



LAWRENCEVILLE

GEORGIA

HOOPER RENWICK LEGACY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Tuesday, December 17, 2019
6:00 PM

Third Floor Gwinnett Municipal Association Large Conference Room
70 S. Clayton St, GA 30046

Call to Order

Chairman Bailey recognizing a quorum called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.

PRESENT

Committee Member Theresa Bailey
Committee Member Constance Brown
Committee Member Marlene Taylor Crawford
Committee Member Gary Glenn
Committee Member John Maxey
Committee Member Joyce Moore
Committee Member Gwendolyn Brown Taylor

New Business

1. Review Project History
Lisa Sherman reviewed the timeline of the Hooper Renwick project.

Hooper Renwick Project Timeline

2014 – Hooper Renwick property is acquired by the City of Lawrenceville from Gwinnett County Public Schools.

2015 – The Hooper Renwick facility serves as the offices for Streets & Sanitation and Electric departments.

Winter/Spring 2016 – City of Lawrenceville moves Public Works operations into new facility on West Pike Street and begins focus on SouthLawn development and contract negotiations.

Fall 2016 – City of Lawrenceville begins to receive calls and concerns from the Hooper Renwick community regarding the future of the school building as conceptual plans for a large SouthLawn development are developed.

Spring 2017 – City of Lawrenceville forms the Hooper Renwick Legacy Preservation Committee of 12-members to work through preserving the memory of the African-American community while engaging the SouthLawn project for revitalization of the downtown area.

Summer 2017 – City of Lawrenceville staff meets with the formalized 12-member Legacy Preservation Committee to brainstorm ideas for preserving African American history in Gwinnett.

Fall 2017 – City of Lawrenceville together with the Hooper Renwick Legacy Preservation Committee execute a joint press conference to announce that the City will save the original 12,000 sq-ft Historic Hooper-Renwick School facility.

Winter/Spring 2018 – City of Lawrenceville works to identify structural integrity of the facility, how to approach preservation of the original part of the historic facility and begins execution of that preservation.

Summer 2018 – City of Lawrenceville breaks ground on the SouthLawn development, working with the developer to ensure the preservation of the original structure as demolition of additions begins.

Winter/Spring 2019 – City of Lawrenceville engages Chad Smith, local architect, to assist with building integrity study as well as potential concepts for an integrated Gwinnett County Public Library and African-American cultural civic space on the Hooper-Renwick site. Staff and architect meet with Hooper Renwick Legacy Preservation Committee over a series of 4 meetings to outline their vision and desires for the physical appearance and architectural revitalization of the facility.

Spring/Summer 2019 – City staff engages the County with the agreed upon concepts from the Committee to start putting together an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) that staff can bring back to the committee for review.

Fall 2019 – City staff meets with select members of the Hooper Renwick committee to address concerns for communication and consistency and sets meeting for December 17 to outline status of the project, understand County's involvement, introduce the new district

commissioner, set a regular meeting schedule for 2020 and begin the conversation for long-term visioning of this project.

December 17, 2019 – Meeting date set.

Mayor Judy Jordan Johnson spoke for a few minutes regarding how the committee members were chosen.

2. Update on Project Status

Chuck Warbington gave an update on the renovation project and reviewed the renderings with the committee. (Renderings and memo of the update are attached to the minutes).

3. Discussion with Commissioner Marlene Fosque

Gwinnett County Commissioner Marlene Fosque spoke to the group.

Commissioner Fosque told the group that it was an honor to meet them and how much she appreciates them stepping up to work to save Hooper Renwick.

Commissioner Fosque showed the Committee photos and renderings from the Norcross library to illustrate the various aspects libraries in the Gwinnett County System must have to meet official library standards and to also illustrate how a space could be adapted.

Commissioner Fosque is excited about the solid history the Committee and others in the community can provide regarding Hooper Renwick. She is looking forward to reading the historical documents the Committee has already provided and will continue to provide regarding the far reaching effects Hooper Renwick had on each student, faculty member, parent, and the community at large. She mentioned she could feel the heart behind the Committee members and their connection to Hooper Renwick. Commissioner Fosque mentioned there maybe things we are unable to do due to financial concerns, regulations, etc., but that fundraisers may be possible. One of her suggestions is to coordinate with a museum curator to gather information on how to best preserve the historical items the Committee currently has regarding Hooper Renwick and how best to display them. She also suggested possibly touring other museums to get more ideas on how to display the artifacts, etc.

Commissioner Fosque asked the Committee to consider the following items. What is the overall mission of the Hooper Renwick Museum? How will the museum be sustainable? Are there enough artifacts? In April, we need to have a solid plan together for an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the City of Lawrenceville to be a partner with Gwinnett County.

Dialogue between Commissioner Fosque asking the Committee members questions.

- 1) Commissioner Fosque asked, for someone trying to get a better feel for Hooper Renwick, what stands out?

Chairman Bailey: The Committee members hold the key to the reliable truth regarding Hooper Renwick, we did extensive research about 3-4 years ago, it is vital to capture this history, and the Committee members have the passions and talents necessary.

Committee Member Maxey: The museum is all about the feeling. Guests need to feel they are walking into history.

Committee Member Crawford: It is also important how they feel when they leave so they will invite others to come back with them the next time they visit.

Committee Member Taylor: Every aspect of the museum is important. We need someone that can explain and interpret the history of Hooper Renwick. I can assist with this and Committee Member Brown is willing to assist as well.

2) Commissioner Fosque: What is the focus of the museum?

Committee Member Brown: Our vision encompasses all of the history. Hooper Renwick was the nucleus of the area. It was the only African American school throughout Gwinnett County and we have the documented history.

3) Commissioner Fosque: What about the principals?

The Committee members mentioned they have lots of information in their memories that need to be put down on paper.

Chairman Bailey mentioned there were two buses that bused students from all of Gwinnett County to Hooper Renwick since it was the only school for African American students at the time.

Committee Member Moore mentioned they do not have a complete list of all of the artifacts and they do not have anywhere to store the artifacts safely.

Chairman Bailey confirmed that a list of the artifacts is needed.

Committee Member Maxey said he believes people should give or loan the artifacts to the museum for display. He said the Committee should have legal ownership of the artifacts.

Commissioner Fosque reminded the Committee that the financial details of this capital campaign are still being work out between Gwinnett County and the City of Lawrenceville. She is hoping they can have the subjective costs resolved by April.

Items Commissioner Fosque suggested for the Committee:

- She suggested the Committee consider setting up a foundation to raise funds.
- Contact a curator and ask them about how to tell a story long term.
- Committee to meet at least once a month.

Commissioner Fosque thanked the Committee members for the opportunity to attend the meeting and to work with them on this project.

4. Discussion on 20-year Vision

Lisa Sherman mentioned the following items to be considered as the Committee compiles their historical information.

Organizing the information and artifacts, consider ordering them the way you experienced them. A day in the life of a Hooper Renwick student. Life for African American students in the City of Lawrenceville and Gwinnett County.

5. Set 2020 Meeting Schedule

Chuck Warbington said a doodle poll would be sent out to the Committee members to assist with scheduling a consistent monthly date that would work for majority of the Committee members.

Motion to limit meeting times to two hours made by Committee Member Maxey, Seconded by Committee Member Moore.

Voting Yea: Committee Member Bailey, Committee Member Brown, Committee Member Taylor Crawford, Committee Member Glenn, Committee Member Maxey, Committee Member Moore, Committee Member Brown Taylor.

Executive Session

No Executive Session was held.

Final Adjournment

Chairman Bailey adjourned the meeting at 8:14 pm