

**From:** [Ellen Chapman](#)  
**To:** [Nye, Kristen M. - City Council](#); [Lambert, Ann-Frances - City Council](#); [Robertson, Ellen F. - City Council](#); [Addison, Andreas D. - City Council](#); [Jordan, Katherine - City Council](#); [Lynch, Stephanie A. - City Council Office](#); [Newbille, Cynthia I. - City Council](#); [Trammell, Reva M. - City Council](#); [Jones, Nicole - City Council Office](#); [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Cc:** [LENORA MCQUEEN](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Ordinance 2024-283  
**Date:** Sunday, November 10, 2024 9:20:42 AM

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Dear Honorable Members of City Council,

I am an archaeologist working in cultural heritage law in Richmond and I live within a half-mile of the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground cemetery. I have been working on this project with Lenora and others since 2018. I strongly support passage of this ordinance, currently listed on the Consent Agenda for the November 12th meeting, and ask you to pass it this week.

Historical and archaeological evidence is ample that the city established a cemetery at 1305 North 5th Street and that the vast majority of the city's African-descended population were buried there over the course of its existence (roughly 1816-1879). The city was then a primary actor in disappearing the cemetery, both through conducting and allowing destructive projects and through allowing the cemetery to fall into neglect and failing to keep records of its existence.

This ordinance will acknowledge what the city staff and advocates and researchers now know to be true - that this place is a sacred place of rest that must no longer be desecrated, and that there is overwhelming evidence of intact and disturbed human remains across the 1305 North 5th Street parcel.

I deeply thank the city for taking this action and restoring this cemetery zoning, as one important part of undoing the city's past and ongoing erasure of this cemetery. I greatly appreciate the work of Councilmember Ellen Robertson, Mayor Stoney, and city staff on this issue over the last several years. I additionally ask the city to ensure that the sections of 5th Street and 7th Street within the cemetery's National Register of Historic Places boundary also be zoned as a cemetery. There is substantial evidence that bodies were graded under these streets (including by then City Engineer Cutshaw), and any future work to maintain these roads must be undertaken with the utmost care to ensure that ancestral human remains are treated in compliance with state laws regarding cemeteries and human remains.

Thank you for your consideration of this important ordinance. I do not have any economic or professional relationships that would be affected by the adoption of this legislation.

Best wishes,  
Dr. Ellen Chapman

1701 4th Ave  
Richmond, VA

**From:** [LENORA MCQUEEN](#)  
**To:** [Nye, Kristen M. - City Council](#); [Lambert, Ann-Frances - City Council](#); [Robertson, Ellen F. - City Council](#); [Addison, Andreas D. - City Council](#); [Jordan, Katherine - City Council](#); [Lynch, Stephanie A. - City Council Office](#); [Newbille, Cynthia I. - City Council](#); [Trammell, Reva M. - City Council](#); [Jones, Nicole - City Council Office](#); [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Cc:** [ourrosewood](#); [Ryan Smith](#); [Ellen Chapman](#); [Dan Mouer](#); [Steve Thompson](#); [Suanna Crowley](#); [Kimberly Gray](#); [Lawana Holland-Moore](#); [Cyane Crump](#); [Elizabeth Kostelny](#); [Robert Nieweg](#); [Christopher Cody](#); [Elizabeth Betsey Merritt](#); [Cat Warren](#); [Nelson Louis P \(In6n\)](#); [Danielle Worthing Porter](#); [Charles Birnbaum](#); [Chip Colwell](#); [Nord Wennerstrom](#); [Brown Hannah Jane \(hjb8ma\)](#); [Michael Solomon](#); [Peighton Young](#); [Brian Palmer](#); [Erin Hollaway](#); [Valerie Parker](#); [Shawn Utsey](#); [Joseph Rogers](#); [Phil Wilayto](#); [Historic Jackson Ward Association](#); [AAHGS Greater Richmond Virginia Chapter](#); [Viola Baskerville](#); [Sa'ad El-Amin](#); [Jeffery Burden](#); [Friends of East End](#); [Astrid B. Liverman](#); [Smith Jolene \(DHR\)](#); [Green Joanna \(DHR\)](#); [McKnight Joanna \(DHR\)](#); [Gray Latoya \(DHR\)](#); [Laura Kiser](#); [Katherine Driggs](#); [Rae Cousins](#); [Lamont Bagby](#); [Michael Jones](#); [Jeremy Lazarus](#)  
**Subject:** Letter of Support for Ordinance 2024-283, 1305 N 5th St. (part of the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground)  
**Date:** Sunday, November 10, 2024 1:20:20 PM  
**Attachments:** [Letter of Support to City Council for Ordinance 2024-283 \(1\).docx](#)

