

Submitted On	Name	In your opinion what should be done with the Monuments	Message
02/01/2018 17:32:45	Robert Lamb	Leave the monuments as they are., Add more monuments to Monument Avenue.	How much time is a speaker given at these smaller meetings and will commission members question them about their remarks and will speakers be given an opportunity to respond? When will we learn about dates that have been scheduled? Will non- speakers be allowed to attend or interject remarks directed at the speakers or their viewpoints?
02/02/2018 14:52:45	JAMES CONNORS	Add context to the monuments., Add more monuments to Monument Avenue., Relocate the monuments.	I am preparing a written proposal for submission addressing a conceptual change for Monument Avenue and how it could better serve all Virginians now and for all future generations.
02/04/2018 17:19:26	Will Kitchen	Leave the monuments as they are., Add context to the monuments., Add more monuments to Monument Avenue.	Removal of the monuments will destroy Monument Ave. They need not be moved to a museum because they are and have always been in an outdoor museum. They are symbols of many things to many people. Most important, they are symbolic of how far we have come as a nation in achieving the dream (all men are created equal) that spawned the American Revolution. They are also important reminders that, under our Constitution, states have the power to oppose the Federal government. For better or worse, the statues represent Americans who were doing exactly what their fathers and grandfathers did in breaking away from England. While their actions are today perceived to be of a singular nature (preserving slavery), the reality (history) is more complicated in that they fought to preserve their political freedom and their economic freedom (of which slavery was a central feature). However, slavery was not the reason that Lincoln sought to use force against the Southern States. His goal was preservation of the Union first and foremost. Only in 1862, did ending slavery become a means to an end (Emancipation Proclamation) to preserve the Union. Addition of statues representing Virginia's and Richmond's progress in overcoming "Jim Crow" and promoting civil rights for all would certainly be appropriate. Adding context to the existing statues would be appropriate as long as the context was balanced.
02/05/2018 15:20:44	HARRY DANDRIDGE	Leave the monuments as they are.	<p>I FREQUENT THE WASHINGTON DC SMITHSONIAN MUSEUMS ANNUALLY .WHAT'S STRICKING TO ME IS THE DEGREE OF FOREIGNERS VIST TO SEE THE US HISTORY , IN THE SPRING THE SCHOLL BUSES LINE UP FOR MILES .I BELEIVE WHATS LACKING NOT JUST IN THE RICHMOND AREA BUT ALL OF THE SOUTH .PEOPLE JUST WANT TO BE REPRESENTED AND NOT FORGOTTEN .THE HISTORY OF THE NORTH AND SOUTH WAR IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE HOLECOST ERA ,THE GREAT DEPRESSION, AND ALL THE WORLD WARS THAT VIRGINIA NATIVES HAVE SERVED . PEOPLE ARE TIEING EVIL TO HISTORY .JUST CLEARLY TELL HISTORY.THE SLAVERY WAS JUST ONE PART OF WHY THERE WAS A WAR ,IT WAS ALSO THE FIRST DRAFT ,THERE WERE BLACK HEROS IN THE SOUHT AS WELL AS THE NORTH .</p> <p>RICHMOND CAN BENEFIT FROM A HISTORY MUSEUM (ALL VIRGINIA HISTORY) UNDER ONE ROOF .WE NEED NOT TO TAKE SIDES OR DRAW LINES IN THE SAND INDICATING IMPORTANCE ,JUST STATE THE FACTS .</p> <p>FYI - I'M AFERICAN AMERICAN BY MAN STANDARDS ,BUT CHOOSE TO BE A CHRISTAIN AMERICAN ,NOT DEMOCRATE OR REPUBLICAN . I SERVED IN THE US ARMY (SGT) AND CURRENTLY MINISTER TO THE POOR IN THINKING . LETS NOT JUDGE PEOPLE OR TAKE SIDES WITH THEM ,ALL PEOPLE WILL PERISH FOR THE LACK OF WISDOM .YOU CAN'T HAVE WISDOM WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE ,AND YOU CAN'T HAVE KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT THE WILLINESS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL PEOPLE</p> <p>REV. HARRY L. DANDRIDGE JR</p>

