

EAST MARSHALL STREET WELL PROJECT

Community Consultations on the Well #3 Preliminary Report May 16, 2015

On Saturday, May 16, 2015 Stakeholders gathered at Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School with members of the East Marshall Street Well Planning Committee, VCU Staff and consultants to continue the community process “to identify individuals who would serve in the role of the “Family Representative Council” and make recommendations around memorialization, reburial of the human remains and the need for additional examination of the remains”.



Kevin Allison, The Senior Assistant to the President at Virginia Commonwealth University, welcomed all in attendance. He shared his excitement and honor that attendees took their time to give input and feedback as it relates to this important topic.

The Community Consultations have 3 main goals:

- Implement a community process that encourages learning about the human remains discovered near East Marshall Street
- Seek community input in the formation of a Family Representative Council
- Represent the descendent community that will make recommendations on behalf of those individuals whose remains were discovered to support appropriate study, memorialization, and reburial with dignity.

During the consultation, community members heard from Tal Simmons, PhD from The Department of Forensic Science at VCU and Michael Blakey, PhD from The Department of Anthropology at The College of William & Mary. They then engaged in facilitated discussion in groups of five to ten. The discussion and session was led by Justice and Sustainability Associates, a civic engagement and alternative dispute resolution firm based in Washington, D.C.

The day was closed by a performance of “Crossing the Jordan” from James Rusell Bennett, III.

Participants responses to the Consultation’s Questions are captured on back.

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How does your understanding of the research findings presented today inform how we should tell the story about the people whose remains were found in the well?:

Research

Socioeconomic

What was life like for individuals during that time

Genetic

Is it possible to have additional modern study conducted?

Any other options other than DNA testing?

Would like more about the process to connect families to the remains?

What would the swabbing process look like?

Feeling, Emotions & Memorialization

Ensure humanity is restored to individuals

Would like to see an amphitheater

Would like individual memorialization not mass graves

What laws or statutes are in place to prevent this from happening again?

Connect to Baltimore and other present day issues

What characteristics would you like members of the Family Representative Council to demonstrate?:

Process & Authority

What power does this group have?

Who makes final decisions regarding recommendations?

First Session should be an open so folks can volunteer to participate

Will this group hold VCU accountable?

Group Dynamics

Serious and Honest commitment

Should be problem solvers

Should have good group skills

Desired Group Characteristics

Diverse with respect to age, career, and geographic location

Lay people

No hidden agenda

Religious representation

Black Community in Richmond & VA

Should have good group skills

Small enough to get the job done

Should be familiar with burial ground

Youth should be involved

White people should be allies but not make decisions

No elected officials

No VCU affiliations

Predominately African American

Join us for the next Community Consultation:

May 30, 2015

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