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## President's Advisory Panel on University Namings and Recognitions

February 14, 2018

Turnbull Conference Center, Room 103

9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

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### Panel Attendees:

#### Members

Renisha Gibbs- Chair

Miguel Hernandez

Maxine Jones

Karen Bearor

Walter Moore

Norman Anderson

Janet Stoner

Robyn Jackson

Kyle Hill

Lane Forsman

Allisson Yu [via phone conference]

Kyle Doney [via phone conference]

#### Support Staff

Elizabeth Hirst

Danni Staats

Rebecca Peterson

### **The meeting began at 9:02 a.m.**

#### 1. Welcome

Renisha Gibbs, Panel Chair, welcomed the panel to the meeting. She indicated the main goal of the meeting was to work through the logistics for the upcoming Town Halls.

#### 2. Public Comments

Ms. Gibbs stated that the panel would first welcome any public comments. She reminded everyone that the public comments should be three minutes or less.

#### [Comment #1]

Danni Vogt introduced himself as an FSU graduate, class of '77 undergrad, and FSU Law School graduate, class of '84. He stated that he was in support of renaming B.K. Roberts Hall, due to Roberts past support of segregation and his defiance to higher court orders. Mr. Vogt stated that in retrospect, it makes Roberts' name inappropriate for a public building. He mentioned that he had created a website with an overview of the entire situation, hoping that it would go viral, but so far the website only had 200 "hits". He stated that of the 200 "hits", several people had submitted petitions in support of renaming B.K. Roberts Hall, and he had submitted copies of the petitions

to the Panel Chair, Ms. Gibbs. He indicated that in his review, the majority of people who submitted petitions had stated that they were less likely to give donations to the Law School, even though they were mostly alumni of the Law School, and had attributed this to Roberts' name being on the building. He acknowledged the panel's willingness to reach out and seek public input, stating that he only had contact information for those alumni in his graduating class. He suggested that the panel could get contact information for all Law School alumni, current students and faculty. He stated that to date, he has not found one person that is supportive of keeping B.K. Roberts name on the building. He concluded by stating he hoped the panel would get a broad segment of the community to give their input on the matter.

[Comment #2]

Daniel Clibbon introduced himself as a current student at FSU Law School, currently in his third year, and reminded the panel that he spoke two meetings prior about B.K. Roberts Hall. He stated his purpose was to encourage the panel to hold a public forum or town hall meeting at the Law School. He stated that many current students of the Law School do not know the location of the building [Turnbull Conference Center] that the panel meetings have been held. He indicated that if the panel wanted input from current students, then the panel should hold a public forum located at the Law School. He concluded by stating he thought it would help if the goal of the panel was to get input from as many people as possible and it would be easy to advertise the location of the Law School.

### 3. Eppes Hall/Statue Overview

Ms. Gibbs directed the panel to the next agenda item, indicating that she had asked Sandra Varry, Heritage and University Archivist, to return to provide the panel more specific information on Eppes Hall and Statue as a result of the clarification from President Thrasher for the panel to focus on Eppes Hall/Statue and B.K. Roberts Hall.

Ms. Varry thanked the panel for welcoming her back and stated that she would be presenting on Eppes Hall and Statue, as she had reviewed additional materials and documents on the building and statue.

- *Francis Eppes Hall (Education, Psychology, Criminology), 1918 (Slide 1):*
  - 1995- The Eppes Hall building naming was requested by Ruth Garrett Blich, an alumna and former staff member, in a letter with citations containing information about Francis Eppes.
  - 1997- The name was approved by the Campus Development and Space Committee's Subcommittee on Naming Campus Buildings.
  - 2000 (May)- After the request was made and went to the President and the Board of Regents, the name was approved and a Naming Ceremony took place.
- *Eppes Statue (Slide 2 and 3):*
  - 1999- State of the University Address, President D'Alemberte wanted Florida State University to recognize its unique history, including Francis Eppes and anyone else involved in developing the University during the first 150 years of FSU's history.

- There was little information on the impetus for the statue but there was a “Call for Proposals” in coordination with campus beautification that was sent out in February 2000.
- Four sculptural options were given: Francis Eppes, Transition from FSCW-FSU, The Integration of FSU in 1960’s, and the Forty-Niners.
- Only a few sculptors submitted proposals and it was awarded to Ed Jonas in an MOA signed July 31, 2000.
- The idea was to have the sculpture unveiled for the very first Heritage Day, which took place on January 24, 2002.
- Ed Jonas also did the statue on Landis Green.
- Ed Jonas has some additional information that he did as part of his research for the statue. There have been additional policy documents that will be provided to the panel that gives information on the “how and why” timelines.

Ms. Gibbs asked if the panel had any questions.

[No questions]

Dr. Walter Moore commented that he was aware there were several Eppes Professors and that they may have opinions about what the panel should do with respect to this issue.

Ms. Gibbs stated that the Eppes Professorship had come up at the last meeting, and indicated that the panel would invite those faculty members to town halls so they would have the opportunity to share any input they may have.

Janet Stoner asked at what point it would be appropriate to learn the history of the “person”, specifically Francis Eppes or B.K. Roberts, rather than the building or statue history.

Ms. Gibbs clarified that Ms. Stoner was requesting to learn about the background of the specific person. She stated that it could be added to the agenda and researched to be discussed after the town halls were held.