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Lenora McQueen  
[lenora.m@prodigy.net](mailto:lenora.m@prodigy.net)

November 10, 2024

To: The Richmond City Council

Re: Seeking your support for Ordinance 2024-283, and your help for the still endangered Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground

Dear Honorable Councilmembers Robertson, Larson, Lambert, Jordan, Addison, Lynch, Newbille, Trammell, and Jones:

I wish to express to you my support for ordinance 2024-283. This ordinance I understand will re-establish the now city owned and reclaimed 1.2 acre parcel at 1305 N 5th St., (which is a portion of the much larger and long invisible *Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground*) as an official cemetery. This parcel contains a portion of both the original 1816 "Burying Ground for Free People of Colour" and the "Burying Ground for Negroes", which was established and operated by the city of Richmond as a municipal burying ground. This later combined and expanded burial ground was historically a segregated part of the city's *Shockoe Hill Burying Ground* (a.k.a. Shockoe Hill Cemetery), designated specifically for the burial of people of African descent. It is the burial place of my ancestors, and I imagine it may also be the burial place of the ancestors of some of you, and of some (or of many) of your constituents (whether they are currently aware of it or not). I believe the descendants of people buried there are likely to number in the millions and are spread across the entire country. Enslaved and free people of color, who resided all over the city of Richmond were laid to rest there. It is on their behalf that I write to you today. The passage of this ordinance will do an incredible thing for this burial ground, and provide it much needed recognition and protection, at least in that specific location. I ask that you please support ordinance 2024-283, and vote in its favor.

I would however like you to be aware, and keep in mind please, that this burial ground is so much more than this small parcel at 1305 N 5th St., which represents a little less than 4% of the larger burial ground. During its active period (1816-1879) it was expanded from its original 2 acres, to a little over 31 acres, and received over 22,000 interments. It is not just one of the largest African Burial Grounds in the United States. It is the largest African Burial Ground in the United States (larger than the African Burial Ground in New York City, which before the rediscovery of the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground was thought to be the largest, and made to be both a National Historic Landmark, and a National Monument). I have heard DHR refer to this burial ground (SHABG) as being the most important burial ground in the country. And though the passing of this ordinance will bring much needed protection to 1305 N 5th St., the rest of the burial ground remains one of Virginia's most endangered historic places.

Unfortunately one of the current threats against the burial ground is the city of Richmond itself. The intersection and railroad crossing at N 7th St., and Hospital St. was constructed directly in and through this burial ground. The railroad tracks from N 2nd St. to past N 7th St. were also constructed upon, in and through this burial ground. The extension of 7th St. in 1890 directly harmed part of the burial ground. Human bones were unearthed and left scattered across the new 7th St. extension. This terrible (documented) episode in the history of the burial ground should prove that this intersection is part of the burial ground. Hospital St. (east of N 5th St.) was diverted prior to 1880 to a northeasterly direction and also constructed upon this burial ground. It is my ask, my hope, and my prayer that the city will do a new thing and work to correct the dangerous traffic issues there at that intersection without causing further harm to the burial ground. Unfortunately, the currently proposed city plans will harm it. I have personally proposed reasonable, non-invasive alternatives that I hope will be given real serious consideration by the city and adopted and implemented. (Though of course the truly right thing to do would be to close the streets, and move the railroad tracks around the burial ground. They should have never been constructed there in the first place). This entire burial ground is a sacred place, not just what has been reclaimed at 1305 N 5th St. I ask and pray that all of it will be given the respectful treatment, honor and protection that this sacred place deserves (all of which is an actual cemetery), and that no more harm will be done there, or anywhere within the burial ground. This burial ground and its people desperately needs your help and continued support, and protection.

Thank you all for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Lenora McQueen

Descendant, researcher and advocate for the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground

Enclosures: 3 maps of the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground to include one highlighting city owned area of the burial ground in fuchsia and lavender, and 1890 City Council records regarding 7th St extension in the burial ground.

Lenora McQueen  
[lenora.m@prodigy.net](mailto:lenora.m@prodigy.net)

November 10, 2024

To: The Richmond City Council

Re: Seeking your support for Ordinance 2024-283, and your help for the still endangered Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground

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given real serious consideration by the city and adopted and implemented. (Though of course the truly right thing to do would be to close the streets, and move the railroad tracks around the burial ground. They should have never been constructed there in the first place). This entire burial ground is a sacred place, not just what has been reclaimed at 1305 N 5th St. I ask and pray that all of it will be given the respectful treatment, honor and protection that this sacred place deserves (all of which is an actual cemetery), and that no more harm will be done there, or anywhere within the burial ground. This burial ground and its people desperately needs your help and continued support, and protection.

