

Interim Report
of
The Mandela Memorial Commission

July 14, 2021

Jackie Jenkins-Scott and Mary Tiseo
Co-Chairs



June 23, 1990 🌀 JFK Library and Museum

To Governor Baker, Mayor Janey, and the Clerks of the House and Senate, in partial fulfillment of the charge issued to us by Chapter 1 of the Resolves of 2016, we submit to you an interim report describing the activities of our commission to date as well as our intentions for the future. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this report, serve on this commission, and inform you of the current state of our affairs.

Said Chapter 1 instructs a special commission to study the opportunity for establishing an appropriate memorial to Nelson Mandela, commemorating his visit to Boston in 1990:

Resolved, that there shall be a special commission to consider the viability of establishing a designed space or facility on the Esplanade, Madison Park high school or another location in the city of Boston to commemorate the visit of Nelson Mandela to the city of Boston in June 1990 and the speech given by him on the Esplanade and at Madison Park high school.

The commission shall consult with the department of conservation and recreation and other relevant state or city agencies and shall engage the people of the city of Boston in the consideration of the importance and value of having a space or facility to commemorate Nelson Mandela's visit.

The commission shall consider: (i) the universal nature of Nelson Mandela's message to the city of Boston and to the United States and how to best convey that message through the establishment of the designed space or facility; (ii) the establishment of a design committee and selection process for the design of the space or facility; and (iii) funding options for the designed space or facility.

The commission shall consist of: 2 persons who shall be appointed by the governor; 1 person who shall be appointed by the senate president; 1 person who shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; 1 person who shall be appointed by the senate minority leader; 1 person who shall be appointed by the house minority leader; 1 person who shall be appointed by the mayor of the city of Boston; 1 person who shall be appointed by the Esplanade Association, Inc.; 1 person who shall be appointed by The Boston Society of Architects; 1 person who shall be appointed by South Africa Partners, Inc.; 1 person who shall be appointed by the Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston, Inc.; and 4 persons who shall be appointed by the Mandela memorial committee, 1 of whom shall be an architect or design professional. The members shall select a chair and vice chair of the commission.

The commission shall invite the submission of papers and plans from interested parties and receive testimony from experts and the general public. The commission shall examine designs and the process used to establish comparable spaces in other cities or states and shall submit a detailed report with its proposals and recommendations to the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate, the governor and the mayor of the city of Boston not later

than 18 months after the effective date of this resolve. The clerks of the house of representatives and the senate shall make the report available to the public via the internet. The appointment of the commissioners shall occur within 60 days after the effective date of this resolve. The special commission shall dissolve 60 days after the submission of the report.

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Resolves/2016/Chapter1>

In sum, to date we have accomplished the fact finding elements of our charge: we have consulted with DCR; the city of Boston; many other relevant local officials and stakeholders; and conducted public hearings to hear from members of the public. What remains is the development and implementation of a robust design process.

The following draft report provides historical context to the establishment of the commission; includes more detail on our efforts to date; and enumerates our anticipated opportunities and challenges as we move forward.

Nelson Mandela in Boston.

Nelson Mandela spoke to a crowd of approximately 250,000 at the Esplanade on June 23, 1990; only 4 months after gaining his freedom after 27 years of confinement in South African prisons.

On his first trip to the United States he visited only eight cities. President Mandela chose Boston as one of those cities because of the leadership and support Massachusetts provided to the efforts of countless South Africans striving to overcome repression. Many of those involved in the struggle against apartheid here in the United States knew of Robert F. Kennedy's visit to South Africa in 1966 (during the height of apartheid) and that he had inspired many South Africans with his speeches there. A quote on the monument at Robert Kennedy's grave in Arlington National Cemetery is sourced from a speech ("the ripples of hope speech") given by him in Cape Town, South Africa in 1966:

"It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped each time a man stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others or strikes out against injustice. He sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest wall of oppression and resistance."

Margaret Marshall, now the former Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme

Judicial Court, helped organize Robert Kennedy's visit to South Africa.

