



NBC CONNECTICUT

REMEMBERING SANDY HOOK

TOWN HEALS AND REMEMBERS

Newtown to Build Memorial for Sandy Hook Shooting Victims

Updated at 9:45 AM EDT on Wednesday, Jan 21, 2015

The Sandy Hook Permanent Memorial Commission is setting out to honor the lives of 26 students and staffers who died during the December 2012 school shooting.

The victims' families were first to hear the plans to erect a memorial, and they'll also play a large role in shaping the monument.

"I think we have to really run it by the people who were most impacted and see what they feel comfortable with," Newtown resident and Lions Club member Bob Schmidt said during a public forum on Tuesday night.

Although only a dozen residents attended the forum at Newtown High School, commissioners said they were not discouraged or disappointed by the low attendance, but rather inspired by the questions and ideas that were brought to the table.

"We've had multiple different forums with different groups in town, and this is an opportunity for those who want to participate to chat with us and understand and ask questions," commission chairman Kyle Lyddy said.

The commission shared some of that feedback on Tuesday night, explaining that the majority of residents want to see the memorial function as a community gathering place.

"Most of the organizations in town want to participate," Schmidt said. "They want to do something."

Although the commission has yet to hammer out the details, Schmidt said the Newtown Lions Club is one of several organizations that already plan to donate to the cause.

Newtown resident Richmond Jones suggested a memorial park where the community could gather. A peace symbol would mark the center, surrounded by a cluster of 26 trees.

The commission, which has been working on the project for 18 months now, said it has not adopted any sort of timeline.

Along with reaching out to victims' families and residents, commissioners said they are also looking to other communities that have been affected by tragedy, including Virginia Tech.

Commissioners emphasized the importance of getting it right and asked for patience.

The next public forum is set for Jan. 29.

Published at 11:30 PM EDT on Jan 20, 2015