Thank you all for your consideration.

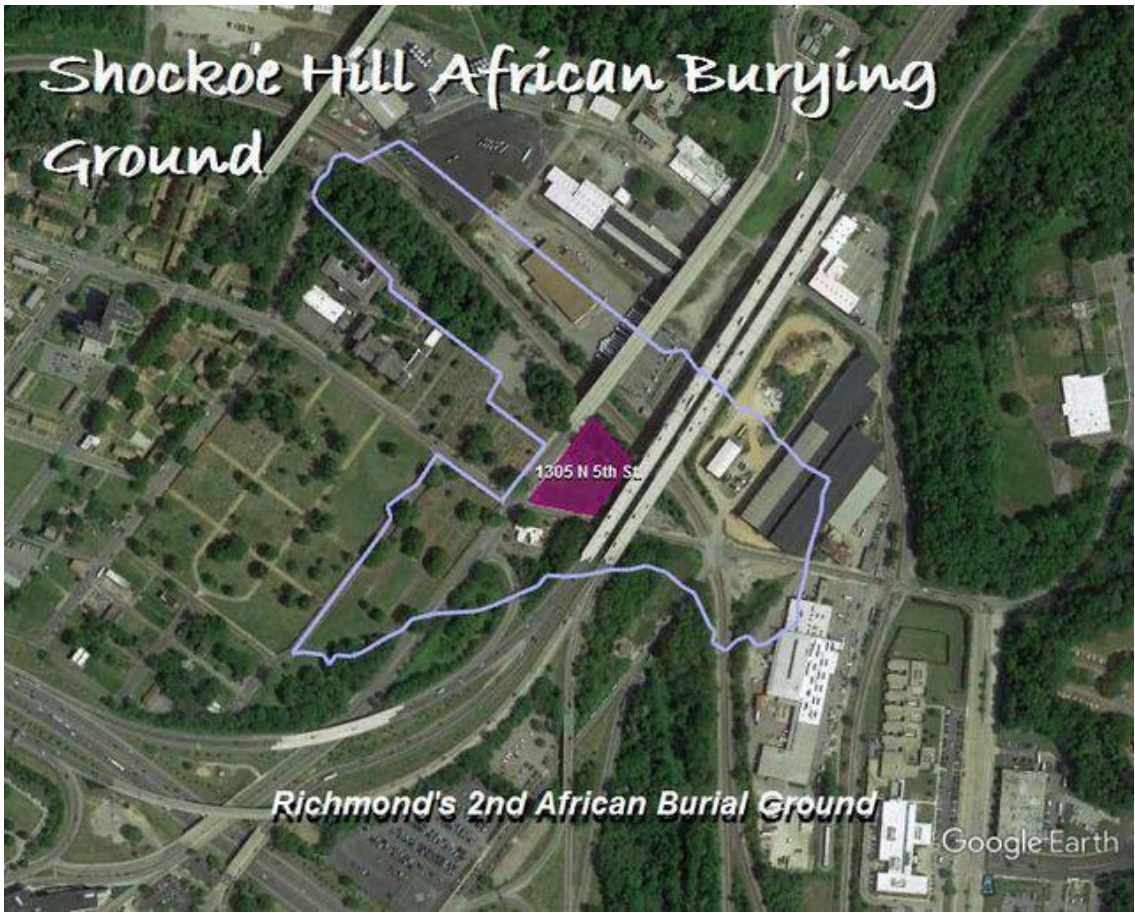
Yours truly,

Lenora McQueen

Descendant, researcher and advocate for the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground

Enclosures: 3 maps of the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground to include one highlighting city owned area of the burial ground in fuchsia and lavender, and 1890 City Council records regarding 7th St extension in the burial ground.





*Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground*

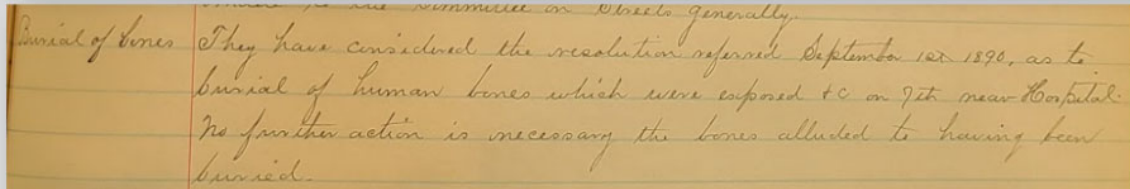
1305 N 5th St

**Richmond's 2nd African Burial Ground**

Google Earth

From City Council meeting held on 6 October 1890:

"Burial of bones: They have considered the resolution referred September 1st 1890, as to burial of human bones which were exposed & c on 7th near Hospital. No further action is necessary the bones alluded to having been buried."