Furthermore, many Massachusetts college campuses were the sites of student-led campaigns calling for universities to divest their investments of companies doing business in South Africa. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst was among the first in the country to divest. The City of Boston was the first major city to pass an ordinance that prohibited the city from investing public funds in any institution doing business in South Africa. In 1982, the Commonwealth followed suit and divested its public funds of any companies doing business in South Africa. These campaigns continued through the 1970's and 1980's, supported and encouraged by organizations such as FreeSA (Fund for a Free South Africa) - a foundation here in Boston with an affiliation to the African National Congress, Mr. Mandela's organization. FreeSA members included many South Africans living in Boston and a group of committed American anti-apartheid activists. The efforts of FreeSA and many committed advocates throughout the Commonwealth helped convince Massachusetts to become the first state to withdraw its pension funds from companies that did business in South Africa. In 1986, Congress overrode President Reagan's veto and enacted the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act championed by Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy and Congressman Ron Dellums. Finally Boston had been home to Nelson (and Winnie's) older daughter, Zenani ("Zeni"), who with her husband, Musi, had been a student at Boston

University for a number of years.

For those of us that shared in this special day, it was also a day of real significance for the citizens of Boston, as a crowd of racially, ethnically, and economically diverse people came together in a rare (at that time), inclusive event that demonstrated the very best of the city. To the South African mind, and to many in the Boston area, the ties that bind Massachusetts and South Africa are significant and continue today through South Africa Partners (the successor to FreeSA) and numerous other organizations.

In this context a memorial for Nelson Mandela's visit to Boston is certainly appropriate. Nelson Mandela had three (3) principal events during the day he spent in Boston on June 23, 1990:

(1) The first was a speech to the students, staff and parents as well as many members of the African-American Community at the Madison Park High School in Roxbury;

(2) a luncheon at the John F. Kennedy Library in Columbia Point (hosted by the entire Kennedy clan, including Senator Edward Kennedy and Jacqueline Kennedy); and

(3) the open event on the Esplanade in the afternoon – a concert sponsored by Boston business leaders

At the Esplanade, Mr. Mandela thanked Massachusetts saying:

“One day, when our history is rewritten the pioneering and leading role of Massachusetts will stand out like a shining diamond. It was you who supported us when very few knew of our existence; our trials and tribulations. It was you who rallied around our cause at a time when we soldiered on, all by ourselves... You became the conscience of American society - a treasured beacon within and beyond the boundaries of this great nation.”

Each event had its own unique aspects and formed an important part of the day, which culminated in a fundraising event at the Copley Plaza Hotel that evening.

25th Year Commemoration

In 2015 (25 years after the visit of Nelson Mandela to Boston) South Africa Partners, a local non-profit, together with a group of South Africans who had assembled the Mandela Memorial Committee, joined with the Madison Park High School Committee, to hold a commemorative event complete with music, student dancing and speeches from members of the community that had been at the original event (perhaps as a student) 25 years earlier.

The success of this commemorative event in 2015 raised the question of whether a memorial celebrating Nelson Mandela's visit to Boston would be well received by the local citizens and, if so, what would be the proper approach to doing so. Conversations with (then) Representative Byron Rushing and Senator Jason Lewis (South African born) were held over a series of several months in 2015 and 2016. Following those discussions bills were introduced in the Massachusetts House of Representatives and in the Massachusetts Senate (H2929 and S2426) to establish a Commission to conduct initial research on this issue. Eventually the legislation passed by way of a resolution and a Commission was established to do the initial groundwork. Thirteen members were appointed to the Commission including two (2) by the Governor (Jackie Jenkins-Scott and Donna Stewartson), one (1) by the Mayor (Karin Goodfellow) and several by the Legislature. The members of the Commission are listed on Addendum A attached hereto.

The Commission.

