

From: Cyane Crump <ccrump@HistoricRichmond.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 25, 2020 9:57 AM
To: Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR
Cc: Elisabeth Price; LENORA MCQUEEN; Chen, Kimberly M. - DED
Subject: Support for ORD 2020-240 and acquisition of 1305 N. 5th Street

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Matthew –

I am writing to support the Ordinance 2020-240 (which I believe will be on the December 7 Planning Commission Agenda) and its focus on acquiring 1305 N 5th Street. We wrote earlier this fall to support a companion ordinance (ORD 2020-213) and I am forwarding the letter sent in support of that ordinance. We are grateful for the City's efforts to reacquire this site.

Thank you for including our letter of support with any others for consideration by the Planning Commission on December 7.

Wishing you and yours a very happy Thanksgiving!

Cyane



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From: Cyane Crump

Sent: Sunday, October 4, 2020 12:10 PM

To: rodney@thewiltonco.com; David Johannas; Ellen.Robertson@Richmondgov.com;

lawmanchem@yahoo.com; Elizabeth Hancock Greenfield; murthyvg@gmail.com;
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Cc: Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR; Chen, Kimberly M. - PDR; LENORA MCQUEEN; Danielle Worthing Porter; Elisabeth Price; Harold Williams

Subject: Support for ORD 2020-213 and acquisition of 1305 N. 5th Street

Members of the City of Richmond Planning Commission –

Historic Richmond is writing to support the Ordinance 2020-213 (Item #11 on Monday's Planning Commission Agenda) and its focus on acquiring 1305 N 5th Street.

This site has been known by many names over the years and now is best known as the "Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground." This burial ground, which is actually larger than the parcel at 1305 N. 5th Street, was established in 1816 as a municipal burial ground by the City of Richmond at about the same time as nearby Shockoe Hill Cemetery and Hebrew Cemetery. Additional detailed information on the history and historic significance of this site can be found in the Preliminary Information Form recently reviewed by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) accessible here - <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/pifs/shockoe-hill-burying-ground-historic-district-richmond-dhr-127-7231/> - and in the scholarly article by Dr. Ryan K. Smith in Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum accessible here - <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/buildland.27.1.0017?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference>

We first learned about the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground site after Lenora McQueen's research was shared with us several years ago. She is the leading advocate for this site. Notably, she has several ancestors and family members who were buried here. Most poignantly, one of her family members, who was then the sexton at Monumental Church, lost twin toddlers in July 1867 who were buried here.

After studying Lenora McQueen's research, it was immediately apparent to us that this was an important site worthy of saving. In 2018, we began advocating for this site in connection with the DC2RVA project. While we support the DC2RVA project, we were very concerned about how this site had been treated over the years and wanted to make sure that there were no further adverse effects from this rail project. In connection with the DC2RVA project and its further investigation into this site, by letter dated March 20, 2019, we asked the City of Richmond to acquire the parcel at 1305 N 5th Street with a goal to further the physical examination, educational research and interpretation of the site.

In connection with DC2RVA, we fought for the site to be treated as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This advocacy continued through this year as we supported an application for listing on the National Register as part of a larger district with the nearby Shockoe Hill and Hebrew cemeteries and the Almshouse, among other related historic sites. The Preliminary Information Form for this proposed district advanced through the DHR State Review Board in September 2020.

We also have been advocating for this site as part of the Richmond 300 process. In that regard, we are pleased to see its Future Land Use designated as Public Open Space rather than Industrial in the September 29, 2020 version of the Richmond 300 master plan.

Few people know of this site's history because it has been so damaged. Lenora McQueen has diligently researched the site and worked with a number of academics, and their collective research has shown that the burial ground received approximately 20,000 souls over seven decades. Starting in the 1870s, road, railroad and highway projects damaged the site, desecrating an unknown number of graves. It is likely there are many graves remaining on this parcel, under Hospital Street and on other land nearby.

In addition to the City administration, we are grateful for City Preservation Planner Kim Chen's concern for the site, for the many talented academics and preservationists who have taken up its cause, and for DHR's recent advancement of the historic district. And, above all, we are grateful for Lenora McQueen's tireless advocacy for this site.

This site is not only sacred space, but its past treatment also tells the story of how historic sites, particularly those connected to underrepresented communities, have been mistreated over the years in the name of progress. Almost 150 years of development has tried to erase this site from the landscape. It is time for this place to be once again visible on the landscape of our city, remembered appropriately, and studied.

We understand that Ordinance 2020-213 is one of two ordinances needed to advance the actual acquisition of the parcel at 1305 N. 5th Street. We hope that second ordinance will follow in the near future.

I ask you to vote in support of this ordinance and the re-acquisition by the City of this parcel. I ask you also to consider how sites like this have been damaged by prior planning decisions and development as you consider your work on all matters coming before this commission in the future. We can't let our work today treat our community's sacred and historic places in the same manner as our predecessors.

Please let me know if you have any questions about these comments. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Cyane



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