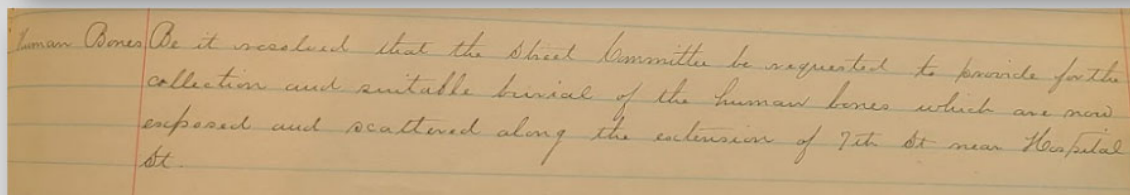


Burial of bones They have considered the resolution referred September 1st 1890, as to burial of human bones which were exposed & c on 7th near Hospital. No further action is necessary the bones alluded to having been buried.

Citation: Richmond City Council, Common Council Journal, April 1887 - November 1890 (Richmond, VA: Library of Virginia, 1890), 753. Accession number: BC7S96774

From City Council meeting held on 1 September 1890:

"Human Bones: Be it resolved that the Street Committee be required to provide for the collection and suitable burial of the human bones which are now exposed and scattered along the extension of 7th St. near Hospital St."



Human Bones Be it resolved that the Street Committee be required to provide for the collection and suitable burial of the human bones which are now exposed and scattered along the extension of 7th St near Hospital St.

Citation: Richmond City Council, Common Council Journal, April 1887 - November 1890 (Richmond, VA: Library of Virginia, 1890), 743. Accession number: BC7S96774





The green areas above represent over a dozen various owners of parts of the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground. The 3 fuchsia areas are city of Richmond owned parcels to include 1305 N 5th St. The lavender areas that include N 2nd St., N 4th St., N 5th St., N 7th St., and Hospital St. are also owned by the city. These streets were constructed in the existing burial ground.

Thank you Mayor Stoney and Councilwoman Robertson for being the patrons of Ordinance 2024-283

**From:** [Fairfax, Colita N.](#)  
**To:** [Mayor Levar Stoney](#); [Daniel.Wagner@richmondgov.com](mailto:Daniel.Wagner@richmondgov.com); [Lambert, Ann-Frances - City Council](#); [Addison, Andreas D. - City Council](#); [Jordan, Katherine - City Council](#); [Nye, Kristen M. - City Council](#); [Lynch, Stephanie A. - City Council Office](#); [Robertson, Ellen F. - City Council](#); [Newbille, Cynthia I. - City Council](#); [Trammell, Reva M. - City Council](#); [Jones, Nicole - City Council Office](#)  
**Cc:** [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Subject:** Advocacy for the Shockoe Slip African Burying Ground  
**Date:** Sunday, November 10, 2024 3:51:45 PM  
**Attachments:** [2024FairfaxLetterforAfricanBuryingGround.pdf](#)

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Dear Honorable Levar Stoney and Councilmembers, please accept my letter of advocacy for the Shockoe Slip African Burying Ground, as I support Ordinance 2024-283. - Colita Fairfax

**Colita Nichols Fairfax, Ph.D.**  
**Professor, Social Scientist, Historiographer**  
**Honors College Senior Faculty Fellow/CAAmPP Faculty Scholar**  
**NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY, 700 Park Avenue**  
**The Ethelyn R. Strong School of Social Work**  
**GWC Brown Memorial Hall, Office 335.17, Norfolk, VA 23504**  
**Voice (757) 823-9593**  
**X - [@cnfairfax](#)**

November 11, 2024

Richmond City Council  
900 E. Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Mayor Levar Stoney and City Councilmembers:

As the immediate past Chairman of the State Board of Historic Resources, a native Richmonder, and a scholar in African American history, policy and culture, I am writing a letter of support for the Ordinance 2024-283 at 1305 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, which is a portion of the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground. I was so elated to represent the state board when we erected the highway marker at the site of the sacred space, and I continue my preservation involvement by issuing this writ to support such efforts there. The significance of this sacred space is that it contains the remains of free and enslaved African people from 1816-1879, before and after the Civil War, with over 22,000 burials on 31 acres. Be mindful that this space remains endangered, and more work is necessary to protect its entire acreage. The Ordinance seems to only protect a portion of it.

