

How to Join the Conversation:

Tips for giving public testimony at the meeting of the Special Commission to Review Baltimore's Public Confederate Monuments

December 15, 2015 | 5:00 pm | Board of Estimates Room, City Hall

If you are interested in giving public testimony at the next meeting of the Special Commission to Review Baltimore's Public Confederate Monuments here are some guidelines about how the sign-up process will operate, as well as some tips to keep in mind when preparing and presenting your testimony.

The meeting is scheduled to run from 5:00-8:00pm. The Commission will do its best to hear from as many members of the public as possible during this time. If the Commission feels that it was unable to hear from a significant number of individuals who wished to speak, they reserve the option to schedule an additional hearing dedicated to public commentary at a later day.

Sign up in advance- As is common for most public meetings, a sign-up sheet will be posted two hours in advance of the meeting and will operate on a first come first serve basis. The sign-up sheet for the December 15th hearing will be posted at the front desk of City Hall at 3:00pm on December 15th. After the start of the meeting, the sign-up sheet will remain available, and will be moved to the Board of Estimates Room.

Being called to speak- Staff will call upon commentators in the order they appear on the sign-up sheet. A name will be called 3 times but if someone is not present the next person on the list will be called. At the end of the meeting, if there is still time on the agenda, anyone who was on the list, but not present when first called will be called again.

Bring a paper copy- The Commission asks that anyone who is planning to speak bring a paper copy of their statement that they can provide to staff for the record. This will make it easier to transcribe and record public comments collected during the meeting and account for all of the testimony received. Please include your full name, address and contact information on the paper copy of your testimony.

Time allotment: Given the amount of time set aside, we expect to hear from approximately 50 speakers if each gives an approximately 3 min. testimony. Time allocation and procedures will be at the discretion of the Commission Chair and Staff.

Tips for Testimony:

While your testimony should be based on your personal viewpoint and experience the following are some helpful tips for making the most of your testimony

- **Introduce yourself** - Sounds obvious but it is easy to forget. Start with your name! If you are testifying on behalf of a special interest group, share the name of that group and what kind of work you do. If you are testifying as an individual, share where you live
- **Lead with your key message** - Make a clear statement of what your personal recommendation for these public Confederate Monuments might be.
- **Make it personal** - Back up your message with a unique personal story or anecdote about your own experience
- **Stick to the facts** - Back up your information with citations to reliable sources. Speculation or opinions unrelated to your key message are discouraged.
- **Keep it short** - Prepare to talk for 5 minutes or less! Short and sweet is the most memorable and effective way to share your perspective.
- **Say thank you** - Good manners are always appreciated. Close your testimony by thanking the Commission for their attention.