

Willa Cather National Statuary Hall Selection Committee Meeting

Friday, March 11, 2022

11:30 – 12:30 p.m. CST

Dr. Don R. Gerlach Capitol View Room & Zoom

Minutes

Chairman Hull began the meeting at 11:34 a.m. by stating that a notice to the press had been given, and that compliance with the Open Meetings Act has been satisfied. Chairman Hull welcomed guests and advisors to the Willa Cather National Statuary Hall Selection Committee meeting.

Roll Call

Present: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Trevor Jones, Jim McKee, Aaron Wyatt

Not Present: None

Aide to Committee: Anne Dorsheimer

Guests and Advisors to the Committee:

Ashley Olson, Executive Director, Willa Cather Foundation

Ruth Haley Keene, Member, Willa Cather Foundation

Littleton Alston, Sculptor

Mike Zeleny, Chief of Staff, Chancellor's Office, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Katie Brossy, Akin Gump, Strauss, Hauer, & Feld, LLP

Motion to approve the minutes on January 28, 2022.

Motioned by Sara Crook

Seconded by Tim Heller

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Jim McKee, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Abstain: Trevor Jones

Not Present: None

Motion Adopted

Discuss potential authorization of sculptor to produce a bust of the Willa Cather statue for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) library, and to discuss potential authorization of the artist to proceed with the production of additional full-scale figures or bust editions:

Littleton Alston:

Littleton asked for approval from the Committee for the Willa Cather bust for the UNL library, and anything done regarding Willa Cather will be done after the installation and unveiling in Washington, D.C. and it is made public, as well as, hopefully, large scale figures of Willa Cather. Littleton

stated that time is of the essence as the sculpture's molds have a shelf life of only a couple of years. Approval of additional full size statues now will help with planning and fundraising efforts from interested parties.

Full scale works that Littleton anticipates:

- Willa Cather Foundation
- The Museum of the Shenandoah in Winchester, Virginia
- Sculpture for Centennial Mall in Lincoln

Executive Session to discuss contracts

Motion by Trevor Jones to go into Executive Session with members of the Willa Cather National Statuary Hall Selection Committee to discuss contractual matters related to this request

Seconded by Aaron Wyatt

Chairperson Hull clarified that Advisors and Guests will need to step away from Zoom and come back.

Present: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Trevor Jones, Jim McKee, Aaron Wyatt

Not Present: None

Motion Adopted

Executive Session started at 11:45 a.m. and ended at 11:57 a.m.

Motion by Sara Crook for members of the Willa Cather National Statuary Hall Selection Committee to come out of Executive Session

Seconded by Aaron Wyatt

Present: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Trevor Jones, Jim McKee, Aaron Wyatt

Not Present: None

Motion Adopted

Motion by Trevor Jones to authorize Littleton Alston to create a larger than life bronze bust of Willa Cather for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, using the original plaster molds, not to be unveiled before the unveiling of the statue in Washington, D.C. and with proper credit referencing the original statue in Washington, D.C.

Seconded by Aaron Wyatt

Present: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Trevor Jones, Jim McKee, Aaron Wyatt

Not Present: None

Motion Adopted

Motion by Trevor Jones to authorize Littleton Alston to produce full sized copies and/or busts made from the original plaster molds for the statue in Washington, D.C., contingent that none of these will be unveiled before the original statue is unveiled in Washington, D.C., and that proper credit is given to the original statue.

Seconded by Aaron Wyatt

Present: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Trevor Jones, Jim McKee, Aaron Wyatt

Not Present: None
Motion Adopted

Trevor Jones will write up two authorization documents based on the votes to provide Littleton Alston official permission as specified in the contract. Trevor also clarified that in a previous legal agreement, the Committee authorized the Willa Cather Foundation to sell maquettes and receive profit from the sale of those maquettes, and it is still the intent of the Committee that this be done and any proceeds benefit the Willa Cather Foundation. Trevor stated that it is the Committee's hope that the sale of the busts and full-length statues will help that effort, and that increased interest in Willa Cather should benefit the Willa Cather Foundation.