I encourage City Council to enact protective measures for the entire ground. I also request that appropriate oversight be provided should the Ordinance pass. It is vitally important that equal respect and resources should be allocated to the development of new lived spaces, and preservation of historic sacred spaces. Please save the burying ground from further desecration by supporting Ordinance 2024-283.

In Service,



Colita Nichols Fairfax, Ph.D.  
Professor  
Robert C. Nusbaum Honors College Senior Faculty Fellow  
Inaugural Fellow with the Center for African American Public Policy

**From:** [Ryan Smith](#)  
**To:** [Nye, Kristen M. - City Council](#); [Lambert, Ann-Frances - City Council](#); [Robertson, Ellen F. - City Council](#); [Addison, Andreas D. - City Council](#); [Jordan, Katherine - City Council](#); [Lynch, Stephanie A. - City Council Office](#); [Newbille, Cynthia I. - City Council](#); [Trammell, Reva M. - City Council](#); [Jones, Nicole - City Council Office](#); [City Clerk's Office ourrosewood](#); [LENORA MCQUEEN](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Ordinance 2024-283, 1305 N 5th St. (part of the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground)  
**Date:** Monday, November 11, 2024 9:29:28 AM  
**Attachments:** [RKS comments on City ordinance 2024-283.pdf](#)

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Dear honorable members of Richmond City Council,

I write in strong support for the proposed Ordinance 2024-283, related to the historic core of the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground at 1305 N. Fifth Street.

On May 27, 1958, the city of Richmond's Director of Recreation and Parks wrote to the City Manager, following an inquiry into the history of the burial ground at Fifth and Hospital Streets. That director advised the city manager that "there doesn't seem to be much documentary proof that the corner of Fifth and Hospital Streets was used as a cemetery."

He wrote those shocking words despite the fact that a city ordinance had set up a cemetery for African Americans at that site in 1815, and despite the fact that official records of interments from that site survived, and despite the fact that eyewitnesses had described burials there over decades, despite the record of that burial ground on numerous maps, and despite the fact that human remains in that area had been disturbed by numerous previous infrastructure projects. Indeed, the city's judgment in 1958 represented yet another step in the ongoing desecration of the much-larger Shockoe Hill African Burial Ground. Accordingly, in spite of all the evidence of the burial ground's existence and ongoing memory, both the northeastern and southeastern corners of that intersection were rezoned for non-cemetery uses by 1959.

Ordinance 2024-283 proposes to return one element of that burial ground, the city-owned parcel at 1305 N. Fifth Street, to its standing as an official city cemetery. This step is essential, for the property is not simply a memorial site. Despite all its desecrations over the years, it remains just as much a cemetery as the yard surrounding St. John's Church, the Barton Heights Cemeteries, Shockoe Hill Cemetery, Oakwood Cemetery, Riverview Cemetery, Maury/Mt. Olivet Cemeteries, and others now recognized by the city. It deserves all the protection of human remains that the city code can offer it.

Additionally, I strongly support the 11/10/2024 statement to you from Lenora McQueen, a recognized descendant whose family members rest in that very ground, and a tireless researcher and advocate for the site's history and memory. Ms. McQueen correctly states that 1305 N. Fifth Street is only a small portion of the much larger Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground, whose active boundaries at one time stretched further to the northwest, north, northeast, east, southeast, south, and southwest. We have good reason to believe that this burial ground served as the largest municipal cemetery in the United States for enslaved and

free Blacks during its many decades of operation. Its history touches countless lives. Its full extent deserves all the recognition and protections the city can offer. Right now, Ordinance 2024-283 can serve as one more step in restoring the site to its proper place, with proper protections.

I thank Mayor Stoney and Councilwoman Robertson for being the patrons of Ordinance 2024-283. I thank you all for your ongoing efforts on behalf of this site. I ask that you support ordinance 2024-283 and vote in its favor.

