



Loudoun County, Virginia

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NEWS RELEASE

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Heritage Commission Presents Report and Recommendations to Board of Supervisors

The Loudoun County Heritage Commission presented its extensive research on the history of the Loudoun County Courthouse grounds to the Board of Supervisors during the June 4, 2019, meeting. The presentation included recommendations for future memorials, monuments, statues and interpretative historical displays.



The Board accepted the Heritage Commission's recommendation to publish on the Loudoun County website the historical narrative developed by members of the Heritage Commission. The text also will be made available to the public in Loudoun County Public Library branches.

The Board forwarded the Heritage Commission's other recommendations to a future Finance, Government Operations and Economic Development Committee meeting so that the Board may discuss them in greater detail. The recommendations are:

- Allocating funds and directing staff to pursue National Historic Landmark status for the courthouse;
- Naming the old or new courthouse after prominent African-American attorney Charles Hamilton Houston;
- Creating an interpretive "Path Toward Freedom" walk on the courthouse grounds; and
- Implementing a professionally-facilitated community process to design and place memorials along the interpretive walk honoring "Loudoun County's path to freedom and justice."

In September 2017, the Board of Supervisors directed the Heritage Commission to review the "full historic significance" of the courthouse grounds and its statues and to make recommendations on additional memorials "to fully reflect the history of the grounds and Loudoun County."

Members of the Heritage Commission subcommittee who worked on the project met 20 times over a 16-month period. They worked with experts and members of the community who provided insight and technical assistance, including the Black History Committee of the Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Douglass Alumni, Carver Alumni, and the Loudoun Freedom Center. They also invited experts to conduct a peer review of the historical narrative.

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The Heritage Commission's scope of work did not include recommendations about any current memorials or statues. Virginia state law, [Va. Code § 15.2-1812. Memorials for war veterans](#), states that it is "unlawful for the authorities of the locality, or any other person or persons, to disturb or interfere with any monuments or memorials..."

The Heritage Commission's report, *The History of the County Courthouse and its Role in the Path to Freedom, Justice and Racial Equality in Loudoun County*, is posted online at loudoun.gov/CourthouseHistory

The Heritage Commission is one of dozens of advisory bodies whose members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The Heritage Commission advises the Board on issues regarding the county's heritage resources and the implementation of the Countywide Heritage Preservation Plan. The Heritage Commission supports and encourages the identification, documentation, protection and preservation of the county's natural and cultural heritage.

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