

Land Use, Housing and Transportation Standing Committee  
11/21/17

re: Res. 2017-R075

Dear Mrs. Gray, Mrs. Larson, Mrs. Richardson,

Any decision to put this resolution before City Council will implode our peaceful city into another Charlottesville. Despite the rhetoric otherwise, the city will place its Monument Avenue citizens and public art in further peril which could very well lead to loss of life as demonstrated in Charlottesville.

This resolution does not reflect the majority of the residents of Richmond or the Commonwealth that have strongly vocalized their heartfelt desires to keep the statues and leave them alone, as shown in poll after poll and in petition after petition, even after Charlottesville. Despite this, special interest groups continue to divide our community on political and corporate agenda based falsehoods.

The resolution states in part, "that historical figures associated with the Confederate States Of America such as these five statues on Monument Avenue continue to inspire racial division," further, "these five statues on Monument Avenue were constructed during an oppressive era in Virginia's history and remain tangible symbols of that oppression."

To the contrary, the statues were erected to honor the men that fought during America's greatest struggle, the War Between The States, and reflect the quite normal process of a generation's veteran's groups, Memorial associations and citizenry that were reflecting on their legacy in world history. The WW11 Museum in Before, VA, The Vietnam Memorial in DC, were ALL ERECTED LONG AFTER THE CONFLICTS. That is the natural way that veteran groups express themselves to future generations and are in no way shape or form divisive or oppressive.

The insidious idea that modern political episodes, such as the civil rights struggle, are somehow projected in those statues or any veteran statues is a complete false statement. If this is true, then we must also immediately remove the Maggie Walker Memorial as today's NAACP, is NOT yesterdays.

Mr. Jone's resolution places the blame of Charlottesville onto these statues. In fact, it is not the statues, it is rather political groups that have been operating, such as the NAACP and Southern Poverty Law Center to use these statues as a flash points to obtain their political agendas, that have misused this history every day. The complete breakdown of the police in Charlottesville and the orders they received reflect the violence in Charlottesville, not public art.

Mr. Jones inability to hold the Mayor of Charlottesville and City Council responsible for the violence in Charlottesville, shows a politician's inability to provide factual answers in Charlottesville, while hypocritically creating another Charlottesville here in his own city that has already cost the city minimally, over \$500,000. Rather than lead this city in peace, the commission's mandate and its supporters are the culprits to blame.

Politicians such as the hypocritical Ben Jones, an alleged reverend, are not only ignoring the will of the majority, but are intentionally racially dividing our communities via bronze statues. Mr. Jones has no real time solution to the massive gun violence irrupting throughout the black community and has derailed needed leadership to focus resources to resolve that threat. Instead, he has divided us all on historical falsehoods.

Mayor Stoney is also creating this racial divide by dividing us on our personal understanding of the Civil War.

I also speak as a professional fine artist, graphic designer and manufacturer. The attempt to remove historic public artwork or alter these statues in anyway will split our city into a racially divided city. The groups involved in dividing our community upon racial lines, have focused all their resources on creating outrageous lies regarding the historical artifacts that have become the pawns in their hypocritical political agendas.

Monument Avenue is a National Historic Landmark and International Tourist Destination. It encapsulates a foreign government that reflects Richmond's pivotal role in the War Between The States. Like no other work of art worldwide, would any people have created such a beautiful grand avenue for this famous city, other than the former Confederate citizen's, soldiers, sailor's, marines and Statesmen. They did this in after dismal defeat to preserve the significance of Richmond in world history. Contrary to the myth hypothesized by the slanderous media and completely hypocritical propaganda publications such as the Virginia Defender and Style Weekly, these statues do not oppress or offend anyone. Perhaps the Virginia Defender should march on DC requesting the end of the current 2 billion in aid to Egypt, since Egypt benefited from the African slave trade?

The idea that historic public art has to reflect current cultural trends is simply ridiculous. Perhaps the mayor or Mr. Jones should meander around Rome and reorganize the ruins there and see what happens. Monument Avenue is an open air museum that needs no further alterations or "contextualization." Art in fact as always, speaks for itself. This is why people from all around the world come to this famous avenue. To marvel at the most beautiful avenue and urban landscape in America while walking through an open air museum. No one comes to see fairy tail story lines created by social elites such as Mrs. Driggs' fumbling the avenue with her completely out of context suggested artwork for historic public art replacements. Her suggestions reflect her complete ineptitude in urban landscape planning.

The only myth on the avenue is the hateful voices that bear no relevance to true social justice issues. In fact, they are chasing benign statues with no real relevance to today's real issues on any topic. They are simply dividing our communities through their racially motivated divisiveness, in an attempt to disguise their hidden political agendas.

The massive loss of tax revenue and economic impact will further plunge our city in loss from not capitalizing on the significance of Richmond's leading role in history. The historic district will collapse and the law suits that will face the city will continue for years as property owners try to recoup their losses.

Compounding this is the complete collapse of the civil war industry that not only sits in ruin, but is actually participating in the removal attempt of the grandest avenue in America. The ACWC, VHS and Valentine are all corrupt in their forcing of non historic marketing and social agendas onto the back of a National Historic Landmark and International tourist destination. Their storyline myths do not resonate with the civil war industry consumers that they claim they represent. Therefore, they have to further expand their mythology onto some of the most significant statuary related to America's greatest struggle, the Civil War.

Where is the deed to the Museum of the Confederacy? Did City council approve the sale of part of the property to MCV that seems to contradict the terms as stated in the covenants from the City to the

Confederate Memorial Literary Society? How many millions were lost that apparently should have gone to maybe the schools that have not been updated in 50 years or to maybe stop a bullet passing through school busses?

How could the ACWC participate in a commission that is going to remove artifacts that they themselves placed by name on Monument Avenue?

This is complete self absorbed arrogance.

The massive loss of revenue the Mayor's Commission's mandate has caused the city is probably already over 1 million. Please show us the proven track record of the Mayor, or Mr. Jones in actually creating jobs or an economy. I see the total idiocy of hypocrites that care nothing about the city or the truth or our economy. I see no comprehension of long term planning as demonstrated in the recent bus line through the broad street corridor that will result in loss business and no consideration of water/sewer/drainage that will end up on the pedestrians that are soaked wet as they leave half filled restaurants.

This resolution is not teaching history, social justice, the truth, or any other positive term you could dream up. It is nothing less than racially divisive rancor that will have no material effect on the real problems facing Richmond and it's residents. It creates racial divide where no exists.

This resolution and the mayor's commission mandate, also ignores the historical record of minority participation for the Confederacy including free and slave blacks and ultimately, Southern Emancipated blacks that were lining up in Richmond to fight under the battle flag of the Confederacy, "until the bitter end." What about their story that the ACWC has intentionally covered up as demonstrated in the removal of 2 very loyal black employees with Confederate heritage? The untold story of the 2 blacks that refused to drink the koolaid of Ed Ayres faith based mythology.

Jesus came to heal and make whole and bring peace. Mr. Jones's resolution contradicts the tenets of his alleged faith and I say this as a former Southern Baptist Student Missionary. "Cast the first stone." I further state to Mr. Jones, "Do not bear false witness."

The Maggie Walker statue is not just a statue, it says, "The Maggie Walker Memorial." Are we as a society going to remove anyone's memorial because others do not appreciate or understand somebodies else's memorials and monuments?

Please consider the consequences of your actions today.

Respectfully,

Ron Moore