Sincerely,

Ryan K. Smith  
Professor  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
Department of History  
811 S. Cathedral Place  
Richmond, VA 23284  
[rksmith3@vcu.edu](mailto:rksmith3@vcu.edu)

- author of [Death and Rebirth in a Southern City: Richmond's Historic Cemeteries](#), 2020
- co-author of the Shockoe Hill Burying Ground Historic District multiple property nomination, National Register of Historic Places, 2022

**From:** [Nord Wennerstrom](#)  
**To:** [Nye, Kristen M. - City Council](#); [Lambert, Ann-Frances - City Council](#); [Robertson, Ellen F. - City Council](#); [Addison, Andreas D. - City Council](#); [Jordan, Katherine - City Council](#); [Lynch, Stephanie A. - City Council Office](#); [Newbille, Cynthia I. - City Council](#); [Trammell, Reva M. - City Council](#); [Jones, Nicole - City Council Office](#)  
**Cc:** [Charles Birnbaum](#); [Lenora McQueen](#); [City Clerk's Office](#)  
**Subject:** Per: support for ordinance 2024-283  
**Date:** Monday, November 11, 2024 3:01:44 PM  
**Attachments:** [2024-11-11 SHOCKOE CEMETERY ORDINANCE LTR.pdf](#)

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Dear President Nye and Councilmembers Robertson, Larson, Lambert, Jordan, Addison, Lynch, Newbille, Trammell, and Jones,

Charles A. Birnbaum, President and CEO of The Cultural Landscape Foundation, has asked me to send you the attached letter in support of ordinance 2024-283, which would reestablish the city-owned 1.2-acre site at 1305 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street – part of the larger 31-acre Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground – as an official cemetery.

Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Nord Wennerstrom

### **Nord Wennerstrom**

Director of Communications  
The Cultural Landscape Foundation  
1711 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20009  
(t) 202.483.0553 (m) 202.255.7076 (f) 202.483.0761  
[www.tclf.org](http://www.tclf.org)

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**[Read about Kongjian Yu, winner of the 2023 Cornelia Hahn Oberlander International Landscape Architecture Prize](#)**

**From:** [Lawana Holland-Moore](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#); [Nye, Kristen M. - City Council](#); [Lambert, Ann-Frances - City Council](#); [Robertson, Ellen F. - City Council](#); [Addison, Andreas D. - City Council](#); [Jordan, Katherine - City Council](#); [Lynch, Stephanie A. - City Council Office](#); [Newbille, Cynthia I. - City Council](#); [Trammell, Reva M. - City Council](#); [Jones, Nicole - City Council Office](#)  
**Cc:** [Brent Leggs](#); [Robert Nieweg](#)  
**Subject:** Letter of Support for Ordinance 2024-283  
**Date:** Monday, November 11, 2024 3:43:33 PM  
**Attachments:** [NTHP Action Fund Letter of Support-Shockoe Hill Burying Ground.docx](#)

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Good afternoon,

The African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund of the National Trust for Historic Preservation would like to submit the attached letter of support for Ordinance 2024-283 to the Richmond City Council in favor of 1305 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St. (part of the Shockoe Hill Burying Ground) being designated as an official cemetery.

In addition to protections secured by changing the zoning designation, we hope that the Shockoe Hill Burying Ground will continue to tell its story as a special place to the African American community and to Richmond at large.

Thank you,  
Lawana Holland-Moore

**Lawana Holland-Moore (she/her)**

**DIRECTOR, FELLOWSHIPS & INTERPRETIVE STRATEGIES | AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE ACTION FUND**

E [lmooore@savingplaces.org](mailto:lmooore@savingplaces.org)

P 202.588.6134

**NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

600 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW Suite 500 Washington, DC 20005

<https://savingplaces.org/african-american-cultural-heritage>



**From:** [Chip Dicks](#)  
**To:** [City Clerk's Office](#); [Chip Dicks](#)  
**Subject:** Written Statement of Lamar Advertising Company--ORD 2024-283  
**Date:** Monday, November 11, 2024 8:38:17 PM  
**Attachments:** [Statement of Lamar Advertising Company by Chip Dicks \(Final\) 11122024.pdf](#)

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Madam Clerk,

I am legal counsel for Lamar Advertising Company (“Lamar”) and hereby submit the attached written statement to be made part of the official record of Richmond City Council, in lieu of making oral comments in person or electronically.

This written statement as Lamar’s public comments relative to Item 21 on the Consent Agenda ,ORD 2024-283, “to Establish the City-owned real estate known as 1305 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street, as a cemetery in accordance with City Code Section 7-21, in the Sixth Council District”. We understand this written statement will become public information, upon commencement of the City Council meeting at 6 pm on Tuesday, November 12, 2024.

I also called your office at (804) 646-7955 and selected option 3 prior to November 12, 2024 at 10 am, as directed on the City Council agenda and left a voicemail.

