MEETING NOTES

Author: Robbi Woodburn

Summary of Comments and
Small Group Input Notes

Date: May 7, 2007

SUMMARY OF COMMON THEMES

MESSAGE: Honor and respect for the people buried there
Create the story of their connection to the community, ie: seaport community,
contributors to the life of the community through their labor
"we will not be satisfied until 'justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty
stream.'" "Free at last"
Keep historic vision, tell background story

TONE: Simple, peaceful, reflective, respectful, not too majestic, a little uncomfortable, a sense of
flow, flow of history, flow of the generations, flow of time

MEMORIAL: Tells the story simply
Tells who the people were and gives light to their lives in Portsmouth, highlighting
trades, maritime industry, and Africanisms
Indicate that this is part of a bigger whole, on many levels
Symbolism of water
Symbolism of the anchor
Symbols of the trades and skills of people

CONTEXT: Part of the whole, but different, visible and attention getting in a calm way

FUNCTION: Durable, well planned, sustainable, accessible, easy to maintain
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**Group One Comments:**
Led by R. Woodburn and JA Boggis

**MESSAGE:**
Honor and respect for the people buried there
Create the story of their connection to the community, ie: seaport community,
contributors to the life of the community
"we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty
stream."

**TONE:**
Like a cemetery – demands respect
A little uncomfortable “uncomfortable truths”
Example: Salem Witch Trial Memorial
Example: Holocaust Memorial – Boston
Example: Vietnam Veterans Memorial – Washington
Create a feeling that shows this is only one part of the bigger story
Continuity
A sense of flow, generations, water
Not picnicky
Emphasize the positive, personal stories, more than the enslavement story
Celebrate the African Story
Get to the hardship

**MEMORIAL:** Educational – Past and Future where are we going
Correct the misunderstood view of slavery (or lack there-of) in New Hampshire/New
England, along with the view of the benign treatment of blacks in NE.
Indicate that this is part of a bigger whole, on many levels
The sacred space is everywhere on site and beyond
Thinking about the future
Create a “Sense of Absence” – a missing portion of history
Have multiple layers

**CONTEXT:**
Different paving material .....to set off the design
Treat street and sidewalk as one
Same but different
Give a sense that it fits, but can be noticed
Remove existing sidewalk
Mosaic walkways
Does not have to blend in with the surrounding cityscape
Do not segregate the memorial from the rest of the City “as the black population was”
Ex. Shaw Memorial in Boston blends in too much

**FUNCTION:**
Concerns about depths and foundations
Possibly use Stepping Stones
Soft green spaces would be appreciated
Concerns about drivers driving into the street and getting out.
Needs signs or physical evidence that this is not a street.

**Group Two Comments:**
*Led by R. Hull and Dr. D. Mack*

**MESSAGE:**
Mariners trade
Interior of a ship

** TONE:**
Not too majestic
Real/authentic sense of Colonial times, hardship and difficulty of lives

**MEMORIAL:**
Boat anchor as symbolic of maritime industry and salvation
Should be similarly treated to Portsmouth pocket cemeteries
Have a mural or model of the city
Elements of a ship as art
Possibly use markers of coffin locations that were discovered – symbolic
Utilize drainage in the design, rain garden, reflecting pool
Illustrate the triangular trade route (part of the journey)
Incorporate white pine, materials, trees
Utilize the shape of the coffin in the design
Water feature, fountain, pool cascade
Elements suggestive of water
Veil of sand – representative of water
Interpretative plaques
Emphasize construction materials of the time, cobbles, shells etc.
Trades/Skills, symbolism to illustrate trades, anvil, barrel, anchor etc.
A structure or building or connected to the site for shelter as well as education, may be too big for a small site
Altar/Gazebo
Acknowledge the youth of these people

**CONTEXT:**
Pocket park
Important relationship to Strawberry Banke & Prescott Park
Emphasize memorial, not extension of other sites

**FUNCTION:**
Consider durability and function
Seasonal and climactic concerns about using actual water
Element to introduce the Black Heritage Trail
Involve abutters for support and buy-in
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Group Three Comments:
Led by Dr. K. Wheeler and J. Ring

MESSAGE:  "Free at last"
Keep historic vision

TONES:
Peaceful, reflective, simplicity
Keep simple because it is a relatively small space
Solemnity and Joy for the discovery

MEMORIAL:  Should attract attention
Should be visible
Should utilize color and depict diversity
Should have a site to sit and meditate
Should utilize trees and hedges
Possible curves in the walk
Black Green White and Red
Reminders of Africa
Diverse symbols
Texture change at Court Street end of the space
No clutter, not too busy
Main entrance to reflect what is inside
Plaque designation
Stone monument
Ornamental lighting
Uplighting on monument
Disturb nothing below ground
Reinter remains respectfully
Possible flexible sculpture, interactive, personal component
Enclosed hedge space
Possible for the surface of the monument to mark the graves
Should have an entrance off State Street with and immediate understanding of the concept of the park

CONTEXT:
FUNCTION:  The entire street should be closed off
No vehicles
Stone benches, easy to maintain
Wheelchair accessibility/curving pedestrian path
Snow removal may be difficult on the dead end street
Possible grates to collect snow melt and rain
Concrete walk at monument to all a user to walk up and touch it.
Lighting so people could visit the monument anytime