The Commission was authorized by its resolution to investigate three (3) particular elements relating to the memorial:

- (i) The universal nature of Nelson Mandela's message to the City of Boston and to the United States and how best to convey that message through the designed space or facility;
- (ii) the establishment of a design committee and the selection for the design of the space or facility; and
- (iii) funding options for the designed space and facility.

The Commission: held several meetings in which many aspects of the resolution were discussed; conducted visits to the three sites that Nelson Mandela had visited in June 1990; held meetings with key stakeholders; and established an Advisory Council to provide input on a variety of issues. The Commission also held a public meeting at the public library in the Upham's Corner district of Boston. The following paragraphs are the interim results of the investigation of the Commission.

The Message of Nelson Mandela.

Much has been written on the message that Nelson Mandela provided to the citizens of South Africa and to the rest of the world, but the Commission felt that his universal message of tolerance of others, the struggle for human freedom and dignity, and a strength in spirit that overcame the worst and most barbaric of circumstances are especially relevant and would need to be a part of any memorial. The Commission felt that these aspects of his belief system continue to be of enormous importance in this country at this time, and hence a memorial to Mr. Mandela would have validity and importance to the citizens of Boston and of the Commonwealth. It would represent an effort on the part of the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to reaffirm our continued desire to offer an environment that fosters equality, tolerance and a determination to see justice prevail. The Commission felt the memorial should be a vehicle for reflection and thought, but at the same time a living and active environment that is visited and used by the people of Boston on a continuing basis. It should serve to inspire all visitors to the memorial to strive for higher ideals and a more inclusive community.

Locations.

The Commission visited and studied three (3) locations that were on Mandela's itinerary. After much discussion the Commission favored a Mandela "walk" approach which would include all three locations and would be based on the present "Freedom Trail" walk provided to visitors to the City. However, the Commission also questions whether this concept might have its limitations and that, therefore, the decision should be delayed at this time by the Commission since the Design Competition may well include all three (or perhaps two) sites (Madison Park High School and the Esplanade) and that the results of that competition should establish whether there would be just one or multiple sites. As to each specific location:

- (1) The Kennedy Library. This is the most confined location since it is controlled by Federal authority and could require a substantial effort (including the involvement of our congressional delegation) to locate a Mandela memorial at the site. The administration of the Library could (and is willing to discuss doing so) locate a small Mandela display aimed at the Kennedy's involvement in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, and which would be principally for educational purposes. The Library has expressed an interest in developing such educational programming particularly if it highlights Mr. Mandela's visit. This could

include, but is not limited to: an on-site educational curriculum that is used each year in June for visiting Boston area High Schools students; podcasts that focus on the visit, Mr. Mandela, and the international anti-apartheid movement in Boston; and additions to the current Library website that could be made available to the public, particularly classroom teachers. This kind of educational programming would not require a design competition and while some financial resources may well be necessary they would be more limited than for other alternative locations.

- (2) The Esplanade. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (“DCR”) owns the Esplanade, requiring involvement of State Government and perhaps the Legislature. Although a large space, this location presents certain challenges to the installation of a memorial as it lacks a firmly identified site that is situated close to the Hatch Shell (where Mandela spoke). Further the DCR is disinclined to support the installation of statues of any kind on the Esplanade. Our meeting with the Director of the DCR which was very cordial and helpful was also realistic as to the possibility of locating the memorial on the Esplanade. It is our recommendation, however, that this avenue should not be abandoned and instead requires additional consideration and effort.
- (3) Madison Park High School. Some of the Commission strongly favored

this site. The Plaza in the front of the school presents as a possible site that could be developed into an active and attractive tree covered plaza. The school as a backdrop and with use by many students (Roxbury Community College is across the road) are all positives. The ledge across the street has potential as well. The financing of this project could be more manageable and potentially this could be integrated into the Boston 2030 program.

Design Sub-Committee.