Please confirm receipt of this written statement and that the written statement will become part of the official record of the City Council upon commencement of its meeting on November 12, 2024 at 6 pm.

Thank you.

Chip Dicks  
Gentry Locke Attorneys  
Legal Counsel for Lamar Advertising Company  
7650 Hill Drive  
Richmond, Virginia 23225  
[chip@chipdicks.com](mailto:chip@chipdicks.com)  
[chipdicks@gentrylocke.com](mailto:chipdicks@gentrylocke.com)  
(804) 225-5507 (Direct)  
(804) 314-9080 (Personal Cell)



## Statement of Lamar Advertising Company (“Lamar”)

Lamar has no objection to the proposed ordinance amendment designating 1305 N. Fifth Street (“Fifth Street”) as a cemetery to properly recognize the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground (the “Shockoe Burying Ground”). Out of respect for the sacred nature of the Fifth Street property, Lamar has no longer been using the Fifth Street billboard for advertising for almost a year now, since learning from the City that this property had been identified as the Shockoe Burying Ground.

Lamar owns a perpetual easement on the Fifth Street property and owns the billboard structure that was rebuilt by Lamar in 2003, more than 20 years ago, in accordance with detailed plans approved by the City. In 2023, the City Staff sent Lamar a letter advising of the discovery of the Shockoe Burying Ground and requested that Lamar submit various options for a replacement site on City-owned properties in the City of Richmond.

In a good faith effort to find common ground with the City, Lamar responded to the City Staff’s letter in December 2023 and made a proposal for six alternative options to the City. The City Staff rejected all of Lamar’s six possible locations they provided. Lamar then went back to the drawing board and met directly with Mayor Stoney on July 25, 2024, to discuss two options which appeared to be promising to find common ground. Lamar left that meeting with a verbally agreed to alternative path forward. In September 2024, instead of consecrating that agreement, City Staff made a decision that the agreed to alternate location would not be acceptable.

Lamar rebuilt the Fifth Street billboard more than two decades ago with the City Staff’s approval of a building permit and direct supervision on site during construction. We concur with Mayor

Stoney when he said in a recent statement in a Washington Post article, “the City of Richmond is the only one to blame for this.”

Lamar intends to convey the perpetual easement on the Fifth Street property, and the billboard sign located thereon, to the City, or its assignee, once a mutually acceptable replacement location is found. Lamar looks forward to working with Mayor Elect Avula, Councilwoman Robertson and the new City Council to find common ground and arrive at a mutually agreeable resolution through our good faith discussions with the City.

Respectfully submitted,



Dated: November 12, 2024

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**From:** [Sacred Burial Ground Historical Reclamation Project](#)  
**To:** [Lenora McQueen](#); [Nye, Kristen M. - City Council](#); [Lambert, Ann-Frances - City Council](#); [Robertson, Ellen F. - City Council](#); [Addison, Andreas D. - City Council](#); [Jordan, Katherine - City Council](#); [Lynch, Stephanie A. - City Council Office](#); [Newbille, Cynthia I. - City Council](#); [Trammell, Reva M. - City Council](#); [Jones, Nicole - City Council Office](#); [City Clerk's Office](#); [ourrosewood](#); [Ryan Smith](#); [Ellen Chapman](#); [Dan Mouer](#); [Steve Thompson](#); [Suanna Crowley](#); [Kimberly Gray](#); [Lawana Holland-Moore](#); [Cyane Crump](#); [Elizabeth Kostelny](#); [Robert Nieweg](#); [Christopher Cody](#); [Elizabeth Betsey Merritt](#); [Cat Warren](#); [Nelson Louis P \(In6n\)](#); [Danielle Worthing Porter](#); [Charles Birnbaum](#); [Chip Colwell](#); [Nord Wennerstrom](#); [Brown Hannah Jane \(hjb8ma\)](#); [Michael Solomon](#); [Peighton Young](#); [Brian Palmer](#); [Erin Hollaway](#); [Valerie Parker](#); [Shawn Utsey](#); [Joseph Rogers](#); [Phil Wilayto](#); [Historic Jackson Ward Association](#); [AAHGS Greater Richmond Virginia Chapter](#); [Viola Baskerville](#); [Sa"ad El-Amin](#); [Jeffery Burden](#); [Friends of East End](#); [Astrid B. Liverman](#); [Smith Jolene \(DHR\)](#); [Green Joanna \(DHR\)](#); [McKnight Joanna \(DHR\)](#); [Gray Latoya \(DHR\)](#); [Laura Kiser](#); [Katherine Driggs](#); [Rae Cousins](#); [Lamont Bagby](#); [Michael Jones](#); [Jeremy Lazarus](#)  
**Subject:** The Sacred Ground Project endorses Ord. No. 2024-283  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 12, 2024 4:53:37 PM

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I write to convey my full support for the legislation to formally establish and legally acknowledge the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground as a cemetery in the city of Richmond. Even if Lamarr Advertising were not continuing the desecration of the site by their profit-protecting maneuvers, this is a corrective long overdue for this important site.

