

Edenton Human Relations Commission

Strengthening our community by promoting racial equality through activities & policies that foster mutual respect, inclusiveness and harmony among all of our citizens

Commission Core Values

Honesty & Integrity; Truth Seeking; Faith & Love; Diversity, Unity & Community; Compassion & Empathy.

August 16, 2021

Mayor Jimmy E. Stallings
Mayor Pro Tem Elton Bond, Jr.
Councilman Roger Coleman
Councilman Sam Dixon
Councilman Hackney High, Jr.
Councilman Craig Miller
Councilman Roscoe Poole, Jr.

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

Below please find the Recommendation from the Human Relations Commission concerning the Confederate Memorial Monument located on South Broad Street. We respectfully request you review the report in its entirety, including the appendices, which include electronic links to research, data and information the Commission reviewed and took under consideration during our extensive deliberations.

Since early January 2021, when the Human Relations Commission was appointed by the Mayor and Town Council, the commission members have spent most of their meeting time focused on the Confederate Monument, specifically whether it should remain on Broad Street or be re-located. The Commission learned together as they were made aware of the current North Carolina legal statutes on the protection of monuments and memorials. They also were given insight into the significant historical facts regarding the Jim Crow era (1910s) when the monument was erected. This background information was extremely helpful and necessary to fully process what the Commission was attempting to determine, that is, should the statue remain or be re-located. (Appendix A includes list of resources Commission members reviewed and or shared & Appendix B includes description of training members received from Visions, Inc.).

The members discussed at length the significance the monument held for them personally. Some felt it represents racism and division, grounded not only in the slavery of the Civil War era, but that it also serves as a reminder of their own pain experienced as citizens of Edenton. These members expressed the need for healing, which they felt could not begin until the monument is removed.

Others acknowledged that the monument does represent a dark time in American history, but felt that there is a need to preserve that history in order to learn more of the truth of what actually occurred and to move forward in unity and restoration. It was suggested that the existing monument plot could be added to, perhaps with a statue of equal significance, as well as some type of communication that would tell the story of Edenton residents as they seek to heal. The hope expressed was that there could be a way to balance and complete Edenton's local history, striving for equity and respect for all citizens.

After months of very respectful deliberation and many personal reflections concerning this difficult issue, a vote was taken on June 23, 2021. It should be noted that one member was not able to be present for any of the studies and discussions and that the two alternate members did not have a vote. There was question about whether one of the alternates should be able to vote due to the consistent absence of one member and which alternate might be allowed to vote. That generated more discussion and eventually consensus was to have the votes of the two alternates recorded. This resulted in a seven to six vote with the removal of the monument the majority vote. The Human Relations Commission presents to the Mayor and the Edenton Town Council the recommendation to remove the Confederate Monument from its current location on South Broad Street and have it re-located to an appropriate place.

The recommendation to the Town Council is to move the monument to Sixth Street, on green space that is part of the Town's property which includes the Water Treatment Plant and Beaver Hill Cemetery. Limitations to its relocation include that it must remain inside Edenton's city limits and also that, according to N. C. Gen. Stat. Sec. 100-2(b), "An object of remembrance may not be relocated to a museum, cemetery or mausoleum unless it was originally placed there". Recognizing this statute, the Human Relations Commission proposes that the Edenton Town Council consider subdividing the mentioned property adjacent to the water treatment plant so that the monument be moved to the subdivided stand-alone green space which will then no longer be included in the same tract as Beaver Hill Cemetery. It is the desire of the Commission for this area to become a memorial park where there may be other information regarding not only the history of the Civil War era, but how the community seeks to continue to grow in unity. The Commission acknowledges that our story has changed and will continue to evolve as future generations learn from mistakes made which can lead to healing and restoration of all citizens. The Commission recommends that the Town Council reach out to historical experts such as the North Carolina Department of Natural & Cultural Resources, Historic Edenton State Historic Site, Edenton Historical Commission, and the Shepard-Pruden Memorial Library to assist in a long-range plan to develop the proposed memorial park as well as the public space at the foot of Broad Street which would become vacant after the monument is removed. Both locations could become places of personal reflection and historic instruction for residents and visitors alike.

Respectfully submitted,

Human Relations Commission

Marshall I. Jordan, Jr., Co-Chair

Cynthia Herlong, Co-Chair, alternate member

Sally Blount

Dr. Emma Bonner, Ed.D, alternate member

Stella Simpson-Brothers

Jim Chesson

Miles B. Cox

Percy Foxwell

Missie Harrell

Rebecca Hearn

John Morehead

Rev. John R. Shannon

Darnell E. White

Patricia White

Appendix A

1. Research compiled as part of a project the Shepard-Pruden Memorial Library did in 2017 for the celebration of the 350th anniversary of Chowan County entitled “365 days of Black History in Edenton & Chowan County”: Link here to Edenton African American History Google Drive:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16ABcHSsE-I9S6trkbND3_WiXDpXAjpuw

Google Drive Folders include information about the following:

Edenton during Reconstruction;

Port of Roanoke Records;

Lynching of Thomas Earley 1902;

Harriet Jacobs Articles;

The Edenton Movement;

The Confederate Monument 1950 & beyond;

The Confederate Monument 1900 – 1915;

Civil War Life and Laws; and Census Data.

