

Chronology of Events: Involvement of Secretary of Interior in Approval of Design

- 17 Jun 81: Approval of location and design in concept form by Secretary of Interior's National Capital Memorial Advisory Committee. Committee mandates that safety, access for handicapped, and drainage be addressed in design development. National Park Service (NPS) becomes sponsor of project for purposes of approval by two commissions. (See attachment A)
- 7 Jul 81: Approval of location and design in concept form by Commission of Fine Arts (CFA). CFA mandates same three considerations.
- 6 Aug 81: Approval of location and design in concept form by National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). Same mandate as above two.
- VVMF retains Cooper-Lecky Partnership, Washington, D.C. as architect of record to undertake development of design into final plans. Maya Lin becomes design consultant to Cooper-Lecky. Concurrently VVMF retains Gilbane Building Company, Landover, Maryland, as construction manager. Cooper-Lecky begins work on design development in consultation with NPS.
- 13 Oct 81: Commission of Fine Arts approves stone samples so that VVMF can proceed with ordering granite to allow completion by November 11, 1982.
- Tom Carhart appears, to denounce design as "black gash of shame and sorrow".
- 6 Nov 81: VVMF forwards plans for design as developed to National Park Service.
- 10 Nov 81: CFA gives final approval to design as developed.
- 17 Nov 81: Gilbane Building Company orders stone from Rogan Granitindustrie, Chicago Heights, Ill.
- 20 Nov 81: VVMF briefs Ric Davidge, Special Assistant to Assistant Secretary for Parks & Wildlife Ray Arnett on design and process for selection. Davidge reports that detractors have been phoning Secretary Watt with allegations that jurors were communists. Davidge requests written rebuttal to charges.
- 3 Dec 81: NCPC gives final approval to preliminary, i.e., visual, above ground, plans.

VVMF forwards letter to Secretary Watt explaining process for selecting design. (Attachment B)

Grady Clay, on behalf of competition jury, forwards letter to Secretary Watt, explaining jury deliberations and specifically disavowing political discussion or motivation in selection. (Attachment C).

18 Dec 81: Secretary Watt, at staff meeting, noting 90 day approval period in legislation, declines personal involvement, unless presented with evidence that charges of communists are true or that overwhelming majority of public does not like the design.

VVMF forwards lengthy letter to Watt, with 115 attachments, outlining publicity and support for memorial since announcement of design (Attachment D).

31 Dec 81: NPS, on basis of Watt's action at staff meeting, defends design in letters to critics. (Attachment E)

5 Jan 82: Watt signs letter to VVMF, requesting that "as a result of continuing modifications in the original concept submittal of June 1981," he be advised when design is finalized so that he "might proceed to a consideration of that proposal to fulfill (his) statutory responsibilities." (Attachment F)

14 Jan 82: VVMF meets with Watt and Asst. Secretary Hodel. VVMF does slide presentation of design and selection process.

Watt indicates that his interest is in insuring that "procedural process" has been correctly followed. VVMF indicates that next step is submission of cost data.

VVMF meets with H. Ross Perot to explain design and selection process and discuss problems presented by a Gallup Poll. Perot, upon hearing that detractors, i.e. Copulus, would be satisfied with flag and stronger wording of inscription, agrees to hold off on Gallup poll if detractors can be satisfied.

22 Jan 82: Watt telephones VVMF, states that he is under "heavy political pressure" and that he is pleased that meeting will be held on Jan 27th with detractors. Watt makes clear that he will shoot proposal down unless VVMF comes to a compromise.

27 Jan 82: Meeting is held. Perot crashes and assembles detractors, flying some in from around the country. VVMF offers flag pole and stronger wording. Impass. General Davison proposes addition of statue of serviceman as compromise. VVMF, noting problem of commission approval, agrees to "push for" statue as well as flag upon condition that construction of design as submitted and approved by commissions go forward on schedule. Consensus reached on this basis. White House develops memo. (Attachment G)

4 Feb 82: VVMF meets with Watt. Watt indicates pleasure that consensus has been reached and that he will sign off. In meeting Deputy Under Secretary Bill Horn he stated that he expects no problem from commissions. After meeting, Horn agrees, on Doubek's request, that nix goes to commissions until after construction permit is issued.

90 day period since Nov. 6th submittal ends.

Horn gives staff of NPS Capital Region go ahead to resume working with VVMF on final construction drawings.

8 Feb 82: VVMF and architect meet with NPS Capital Region staff to get their comments on working drawings.

9 Feb 82: Doubek meets with Ric Robbins, Interior lawyer, to develop letters from VVMF to Watt and from Watt to VVMF.

10 Feb 82: Robbins meets with Horn.

Horn talks with Doubek by phone, requests VVMF use word "add" instead of "propose" in letter and gives go ahead.

11 Feb 82: VVMF receives financial data from investment institutions and hand carries letter to Watt, requesting formal approval of design and plans and of funds. (Attachment H).

18 Feb 82: NCPC approves final design.

19 Feb 82: Wash. Post article reports that VVMF expects approval from Watt that day. (Attachment I)

VVMF offers to pick up letter when signed.

VVMF hears no word from Watt's office.

23 Feb 82: Horn finally returns VVMF phone calls; states that he has heard nix from Watt.

Construction team opens final bids on project.

24 Feb 82: Construction team meets with NPS Capital Region staff to discuss final considerations prior to construction permit.

Bill Horn informs VVMF that Watt will seek "conceptual approval" from CFA and NCPC before he'll sign off.

26 Feb 82: Watt sends letters to CFA and NCPC, requesting response regarding acceptability of refinements. (Attachment J).

27 Feb 82: Wash. Post reports on Watt letter. (Attachment K)

1 Mar 82: Scheduled ground breaking

4 Mar 82: NCPC Meeting

9 Mar 82: CFA Meeting