paso



San Bernardino



An artist rendering of the December 2 Memorial bound for the San Bernardino County Government Center campus shows a bronze steel curtain with cast glass jewels to honor the victims of the 2015 terrorist attack at Inland Regional Center.



An aerial rendering of the December 2 Memorial bound for the San Bernardino County Government Center campus shows a walkway lined by bronze steel curtains with 14 waves designed into them, one for each victim of the Dec. 2, 2015, terrorist attack at Inland Regional Center.

Nearby, a statue is to mark the date of the attack and the names of those who died.

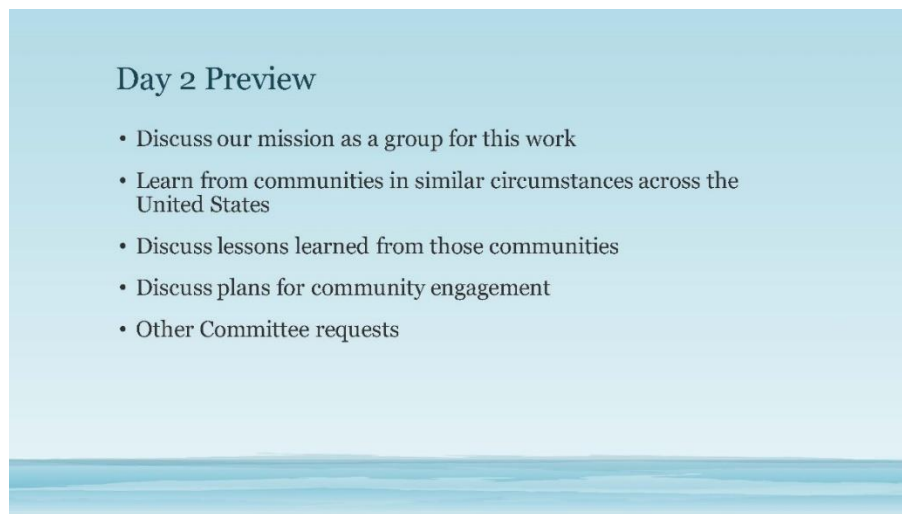


Utøya, Norway

The Clearing: A band of steel with the names of the victims carved out of the metal, hanging in tension from tall pines around the area.

It was decided that the site must meet two requirements: No atrocity should have taken place there, and visitors should be able to withdraw and have a moment of privacy there.

Dr. Schooler closed the meeting by giving a preview of the Day 2 agenda.



Day 2: February 24, 2022, 4 – 8 p.m.

Location: The HIVE, 4636 Columbus Street, Virginia Beach, VA 23462

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: George Alcaraz, William Almond, Michael Berlucchi (Council liaison), Sharon Felton, Kurtis Hooks, Lawrence “Duff” Kliwer, Cosette Livas, Jason Nixon, Tara Reel, Brian Ricardo, Shelby Slutzker (ex officio), Sylvia Strickland, Sabrina Wooten (Council liaison), Charlotte Zito

ABSENT: none

Dr. Larry Schooler, 5/31 Memorial Committee Facilitator opened the meeting and Mayor Dyer gave brief opening remarks.

Dr. Schooler then reviewed themes from Committee intake interviews.

What We Heard – Intake Interviews

- Success at the end of this process will mean reflection and healing
- Commitment to an inclusive process representing all stakeholders:
 - Families and survivors
 - Impacted City employees
 - Community
 - Future generations
- Need for extensive community engagement and for those who were impacted to feel heard throughout the process
- Sensitivity to ensuring all families have opportunities to influence the memorial
- Concern about perception of the City of Virginia Beach as a stakeholder
- Need to focus on the memorial rather than the events of 5/31

Dr. Schooler reviewed mission statements of peer communities, Orlando, and San Bernardino.

Our Mission

Consider what we want to achieve, accomplish, and provide

“We come here to remember those who were killed, those who survived and those changed forever. May all who leave here know the impact of violence. May this Memorial offer comfort, strength, peace, hope and serenity.”-Oklahoma City Memorial Foundation

“Establishing a sanctuary of healing and a beacon of hope by memorializing the lives taken, the lives saved, and all the lives affected by the Pulse Nightclub tragedy of June 12, 2016 – ensuring Pulse’s legacy of love lives on forever.”-OnePULSE Foundation

“To create a respectful place where family members, members of the community and visitors could go to gain an understanding of the innocent victims of Columbine.

“To create a memorial with content and purpose, 100 percent derived from members of the Columbine community, and keeping with the scale, materials and natural forms found in the Columbine area.”

“To recognize and honor the deceased, the injured, the survivors and the community members.”

Our Mission

Consider what we want the memorial to achieve, accomplish, and provide

(San Bernardino)

Permanently honor and celebrate the innocent souls taken from us by a brutal and cowardly act of terrorism on December 2, 2015 and provide enduring recognition of the County employees who witnessed the attack, many of whom were physically injured and all of whom were emotionally impacted.

Acknowledge those who bravely and selflessly provided protection, comfort, and support to the loved ones of those who were taken, the wounded, our San Bernardino County Government Family, and our county community on the day of the attack and in the days, weeks, and months that followed.

Ensure that our efforts reaffirm respect for life, strengthen our resolve to preserve freedom, inspire an end to hatred, and uphold San Bernardino County's tradition of strength, determination, and resilience.

The Committee individually wrote down goals for the permanent memorial on sticky notes and tacked them to the wall.

Goals were broken into thematic categories, including:

- Remembrance
- Honoring those impacted
- Healing

What are your goals?

- Individual writing and then discussion using sticky notes.

One theme heard in the discussion following was that the loss of public servants in the 5/31 tragedy sets Virginia Beach apart from other permanent memorials.

Let's consider our memorial to 5/31

GROUP DISCUSSION

- What message do you want the memorial to convey?
- How does this message augment or challenge what others are likely to know about the historical idea, event, or individual?

Shelby Slutzker, Family and Survivor Liaison and part of the Facilitation Team, facilitated a national discussion and Q&A on memorials with panelists from San Bernardino County, El Paso, and Newtown, CT.

A National Conversation on Memorials

- Melissa Russo and Felisa Cardona, San Bernardino County
- Dan Krauss, Sandy Hook/ Newtown, CT
- Stephanie Gardea, El Paso Museum of History

Dr. Schooler facilitated a discussion on community engagement, key audiences, and methods of gathering input.

Community Engagement for our Committee

- Who do we want to engage?
 - Families
 - Community members
 - City staff
 - Others?
- What do we want to know from them?
 - What they want to feel, think, and/or learn at the memorial
 - Vision for memorial
 - Elements
 - Site preferences
 - Others?

How can we best engage the audiences from whom we want to get input?

- Listening sessions / small group discussions / focus groups
 - Can be by invitation, open to public, or both
- Public workshop
 - Can include stations with info and specific questions
 - Can include virtual options
- Televised community conversation
 - Can include dial-out to homes in VB
 - Can include simulcast in multiple languages
- Online survey/discussion board (via PublicInput or other platform)
- Others?
- "Meeting in a Box" for community organizations
- "Pop up" engagement at events

He then asked the group to sharing closing thoughts before adjourning the meeting.