The Commission feels that the next steps in the process require the establishment of a design sub-committee, and feels that as currently constituted, the commission lacks the necessary expertise to sufficiently run and implement an adequate design process. The Commission itself is currently limited by the presence of only one (1) architect (John Pears) and having only one (1) other member (Karin Goodfellow, the Mayor's appointee) with this kind of experience. As creation of a new committee would require substantial time and perhaps further legislative action, the Commission feels the formal establishment by the commission of a new subcommittee is required for the commission to successfully organize and administer and arrange for a design competition; select a site (or sites); and arrange for the financing and construction of the memorial (or memorials).

In the coming weeks and months the Commission members will evaluate current membership and begin the process of selecting a design sub-committee. The Commission believes the expertise needed for the sub-committee requires the participation of members able to accomplish the following critical tasks:

- (1) draft RFP's and other elements of a competition for the design of the memorial (or memorials),
- (2) administer a design competition, including the judgement of proposals submitted for the competition,
- (3) oversee the construction, administration, and maintenance of, as well as administer and maintain the memorial (or memorials) once installed,
- (4) develop and maintain productive relationships with State Government, ; the Mayor's Office,; the Legislature,; the Boston School Committee; and the Madison Park School Committee, if need be, as well as the other necessary non-governmental stakeholders in this matter,
- (5) raise the funds necessary for the memorial (or memorials), and
- (6) engage, interact and consult with the African-American community, the South African community and other interested parties such as

South Africa Partners in this matter.

The Commission will continue to oversee the process and to eventually deliver a final report with a selected site (or sites) and a proposal regarding finance.

Finances.

The Commission recommends a second sub-committee whose members would have the ability and experience to raise the funds necessary for the memorial (or memorials).

At present the Commission feels that the results of the Design Competition will serve to establish the requirements regarding financing and that few decisions regarding financing could be made until the Commission had determined where and what it has decided to build. Certain choices could require a significant amount of capital to be raised, while others could require much less and permit the memorial chosen to be financed differently. In general the Commission favors private funding if possible, or if public then “creative” funding (for example if a, or the, memorial is at Madison Park, then perhaps through the School Committee). The Commission feels that direct public funding would bring an extra layer of complication to this project.

Ideally, to proceed and ensure success, provision should be made for at least a part-time paid administrative position to provide support to the Commission and to the sub-committee. While individual members did step up and South Africa Partners was able to provide some administrative support to the Commission thus far, the lack of a dedicated staff person slowed down the process of the

Commission's initial efforts.

Conclusion.

We, the Commissioners, of the Mandela Memorial Commission, formally submit this interim report to Governor Baker; Mayor of the City of Boston Walsh; and the Massachusetts State Legislature for due consideration. We are prepared to deliver the report in person should any of the above parties so desire. We appreciate the faith placed in us by the establishment of the Commission and our appointment to it. We are honored to serve the Commonwealth in furtherance of the mission of this Commission.

By: Jackie Jenkins-Scott
Jackie Jenkins-Scott,
Co-Chair, Mandela Memorial Committee

By: Mary Tiseo
Mary Tiseo,
Co-Chair, Mandela Memorial Committee

Addendum A

Mandela Memorial Commission Members

First name	Last name	Appointed by
Frank	Cousins	House Minority Leader
Karin	Goodfellow	Mayor Martin. J Walsh
Maxine	Hart	Mandela Committee
Jackie	Jenkins-Scott	Governor Charlie Baker
Mimi	Jones (deceased)	Mandela Committee
Jason	Lewis	Senate President
Margo	Newman	The Esplanade Association
Geoffrey E.	Norman	Mandela Committee
John	Pears	Mandela Committee
Byron	Rushing	Speaker of the House
Donna M.	Stewartson	Governor Charlie Baker
Mary	Tiseo	South Africa Partners
Darnell	Williams	Senate Minority Leader

Mandela Commission Advisory Council (*in process*)

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Kristine	Glynn	The Victory Group; Suffolk University
Barbara	Brown	African Studies Center, Boston University
Colette	Phillips	CPC Global; GetKonnected
Margaret	Burnham	Northeastern Law School
Reginald	Jean	YMCA of Greater Boston
Marcia	Robertson	Ripples of Hope

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