02/06/2018 14:29:48	Elizabeth Silverstein	Leave the monuments as they are., Add context to the monuments., Add more monuments to Monument Avenue.	It is best to add context to the current Monuments and to add Monuments that are more inclusive to today's society. However, all out removal is a waste of funds.
02/08/2018 17:04:22	Deborah Smith	Leave the monuments as they are., Add context to the monuments., Add more monuments to Monument Avenue.	I grew up in the 50s and 60s riding down Monument Avenue several times a week. I enjoyed the monuments for their artistic beauty and as a piece of the history of Richmond. My heart would break today if I drove there and saw no monuments. They are a piece of my childhood too. I understand that times have changed greatly and we all need to move forward, but let's not decimate our past just because it makes us uncomfortable. Let's add some new pieces of history today. There must be some highly successful people from Richmond who deserve a statue.
02/10/2018 10:12:39	Elizabeth O'Leary	Leave the monuments as they are., Add context to the monuments., Add more monuments to Monument Avenue.	<p>A NEW LAYER OF MEANING</p> <p>In considering the appearance of Monument Avenue going forward in the 21st century, I propose keeping the Confederate monuments in place but adding components that would lend a new layer of historical meaning.</p> <p>Encircle each monument with natural, rough-hewn granite monoliths, anchored in the ground with little space between them. They would come in approximately three sizes, placed randomly, measuring between 4 to 6 feet tall and 8 to 12 inches diameter. The tops of all would be chipped into varied angles.</p> <p>The monoliths, forming an added conceptual monument, would number 500. Each stone would represent 1000 of the approximately half-million enslaved men, women and children sold from the auction blocks of Richmond between 1790 and 1860. After installation one would not be able to view the monuments without also seeing the encircling stones. Visually, the monoliths would contain and constrain the sculptures, in effect "pinning" them in place. The Confederate figures would no longer exhibit latent energy or agency.</p> <p>The stones would be excavated, shaped, and donated from quarries across the former Confederate states. Because of the plentiful natural resource, extra stones can be acquired and stored for any needed replacements. A layer of on-site and electronic didactics would be developed to interpret the installation.</p> <p>Options: Randomly incise several of the stones with names, e.g. "Priscilla, age 13," "John Walker, age 60," "Caesar, age 28." Incise others with traditional African symbols for concepts such as strength, justice, and learning from the past.</p> <p>Install two related ceremonial stone circles, one at Shockoe Bottom and the other at the Richmond Africa Burial Ground. These would have the monoliths spaced apart so visitors could move between them and enter the open interior circle for contemplation.</p>

02/15/2018 4:53:59	Rev.Mark Kleen	Relocate the monuments.	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Rev. Mark Kleen and i am looking to purchase some monuments, I will like you to quote me 3 pieces of the price on the below .</p> <p>Upright Monument 2'-0" X 0'-6" X 1'-10" TABLET 3'-0" X 1'-0" X 0'-6" BASE In Loving Memory</p> <p>Laura T. Edison Sara T.Edison Kelvin T.Edison</p> <p>Sep.15.1951 - August .30.2017.</p> <p>A design of a Rose Flower and the color in Black. I need the Pickup Price without installation because the monument will be install out of state.</p> <p>Also let me know the Forms of Payment you Accept, as well as if am making this order with the Manager or Owner.</p> <p>Whats the eta on how long it will take to be ready ones i make payment. I will be awaiting for your response back the soonest.</p> <p>Thank You. Rev.Mark Kleen</p> <p>Ph: 662 254 4538</p>
02/18/2018 16:52:22	James Connors	Leave the monuments as they are., Remove the monuments from Monument Avenue., Add context to the monuments., Add more monuments to Monument Avenue., Relocate the monuments.	<p>On the 2nd of February I mailed a proposal for your consideration concerning the Monument Avenue monuments/statues. Will you kindly confirm that you have received it. I did not provide additional contact information on the cover letter. That information is:</p> <p>Telephone #; 804-878-4970 E-Mail Address: Bombguy24@hotmail.com</p> <p>Thank you for your attention, James L. Connors</p>
02/21/2018 10:47:00	Tony Wharton		<p>Hi. I live in Richmond but work for the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, OH. The foundation does research into issues facing communities across the country and publishes issue guides which help communities work through deliberative decision-making. The foundation is tentatively looking at the monuments issue nationwide as a possible issue guide. Would it be possible for me to sit in on some of the small meetings you have scheduled, strictly as an observer? This could be valuable research for us. We would observe complete confidentiality for all participants -- in fact, I would not even record their names. You can also reach me at 804-337-7158. Thank you!</p>
02/21/2018 11:05:01	Athena Huss	Remove the monuments from Monument Avenue., Add context to the monuments., Add more monuments to Monument Avenue., Relocate the monuments.	<p>I'm in support of moving some of the momuments to a different area (park? museum) and replacing some with a more diverse and modern view of Virginia. The monuments that stay should have signage talking about the historical context of the individual depicted---as should any new monuments.</p>