2. Webinar: Balancing Scales of Justice <https://nccred.org/> July 2020 by the North Carolina Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparities in the Criminal Justice System
3. Dr. Henry Lewis Gates PBS documentary of African Americans (2013): Many Rivers to Cross; <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/>
4. Cold Mountain movie about the Civil War based on NC author Charles Frazier’s 1997 book.
5. Book: Long time Coming: Reckoning with Race in America by Michael Dyson, 2020.
6. Museum of the Albemarle and NC Dept of Natural & Cultural Resources on-line educational series “Under Both Flags: Civil War in the Albemarle” and other on-line resources that showed that NC was a very divided state regarding the Civil War. Link here:
<http://underbothflags.ncdcr.gov/exhibit.html>
7. Book: Divided Allegiances- Bertie County during the Civil War by Gerald W. Thomas, 2018.
8. <https://cwnc.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/exhibits/show/chowan/chowancounty>
9. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/north-carolina-civil-war>

10. <https://southernsky1861.wordpress.com/soldiers/>
(scroll and click on Chowan County)
11. <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/blacks-civil-war>
12. https://www.dailyadvance.com/news/local/panel-keep-perquimans-confederate-monument-at-courthouse-add-signage/article_2e1e8f24-f547-5d20-906f-5add570658e0.html
13. "The Lesser-Known History of Edenton", a series of lectures sponsored by the Edenton Historic Commission, Shephard-Pruden Memorial Library and the Edenton Reconciliation Group: <https://ehcnc.org/events/lkhe/>
14. "Racial Reconciliation group wants statue removed", Chowan Herald, 10-4-2017:
<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:46d734e0-a403-4293-9e08-dfb60f4dd6ee>
15. Video of recommended site for Confederate Monument to be relocated in to be created memorial park at end of Beaver Street.
https://www.dropbox.com/s/e67cgy3tza3iiw3/20210805_123841.mp4?dl=0
16. Map of proposed memorial park where Confederate Monument is recommended to be relocated to, at the end of Beaver Street.
<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:9f438f2c-6ed5-4d3d-b526-560cf0aaa6bc>
17. Link to Human Relations Commission Meeting Agendas (January 20, 2021 – August 11, 20210):
<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:a1d09178-1016-425d-883b-f95c2ddeb42a>
18. Link to Human Relations Commission Meeting Minutes (January 20, 2021 – July 14, 2021)
<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:0d2696dc-7368-462a-94d6-66f10eb66bc9>

Appendix B

Edenton Human Relations Commission

Strengthening our community by promoting racial equality through activities and policies that foster mutual respect, inclusiveness and harmony among all of our citizens

One of the seven objectives of the Edenton Human Relation Commission to fulfil its mission is -

- Creating educational opportunities through workshops and programs that enhance understanding, respect and goodwill among its citizens.

Town Council provided the Commission with training through **Visions Inc.** – Taking Diversity and Inclusion to the Next Level.

Dr. Val Batts and Ms. Barbara Davis with **Visions, Inc.** reviewed workshop goals below with newly formed Commission:

- Guidelines for authentic conversations
- Enhancing racial harmony, bridging racial gaps
- Addressing Edenton’s past in all its dimensions, including the role of old fashion racism
- Learning how to identify and challenge modern racism.

In the workshop, **Levels of Oppression and Change** and *Focus of Change strategies* were discussed:

Institutional – *Identify structural barriers; create policies, practices, programs and processes which support equitable outcomes*

Personal – *Change thoughts and feelings; increase awareness and openness to learning*

Interpersonal – *Enhance skills and communication patterns; impact behavior and relationships*

Cultural – *Create environments representative of and welcoming to the organization’s diversity; celebrate and utilize differences*

The Commission identified and reviewed 27 goals/initiatives suggested by members.

This of course included the discussion of the Monument/Statue. As a result of this training, the initiatives were align with the **Levels of Oppression and Change** described above.

In addition to initiatives, members identified the following Group Values Check List that we use in governing ourselves:

1. Honesty/Integrity
2. Truth Seeking
3. Faith/Love
4. Diversity; Unity/Community
5. Compassion/Empathy

Diversity refers to differences, the who we are; it is a descriptive term used to refer to a broad range of differences; it is often used to describe the different cultural groups represented in the community and/or workplace (e.g. women, men, whites, people of color, young, old, religion, disability)

Inclusion represents the end result of recognizing, understanding, appreciating, and leveraging differences at the personal, interpersonal, institutional and culture levels. It invites an on-going and organization-wide willingness to learn how to create and sustain an inclusive environment.