The history of the handling of this site by city officials over the course of the last 208 years has been an almost obscene demonstration of openly dismissive and, perhaps worse still, corrupt and deceitful practices justified by a belief in a supremacist social ideology intent on ensuring the official degradation of the humanity of Virginia's Black people. Fortunately, all along, people have fought back, drawing the curtain of deception back to reveal truths in policy and custom that we are most certainly able to make right.

The Sacred Ground Project looks forward to the day when this 1.3 acre founding section of the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground will be joined by its remaining 30+ acres as officially designated and revered for the sacred space it has always been - a cemetery, cared for and understood for the community and cultural treasure that it, along with the equally as invisible Shockoe Bottom African Burial Ground.

**As the Shockoe Project gets closer to realizing the memorial to the Shockoe Bottom African Burial Ground, it is possible the name might be changed, but that will be part of a community-involved process.** For now, the current names should remain consistent and so I respectfully offer two options:

Descriptive language:

" .... the **“Burial Ground for Negroes”** (the first municipal cemetery designated for the burials of Richmond's Black residents, now known as the Shockoe Bottom African Burial Ground)

AND

"Additionally, through the Shockoe Project, efforts are underway to memorialize the **Shockoe**

**Bottom African Burial Ground**, Lumpkin's Slave Jail Pavilion,  
the Trail of Enslaved People, ..."

Sincerely,

Ana Edwards, chair  
Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project  
and on behalf of the Shockoe Bottom African Burial Ground Advisory Group

**P.S. Background for the request to correct the name of the 1799-1816 burial ground in Shockoe Bottom:**

Before 1816, free Black Richmonders petitioned for a new cemetery due to frequent flooding, disturbed burials, and other dishonors related to the "Burial Ground for Negroes" (which later became formally known as The First Municipal African Cemetery) in Richmond, VA, which was established in 1799 in Shockoe Bottom.

....

Additionally, through the Shockoe Project, efforts are underway to memorialize the First Municipal African Cemetery (formerly known as the Burial Ground for Negroes), Lumpkin's Slave Jail Pavilion, the Trail of the Enslaved, Winfree Cottage, the Reconciliation Statue Plaza, as well as the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground.

To say "*which later became formally known as*" is incorrect and misleading--because the wording, "Richmond's First Municipal African Cemetery," is *new* and has never been used in any official way prior to being used as the *title* of the new state historical marker, dedicated just last month, on October 10, 2024. The title of the marker's text is designed to offer an accurate description of the cemetery's status--it was the first city-designated cemetery for Black peoples' burial. Please note, this title was my suggestion to DHR as we worked together to draft the text for the marker, however **the process of titling this marker did not and was not intended to officially change the name of the cemetery. And going forward, it will be particularly important that these passive "paper" decisions not be made official without due process.**

Following the acknowledgment of the "Burial Ground for Negroes" in the early 2000s, there was a social agreement that the site should be proactively referred to as Richmond or Richmond's *African Burial Ground*. Following the growing awareness of the second municipal cemetery located on Shockoe Hill, we realized it was important to clarify the relationship between these two sites and the terms "first" and "second" began to be informally applied, though we never thought these were good formal names for either. "First" always reads well, but "Second" does not and given the scale and duration of the later cemetery, leaves a most inaccurate impression. So, in the last four years, geographical designations have prevailed so that **Shockoe Bottom African Burial Ground** and **Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground** have been utilized in all formal and informal references by associated advocates and news media, including the city.

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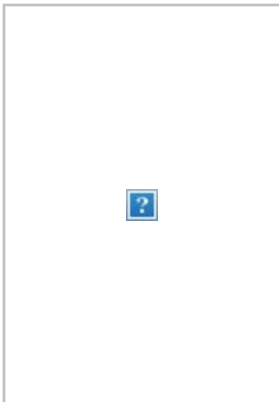
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PO Box 23202, Richmond VA 23223 / 804.644.5834

The Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project was established in 2004, an initiative of the Defenders for Freedom, Justice & Equality. Learn more at [SacredGroundProject.net](http://SacredGroundProject.net)  
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