

Justice Edward O. Gourdin Veterans' Memorial Park  
Roxbury, Massachusetts  
Park & Memorial Design

# Community Informational Meeting

Monday, November 7, 2016



## WORK TO DATE

- Veterans groups developed preliminary vision (1999)
- Obtained Browne Fund grant (2000)
- Artist hired
- Memorial design ideas developed by the artist with the Veterans community

*“The purpose of my comments is to stress...that it was always envisioned that the park would be a “Veteran’s Memorial Park” and that a monument would be erected at the park to honor the legacy of the 372<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery Battalion of Massachusetts and all those other African American soldiers who have served since the first shots of the American Revolution.”*

**Wilma Browne**

October 7, 2015

## PUBLIC PROCESS

### GOALS

- Honor African American veterans
- Honor Justice Gourdin
- Serve as a common for Dudley Square and be a better park for the neighborhood

### USES

- Stage Veteran's Day events
- Gather, sit, converse, enjoy shade and lawn
- View the sculpture

### USERS

- Veterans
- Protesters
- Residents in surrounding neighborhood

### PROGRAM ELEMENTS

- Sculpture honoring African American veterans of all wars
- Interpretative signs and/or panels telling Justice Gourdin's story

### CONCERNS

- Need for a working committee
- Pedestrian safety
- Maintenance
- Jobs for local youth





PRELIMINARY CONCEPT 1



PRELIMINARY CONCEPT 2

## PARK DESIGN

- Developed following the May 3, 2016 Public Forum
- Comments from Forum incorporated
- Concerns of Boston Parks Department taken into consideration

### FEATURES:

- Single plaza space to be accessed from three corners
- Smaller "coffee break" spaces along east and south sides of plaza
- 18" seat wall along west side with bas relief portraits mounted on granite columns
- Gourdin sculpture located in front of seat wall
- Flagpole
- 5' high granite columns (bas relief portraits at top)
- 18" high granite seat wall
- 5' high granite entry sign



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# Communicating the Park's Narrative: *preliminary thoughts*



Located at entrance to park with information to include:

- Boston Parks Department
- Judge Gourdin Veteran's Memorial Park
- Refer to 272 & 372 Infantry Battalions
- Describe the star icon representing the 5 military divisions & explain that the design of the park reflects this
- Show on a "You Are Here" map how the park relates to other cultural, historic and recreation sites in the neighborhood

## Park "Marker"



# Gourdin Sculpture

Information to be included on base of sculpture:

- Plaque (Brown Fund): 15" x 15" with info regarding Justice Gourdin
- Acknowledgement to Friends of African American Veterans Group
- Refer to 272 and 372 Infantry Battalions
- Light sculpture and columns for visual impact and to facilitate reading information in low light/dark



## Bas Relief Portraits

Information to be included on  
columns below portraits  
(placed at different heights):

- Name of War (dates of war)
- Quote from African American veterans
- Refer to 272 and 372 Infantry Battalions  
(on base of sculpture)
- Illuminate sculpture and columns for  
visual impact and to facilitate reading  
information in low light/dark





## Seat Walls

- Etch verses of *Lift Every Voice and Sing*  
(African American anthem)

By James Weldon Johnson

*Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has  
taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has  
brought us,  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun  
Let us march on till victory is won.*



*She's a big girl now  
24 - 1960*





# Narrative Told Using Virtual Technology

Collaborate with other groups in Roxbury (e.g. American City Coalition, Discover Roxbury, Roxbury Heritage State Park) to connect to larger cultural district narrative and use technology to tell the stories, for example:

- Use cell phone and/or QR Code to connect to a website where there is historical information, stories, regarding Justice Gourdin, African American veterans, and African American women in the military, etc.
- Hear verses of Lift Every Voice and Sing (the verses etched in the seat walls) sung by chorus





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## MEMORIAL SCULPTURE



## NEXT STEPS:

Future: BUILDING AND CARING FOR THE MEMORIAL AND PARK

### WORKING GROUP

- Collaborate with the City on the development and completion of the Veterans' Memorial
- Function short-term, until park is dedicated

### FRIENDS' GROUP

- Support maintenance activities, raise funds, advocate for and plan events associated with the park
- Function over the long-term

### EMAIL LIST

(staying informed)

#### Public Forum #1:

- October 7, 2015
- Visioning, Goal Setting

#### Public Forum #2:

- May 3, 2016
- Review of Alternative Designs

#### Boston Arts Commission Review of Sculpture

- December 2016/January 2017

#### On-line conversation:

- Continuous opportunity to provide input
- MySidewalk Social Media

<https://mysidewalk.com/organizations/290133/justice-gourdin-veterans-memorial-park>



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## CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION ON-LINE:

Continuous opportunity to provide input  
MySidewalk Social Media:

<https://mysidewalk.com/organizations/290133/justice-gourdin-veterans-memorial-park>