#### 4. Proposed Town Hall Schedule

Ms. Gibbs stated that she and Danni Staats, support staff, had been working to identify venues and dates for the town hall schedule. She clarified that they had a tentative schedule, not yet ready for distribution, which needed to be discussed. She stated the tentative schedule had a forum held at the Law school, and the dates being reviewed were for the week of February 26<sup>th</sup> and the week of March 5<sup>th</sup>. She stated there would be a total of five forums, and they had identified time at the Alumni Center, the Law School, and the Student Life Center. She clarified that arrangements for a town hall at the Eppes Building and the Black Student Union [BSU] House were still pending, but that they were looking at a few different options and would continue to work on it. She also clarified that they planned to schedule times in the morning, afternoon, and evening, in order to provide flexibility for a variety of schedules to accommodate as many as possible and that the tentative schedule would hopefully be finalized that week. She asked the panel for confirmation

that they were supportive of the schedule being finalized “offline” and that it sounded consistent with their goals.

[Panel agrees]

Ms. Stoner verbally confirmed that the plan sounded reasonable and she was supportive.

Allison Yu confirmed that the plan made sense to her and she thought it was generous to offer five different sessions.

Miguel Hernandez stated he was supportive of the plan as well, but asked if the locations would have technology accessible in order to provide a way for people located out of town to attend via live stream, if needed.

Ms. Gibbs stated that she was not sure, but she would look into it and they would figure that out. She asked if there were any other questions or comments.

[No questions or comments]

Ms. Gibbs stated that they would move forward with finalizing and asked that the panel members confirm which forums, if any, they planned to attend, once those dates/times were communicated.

## 5. Proposed Town Hall Communications

Ms. Gibbs asked that the panel review the draft communication for the town halls and send feedback to Ms. Staats. She clarified that the communication would go out in various forums which have already been identified by the panel, but that it would be tailored slightly to meet the needs of each group. She asked the panel to review and ensure that that draft was consistent with the panel’s intent.

Ms. Stoner indicated she thought the communication was well prepared and consistent with questions the panel would like to hear comments on. She asked if the panel was considering a few minutes set aside for position statements from the panel to the audience before public comments.

Ms. Gibbs confirmed that the panel would have a statement, and she would make the statement on behalf of the panel as the Chair, but that the statement was not yet drafted. She clarified that the statement would be drafted the following week because she agreed it would be important to frame the discussions, and added that she would be happy to let the panel review the statement ahead of time.

Ms. Gibbs asked for additional comments from the panel.

Dr. Maxine Jones asked how the communications would be distributed.

Ms. Gibbs replied that the plan was to distribute using a variety of means such as a press release, information posted to the website, list serves, and reaching out to individual organizations directly.

She stated that Mr. Hernandez had agree to assist with communicating with student leadership organizations.

Ms. Yu stated she thought the communication was worded well and it was clear as to what information the panel was seeking to understand from the public. She asked if there was a need to put in a request for RSVPs.

Ms. Gibbs responded that the RSVP may not be helpful, as it is often not done by those who are attending and that also people may RSVP and then not end up attending. She stated that they were planning to reserve spaces that could accommodate at least one hundred people, in case a crowd attended the meetings.

Dr. Norman Anderson commented that the RSVP may put up perceptual barriers and people may not understand that they don't have to RSVP in order to attend.

Kyle Doney stated that he looked forward to seeing the responses that came through and whether the panel would agree with the feedback.

Ms. Gibbs stated that the panel had discussed having the feedback be open ended at the town halls and having more specific questions posted on the website. She confirmed that the plan was to draft those questions offline and send out a draft to the panel. She asked that the panel members be responsive to communications and indicated that Ms. Staats would combine all of the feedback for the panel's review.

Ms. Stoner stated that she thought going through the alumni and focusing on the College of Law, and possibly the Black Student Union, would be important.

Ms. Gibbs shared that the Dean of the College of Law had been very engaged and said the Law School's doors were open for the event. She stated they would work with her on contact information for Law School alums. She asked the panel to confirm their flexibility to do some of the planning offline and asked for confirmation that the panel agreed with moving forward on finalizing the schedule and communications.

[Panel agrees]

## 6. Next Meeting Agenda

Ms. Gibbs stated the plan was for the next meeting to be after Spring Break so there was sufficient time to review the feedback received from the town halls. She confirmed that the next meeting would include information on the background of the specific individuals. She asked the panel for other agenda items.

Kyle Hill stressed the importance of receiving information on the biography of the individuals.

Mr. Hernandez stated he would like to review the steps or process related to the procedures the committee needed to follow, such as the process for determining what is in the panel's purview and the process for changing names on buildings designated under the legislature.

Ms. Gibbs responded that the panel would take a position and make a recommendation to President Thrasher. She stated that from there, the President would determine how to implement the recommendation. She offered to have the Chief Lobbyist come speak to the panel. She also mentioned that Mr. Vogt had submitted a packet and that the packet would be sent out a few days following this meeting. She asked if there were any other comments or suggestions.

[No comments].

Ms. Gibbs stressed the importance of the panel members to attending the town halls, as that would be the "meat" of their role. She asked that panel members let Ms. Staats know if there were conflicts and they were unable to attend.

[Meeting adjourned]

**Meeting Ended at 9:34 a.m.**