02/21/2018 11:41:17	Katherine Lynskey	Remove the monuments from Monument Avenue., Add more monuments to Monument Avenue.	I think we need to remove most of the Civil War Monuments since they memorialize a horrible time of suffering in our country. We need to add more Richmonds who have accomplished things not related to the Civil War.
02/21/2018 19:18:39	john taylor	Leave the monuments as they are.	Monuments on historic Monument Ave were funded with private funds and belong to the ages, Maintain them or return them to a public gro
02/22/2018 8:54:34	Lois Sisk	Leave the monuments as they are.	These monuments are part of history of this state. They are precious works of art and a tourist attraction. Richmond has been known as the "City of Monuments" Don't destroy that. Find other ways to address slavery in the past and the present. There are currently more people enslaved world wide than there has been in the past 400 years of our existence. Perhaps efforts should be directed to end that. When I have out of town guests, one of the first places I take them is for a drive down Monument Avenue to see these amazing statues.
02/23/2018 12:43:00	Ryan Ahlgrim		I would suggest leaving all the monuments as they are except one: re-purpose the Jefferson Davis monument by removing his statue to a museum and replacing it with a Richmond African American who opposed the Confederacy. (Leave the pillars and steps, but replace whatever plaques are there currently.) Making such a change to this one monument would be a huge statement to the community and the country, and it would give the whole avenue the "context" it requires. Whereas one may wish to remember the Confederate military leaders who fought with brilliance, Jefferson Davis symbolizes specifically the determination to create a slave-based nation. He must be removed. Perhaps in another generation we will want to replace the Confederate military leaders, but that time is not yet. This also maintains the aesthetic value of the current monuments.

02/25/2018 16:15:32	Patrick Wood	Remove the monuments from Monument Avenue.	<p>Confederate symbols have always been and always will be symbols of white supremacy. Inseparably bound with the Confederate cause: preserving slavery. A brutally cruel system whose lifeblood is the barbaric and only legal or moral justification was the false notion of white supremacy and black inferiority. Counter-arguments of the Confederate cause fly directly in the face of decades of scholarship and close examination of primary texts like the secession documents. These beliefs are grounded in convoluted logic and are the byproduct of arguably the single most successful revisionist history project in United States history. Neo-Confederates, former soldiers, and the Daughters of the Confederacy produced narratives surrounding the Civil War, which purposefully obscured the brutality of slavery and attempted to breathe some nobility into their cause. Their intellectual labor coupled with the violence waged by former Confederates stewarded in generations of terror that led millions to flee north as refugees from terror. Look to the work of Bryan Stevenson as a guide for what ought to replace these symbols. Ta-Nehsi Coates wrote a concise piece in The Atlantic entitled "What this Cruel War Was Over" not too many years ago. While Neo-Confederate myths of a "Great Lost Cause" may be deeply held and locally promoted, the overwhelming modern historical consensus points to slavery as the primary cause for secession and the Civil War. I urge those in the community who are passionate about US History to revisit the secession documents, the available Confederate state's casus belli, or read the work of historians like Doris Kearns Goodwin, Eric Foner, James W. Loewen, Edward H. Sebesta, Edward Ayers, and many others. Their scholarly analysis is not based in wild speculation of what Confederate leaders thought at the time but a much closer analysis of the primary sources and their contradictions with the prevailing consensus in the years after the war. These monuments were erected and preserved by years of domestic terrorism by restful whites against freed slaves and their descendants. Extreme violence that enforced the racial code that after the "Plessy v. Ferguson" decision became codified in a system of legal segregation known as Jim Crow. Those statues were not morally ambiguous to black southerners in the immediate post-reconstruction years. They were signs they lived in a land hostile to their humanity and committed to their perpetual subjugation. The racial demographics of this country are shaped by generations of racist domestic terrorism symbolically guarded by these symbols and a whitewashed convoluted logic that protected them. Taking down statues would only be the first step to a dedicated process of truth and reconciliation that re-centers victims of extreme violence in history. Instead of mourning the fantasies of racist slaveholders we should be honoring those who died in their fight against it. There's no way to "add context" to tools of oppression. For our public squares to be reflective of this city's values all of the statues must go.</p>
02/27/2018 9:21:17	David Adamson	Leave the monuments as they are.	<p>Monuments are added as history necessitates. They form the story of our great city. The story continues but can never be rewritten. New monuments will be added and they should be protected just like the existing monuments should be protected and left in place.</p>