Katie Brossy's Update:

Katie stated that the statue of Lafayette was unveiled in the U.S. Capitol. An unveiling is a positive sign and a good indication that we are moving back to a realm of normal in Washington, D.C.

Katie circulated a draft program and a guest wish list. She asked for feedback from the Committee, and if there is anyone we can take off the list or should add? She recommended that if we keep providing information to the Speaker's office to demonstrate progress and keep us on the radar.

Chairperson Hull thanked Katie and asked if it can be done this summer? Katie responded that we should press for June or July, which is the earliest possible it could take place. Otherwise, we will look to the fall or end of the year.

Littleton stated he has talked with rigging companies, and they recommended he transport the statue to Washington now. The rigging company is willing to store the statue and base free of charge. He will confirm that this is possible and move forward.

Katie noted that Dr. Cohen from the Architect of the Capitol's office may be able to cover the cost of moving the statue if it unveiled in Emancipation Hall and then moved.

Sub-committee for the Reception – Chair, Dr. Sara Crook

Sara noted that the subcommittee hasn't gone any further, pending a date. Ashley Olson sent her a mockup of their reception booklet. She'll call for a reception subcommittee meeting within the next month and they will go over the booklet and fine tune it, and then bring it back to the full Committee for final approval. Sara thanked Ashley for the draft booklet.

Sub-committee for the Invitation list – Chair, Aaron Wyatt

Aaron stated that their subcommittee met and started to group individuals on the list, whether it was UNL or the historical society or family descendants. There is no progress yet with regard to an order being established yet out of the 300 individuals on the list. Aaron spoke to Katie in order to get an understanding of how the lists were transferred or coordinated with the Speaker's office and update accordingly and based on what they received from the congressional delegation.

Katie Brossy clarified for Aaron that for the Standing Bear list, there were two lists: the reception/dedication list, and the dedication list, which were one and the same.

Aaron had asked if they did invite more people to the reception than they invited to the actual ceremony? The answer was, there was no difference and it was the same list. There had been discussion regarding inviting more people to the reception, but that is not the way the Standing Bear event did it. For us there could be potentially be three separate lists: dedication, reception, and the-night-before event hosted by the Willa Cather Foundation.

Katie reiterated that the Standing Bear lists were dictated by space, because Statuary Hall was identical to space allowed in the congressional atrium where we held the post-unveiling reception. It was 200 for both, so they just used the same invitation list. The night before, they hosted a celebration at the law office, which included a slightly different list. She concluded that it's up to the Committee, whether to have two or three different lists.

Ruth Haley Keene spoke with Judi Gaiashkibos and she stated that everyone invited to the Dedication is invited to the Reception. So, there would be one invitation for that group and then another invitation for the Willa Cather Foundation party the night before.

Sara Crook noted that it would be awkward to invite people to the dedication and not the reception immediately following, and that the cap should be same. Katie agreed with this. If a person gets to go to either, then a person gets to go to both. There was consensus within the Committee on this point.

Sub-committee for Dedication Ceremony – Chair, Ron Hull

Chairperson Hull mentioned he had a discussion with Mike Zeleny about contact info for Gabrielle Union. Mike continues to work on it.

Chairperson Hull received consent from Rod, Ashley, and Tim to speak with Laura Black, a local person, who could read a passage from Willa Cather at the Dedication.

Chairperson Hull asked Katie how soon would we need the exact wording of the Dedication ceremony for the Speakers office? Katie cited that we would not need specific language until they picked a date. She did, however, note that if we send an invitation list of preferred people now, even if it is just a draft, with justification as to why certain speakers are included, then we can start that conversation. The order of preference is: Former First Lady Laura Bush, Gabrielle Union, and Laura Black.

Chairman Hull asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Rod Bates

Seconded by Aaron Wyatt

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Trevor Jones, Jim McKee, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Not Present: None

Motion Adopted

Willa Cather National Statuary Hall Selection Committee Meeting adjourned at 12:29 p.m.