

BRIGIDI INTRO:

Honorable Members of the Town Council, I will be very brief, touching upon the process that our group followed upon your initial approval for the Independence Park site in September 2022. We were then an ad hoc committee of volunteers, who realized the necessity of organizing as a non-profit organization, completing the process with federal approval in May, 2023. With guidance of the State Council on the Arts, we sent out a formal call, an RFP to all RI artists and RI arts-cultural organizations, open to submissions for designs for more than 60 days. We received a strong response from a number of RI based artists.

The Board convened a Jury of five independent qualified people to oversee the applications received and arrived at three finalists to present models of their designs. The models were placed on public display in our town library for the month of December for all interested parties to freely comment. More than 170 members of the public responded with written comments. Local residents and interested parties responded overwhelmingly with great enthusiasm.

We, the Board of the Bristol Middle Passage incorporated the series of public comments in determining the final model and the artist chosen to fabricate the sculpture. We will present the model on this occasion and the artist is present to describe in more detail the intended piece and to answer any questions the Council and public may have.

The chosen sculpture will also proceed to follow the necessary steps and permits needed for installation, including the Coastal Resource Management Council, The State Preservation and Heritage Commission, and the Department of Environmental Management. The Board will also address our Historic District Commission for approval of the design, and work with Parks & Recreation for later installation, as we continue to work with our Town Administrator throughout the process.

I would now like to introduce the President of the Bristol Middle Passage Port Marker Project, Bernard Freamon, Professor of Law at Roger Williams University School of Law.