02/27/2018 15:27:30	Rachel Kidwell		<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>My name is Rachel Kidwell, and I'm a senior student journalist for the Robertson School of Media and Culture at VCU. I'm writing a piece aimed at publication concerning Richmond's Monument Ave. and the Confederate monuments all around Virginia in general, and I would love to talk to someone on the Monument Avenue Commission to get some input on what's going on with the city's monuments. If there's any possibility I could interview someone on this commission just about how the commission works, the purpose of it, and other general Monument Ave. knowledge, please let me know! The interview would not take longer than 45 minutes to an hour, and I am available to meet at anyone's convenience, at any location. If not in person, I am available for phone interviews as well, my number is: (540) 422-1799. Please feel free to contact me by phone or by this email (kidwellre@vcu.edu), I look forward to further communicating.</p> <p>Thanks, Rachel Kidwell</p>
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Bringing Context to Richmond's Monument Avenue

To Members of the Monument Ave. Commission:

I am very passionate about the current discussion regarding the monuments on Monument Ave. and I wish to share my thoughts on the matter. I hope to see my concept discussed at one of your meetings or at least to get feedback from the Commission.

Having grown up in Richmond and lived here for over 60 years, I've always wondered why there were only 5 monuments (until Arthur Ashe appeared in the 1990's) on Monument Avenue, when someone had obviously designed an impressive 4 lane Avenue with tree lined medians, stretching 5 miles, from the city into the county. I remember asking my parents "Why they didn't finish it?"

Today I ask, what was the original vision and has there ever been a plan to continue what we have?

So, here we are, trying to figure out how to better inform the existing monuments by adding "context".

Context, as described in Merriam-Webster's online dictionary, best describes my vision:

"the interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs: ENVIRONMENT, SETTING"

Signage alone will not resolve the larger picture of the Civil War and its effect on the city of Richmond. The Civil War is only a portion of our history. It needs to be included in a larger context illustrating other events and people who helped shape the story of our city, thus lessening the impact of the statues that speak to some of a bad time in history and yet will always remind us of a period none of us want to return to.

Monument Avenue is the perfect venue to illustrate the Story of Richmond and bring all of us together to acknowledge where our society has been, what brought us to where we are today and, where we may go in the future.

Having worked at Virginia Commonwealth University for almost 11 years, Dr. Rao's message of inclusiveness is strong, and with the school's extraordinarily diverse population and commitment to equality, this mindset has become a sense of culture for all of us who work and attend school here. I'd like to see this mindset spread throughout our city.

With all of this in mind, I recommend that the city continue the intent of our Grand Avenue by adding monuments dedicated to others and to events, which have been instrumental in the development of our city and our culture, and will help illustrate our story, such as:

Development of the First Streetcar

William Byrd I and II, who determined the location of the city and provided original planning

Maggie Walker

Pocahontas

Lewis Ginter

Grace Harris

Wilfred Cutshaw, City Engineer in 1873, responsible for many of the older parks and green spaces within our city

Oliver Hill

02/28/2018 16:32:32	Leah and Christopher Tweel	Add context to the monuments., Add more monuments to Monument Avenue.	<p>Dear Monument Avenue Commission,</p> <p>I submitted a suggestion some time ago and I've since had another idea, one that I feel would truly capture what is needed for our city. Although, I would be in favor of removing the statues, I do believe the unique position of Richmond places in such a challenging juxtaposition that the opposing perspectives on removal will never be adequately resolved by either simply removing them or simply leaving them up.</p> <p>I propose inviting/hiring one or several talented muralists (perhaps those whose work we have already come to appreciate in various locations in the city) to paint a mural over the statues representative of an accurate re-telling, re-framing of Richmond's history. Imagine the Lee statue covered in truthful imagery of the realities of the war of rebellion and the role he played. This would not diminish the towering presence of the piece, but would provide background and more information about the man he was and the choices he made. Additionally, these could continue to generate meaningful tourism and economic activity in Richmond.</p> <p>Grant opportunities such as the Endowment for the Arts Art Works grant could support this project https://www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/art-works/grant-program-description, but I'm sure there are other grants that would also align with a project along these lines. (Potentially something from Virginia Foundation for the Humanities http://www.virginiahumanities.org/grants/ -- along with a series of talks or lectures?) Feel free to contact me especially if an idea like this is selected, I would love to participate in some way as I have a background in art, museums, libraries and grant writing.</p> <p>Thanks for seeking and researching this issue to provide some much needed re-framing to Richmond's history. Leah Tweel</p>
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