



United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL CAPITAL MEMORIAL ADVISORY COMMISSION
Interior Region 1- National Capital Area
1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20242

IN REPLY REFER TO:

10B (NCAO-LP)

December 21, 2021

Barbara Cochran
Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation
529 14th St. NW, 13th Floor
Washington, DC 20045

Dear Ms. Cochran:

The National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (Commission) was established by the Commemorative Works Act of 1986 (40 U.S.C. 89 et. Seq.) (the Act) to advise the Secretary of the Interior and the Administrator of General Services (as appropriate) on policy and procedures for establishment of, and proposals to establish, commemorative works in the District of Columbia and its environs. Section 8908(b) of the Act directs that the Commission provide advice to the Secretary and/or the Administrator in considering recommendations to place memorials within Area I. Following Commission review, the Act requires that the Secretary of the Interior or the Administrator of General Services, as appropriate, make a determination to the Congress that the memorial meets the Act criteria for Area I and is of preeminent and lasting historical significance to the Nation.

On December 23, 2020, Congress authorized the Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation to establish a “*commemorative work on Federal land in the District of Columbia and its environs to commemorate America’s commitment to a free press by honoring journalists who sacrificed their lives in service to that cause*” (Public Law 116-253). The law directs the Foundation to establish the Memorial in accordance with the Act.

At a public Commission meeting on October 5, 2021, the Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation (Foundation) and its consultant team presented the site selection study for the Fallen Journalists (Memorial) and a justification for establishment of the Memorial within Area I. The site selection study analyzed 24 potential memorial sites for their suitability based on the Foundation’s memorial program and selection criteria. Four sites were identified for further analysis: Site A in the eastern portion of Freedom Plaza, Site D at Pennsylvania Avenue and Constitution Avenue, Northwest, Site O at Maryland and Independence Avenues at 3rd Street, Southwest, and Site T at Edward R. Murrow Park between 18th and 19th Streets, Northwest. Site D and Site O are located within Area I.

The Foundation presented a justification for location within Area I including statements and testimonies that the memorial subject was of preeminent historical and lasting significance to the United States in alignment with Act criteria for location in Area I (40 USC Ch. 89 §8908(b)(1)).

INTERIOR REGION 1 • NORTH ATLANTIC-APPALACHIAN

CONNECTICUT, DELAWARE, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, KENTUCKY, MAINE, MARYLAND, MASSACHUSETTS,
NEW HAMPSHIRE, NEW JERSEY, NEW YORK, PENNSYLVANIA, RHODE ISLAND, VERMONT,
VIRGINIA, WEST VIRGINIA

The Commission heard testimonies from Barbara Cochran, President of the Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation, Paul Goldberger, Contributing Editor of Vanity Fair, and from retired network television journalist and author, Tom Brokaw. The Commission also received nine written testimonies in support of Area I authorization from respected journalists, academics, and historians.

The Commissioners commented that the presenters, as well as the accompanying written testimony, provided a strong case that the Memorial should be eligible for inclusion within Area I. Some members noted ambiguity in whether the Memorial honored fallen journalists or the freedom of the press, but commented that subject matter categorical issues could be resolved as the project advanced through site selection. Commissioners also observed that Area I site locations are increasingly scarce, and that Area II sites such as Site T at Edward R. Murrow Park may offer an impactful and rich visitor experience. As a site consisting of two triangle parks surrounded by roadways, Edward R. Murrow Park may also pose design challenges. A memorial placed at this site should focus on one of the triangles instead of both. Commissioners commented that Site A in the eastern portion of Freedom Plaza also presents a number of practical issues including the need to move the General Casimir Pulaski statue. The thematic connection of Freedom Plaza is not strongly evident as Washington, D.C.'s historic "newspaper row" is no longer located off of Pennsylvania Avenue. The Commission considered Site O in Area I as a compelling location with direct views to the U.S. Capitol and a thematic connection to the nearby Voice of America headquarters.

By consensus, the Commission recommended inclusion within Area I and as such will report its findings to the Secretary of the Interior. The Commission looks forward to working with the Foundation as it advances through the site selection and review process. My staff and I are available to assist you and can be reached at (202) 619-7063.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter May", with a stylized, flowing script.

Peter May
Chairman
National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission