**Freedom Wall Stakeholder’s Meeting**

**March 10, 2021 at 4:30 PM**

**Meeting Notes**

**In Attendance:** Samantha White (ESGW), Audrey Clark (MSAAHCC) Kat Massey, Paula Quesinberry, Adam Fogel, McKayla Mulhern, Sydney Collins, Constance Strother, Darren Kempner, Helen Tederous, Sandra Williams Bush, Anthony Wiley, Juweria Dahir, Oswaldo Mestre, Carolyn Lee.

1. **Intro of Project by Samantha White.**
	1. Samantha speaks about how the area surrounding the freedom wall is not up to the standards of the icons represented and introduces Lynn King, local attorney and mediator who will facilitate the meeting.
2. **NFTA Involvement -** Samantha Opens meeting with introduction of Darren Kempner from NFTA.
	1. Darren updates that Senator Kennedy’s support has let them begin design for the improvements surrounding the freedom wall. They will bring a proposal to hire Watts engineering at their next board meeting in March so that Watts can begin the process of incorporating our ideas into their design. Watts was chosen because they have worked with them before, and they are a MWBE.
3. **Community Input Section** led by Moderated Lynn King
	1. **RainCheck -** Sydney Collins talks about BSA and RainCheck. Rain Gardens absorb street water and help beautify the space without taking away from the art. Pervious Pavement and pavers that absorb water to prevent flooding and ice buildup could be an excellent addition to the area. She suggests porous concrete
	2. **Quotes in Pavers –** Kat Massey suggests “ Imbed short quotes -- by some individuals on the Wall – into the sidewalks near the Wall. It could be similar to the metal stars containing the names of people associated in the realm of Theater works located near the Theater District’s sign. Example: “If they don’t give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair. (SHIRLEY CHISHOLM) Also, on Michigan Ave., near Genesee St., are Underground Railroad references implanted into sidewalks which are in the flavor of my suggestion.”
		1. Mr. Mestre suggests using the pavers for fundraiser. People can sponsor them and add their names. These could be a way to have sustainability.
	3. **Senator Kennedy Update -** Adam Fogel talks about the intent behind Senator Kennedy’s intent. The Senator doesn’t want throw paintings up on the wall and walk away, which is exactly what has happened. He wants everyone to know that he believes the space deserves beautiful landscaping and supports this project.
		1. Mr. Mestre adds the city feels the same way. He wants to express how relevant this project and work is. The Freedom Wall has become a destination, but it still is a sort of a “drive-by” spot. Could be better. Lynn notes that people want have this be a destination where people can spend time.
	4. **Plaques** - Sandra Bush – an observation that the informational plaques describing the artwork and people featured in them are small. She suggests we add a virtual component. Lynn suggests QR codes. Mr. Mestre mentions Pride and Place Idea Boxes and adding QR codes to all over the east side. Sam wants the site to have visitors leaving feeling empowered. Anthony Wiley states that he cannot really see the freedom wall when he drives by. Sandra says that plaques are much more visible when you are walking. Sandra notes parking is difficult.
	5. **Benches & Seating** - Carolyn Lee reiterates that the area needs seating despite what others said so that older individuals can enjoy the space. Lynn asks if there is a way to compromise with the artists who don’t want seating. Carolynn Lee stresses that most people want to stop and look at the wall for a couple minutes so seating is important.
		1. Constance is a rep for WNYUAC states the artists aren’t against seating but suggest having it across the street in a “parkette.” She also suggests concrete markers below the murals as a platform to pose with the artwork. Carolyn Lee asks if the city would consider giving up some of the street for a sitting space. Sam says they are called “bump outs” to increase sidewalk space. Sam suggests backless benches to comprise with the elderly and the artists. Carolyn Lee says she would be open to it. Sam asks Helen what sort of benches the NFTA uses. They use benches with spaces to prevent people from sleeping on them. Helen has historic benches from some famous Chicago designer that are used in the Utica Station. Sam suggests creating our own artist benches that match the artists needs. Constance says that John Baker and James have done benches for the Rain Garden in the Northland Work Force. McKayla mentions that the AARP grant for placemaking and benches. She also notes how they will be including this into future projects sponsored by the senator. Sandra Bush suggests the lot across from the street for benches.
		2. **Benches Summary**: Lynn recaps that we need to target two under served communities: the elderly and the hearing impaired/non English speakers. Having benches and a virtual aspect would help address these concerns.
	6. **Lighting & Safety** - Lynn raises questions about lighting and safety and maintenance. Sydney suggests that getting a block club involved in the gardening to help create a sense of community ownership over the space.
	7. **Wayfaring** - Sam suggests having a wayfinding sign that leads to the freedom wall and gives a QR code or website for more information. Adam says that the senator would likely support wayfinding signs.
	8. **Meeting Closure** – Lynn thanks everyone for their attendance and welcome participants to the next meeting scheduled for **April 8, 2021** at 4:30 PM