

House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management
Meeting Summary- Committee Tour of Proposed Vietnam War Memorial Site
Tuesday, May 25th, 2021

Members Present: Rep. Evans, Chair; Rep. Lewis, Vice Chair; Rep. Meek, Vice Chair; Rep. Grayber; Rep. Wallan; Rep. Wright

Tour of Proposed Vietnam War Memorial Site

The Committee assembled at the World War II Memorial on the northwest corner of the Capitol Grounds and walked over to the site of the proposed Vietnam War Memorial south of that location. The primary purpose of the tour was for the Committee members and the public to get an understanding of the design of the memorial and the timeline of the project. Steve Bates, the President of the Vietnam War Memorial Fund, led the Committee on a tour of each of the proposed elements of the memorial while he explained what each proposed element could look like. Mr. Bates emphasized that the goal of the memorial was to provide a space for Vietnam War Veterans to feel welcomed and connected to the community.

The project is currently estimated to cost \$2.7 million, with an anticipated completion date of November 11th, 2023, which was pushed back due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The current design of the memorial was approved by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department on February 25th, 2021. The next step for the Vietnam War Memorial Fund is to commission an archeological survey of the area to ensure they can build in the locations they are planning to use.

Steve Bates noted that the design of the memorial element that contains the names of those who died while serving in Vietnam, will mirror the World War II Memorial in the northwest corner of the Capitol Grounds; but instead of a solid wall, it will be in the form of individual columns to symbolize how the country was divided during the Vietnam War Era. Emphasis was placed on the fact that design of the memorial incorporated the trees currently located in the southwest corner of the Capitol Grounds with design features, such as elevated pathways that protect the root system of the nearby trees. Due to working around the trees, the footprint of the memorial and the number of elements will not be finalized until a final measurement to determine the available space is completed.

Attendees included: Steve Bates, Vietnam War Memorial Fund; Director Kelly Fitzpatrick, Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA); Jenny Donovan, ODVA; Chris Havel, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department; Chris Lehman, Oregon Public Broadcasting and The Oregonian; Jake Thomas, The Salem Reporter; Capi Lynn, The Statesman Journal; Cassie Passon, Legislative Policy and Research Office (LPRO); Kaitlyn Bishop, LPRO; Anna Sovereign, House Republican Office.