

Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR

From: Reid, Candice D. - Clerk's Office
Sent: Monday, November 16, 2020 12:35 PM
To: Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR
Subject: FW: Public comment on ORD. 2020-217

Matthew:

Please see below public comment email intended for an item on today's Planning Commission meeting agenda. I confirmed with Mr. Wiseman that he intended to send it to the Commission. Thanks.

Candice Reid
City Clerk
Office of the City Clerk
900 E. Broad St., Ste 200
Richmond, VA 23219
O: (804)646-5621
C: (804)774-0192
F: (804)646-7736

From: Tyler Wiseman [mailto:wisemantyr@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, November 16, 2020 11:11 AM
To: City Clerk's Office <CityClerksOffice@richmondgov.com>
Subject: Public comment on ORD. 2020-217

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Hello,

I'd like to submit comment on ORD. 2020-217 regarding the restriction of access to the Robert E. Lee circle.

Designating this area a park is a thinly veiled attempt to restrict access to an area that has become incredibly important to this city's community. In fairness, for all intensive purposes, this area *has* acted like a park all summer to the folks who have reclaimed it as their own. However, to designate the area as a park legally, without any attempts to include the community in that process, is shameful and cowardly. And VERY reminiscent of Jim Crow era sundown town laws.

I'm appalled that Council would consider this ordinance, given the racist history of curfews and sundown towns which were often enacted to keep black folks away from white areas after a certain time of day (or at any time of day in some cases). Considering the covenants in place historically on Monument Avenue that prohibited black people from owning homes in the area, you really have to wonder why this ordinance is on the table...

Even more pertinent, enacting curfews in response to unrest has proven time and again to only cause more tension and more unrest. And a greater incarceration rate for black folks, as they are disproportionately targeted. Curfews simply don't work.

Please see the quote below from an article by Linda Poon from Bloomberg, written in June of this year (<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-06-18/the-racist-history-of-curfews-in-america>):

One of the earliest uses of curfews to quell unrest was during the Harlem riots of 1943 in New York City, which were sparked by the police shooting of a Black soldier. But more generally, the restrictions became a popular riot-control tool beginning in the 1960s, including during uprisings in Philadelphia and Rochester in 1964, and the 1965 Watts riots in Los Angeles. They were used in L.A. riots of 1992, ignited by the police beating of Rodney King. And more recently, Ferguson, Missouri, was placed under curfew following protests over the police shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown in 2014.

"When authorities come after the riots, they want order, and one of the ways is to impose curfews," said Anderson. In doing so, though, they create tension and resistance instead. The deployment of local police and military troops that often accompanied the curfews injected more chaos — the kind that cities claimed to be preventing. Meanwhile, images and stories of chaos and violence often became the rationale for imposing blanket curfews, even if perpetrators made up only a small proportion of protesters. These curfews give police officers a new justification for arrests, and have often resulted in mass incarceration of Black citizens.

Have we learned nothing?

I really hope council will think long and hard on this matter, and strike this ordinance down. Doom it to history where it belongs.

Sincerely,

A very considered citizen and public historian

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Tyler Wiseman | she/her/hers
Data Analytics and Visualization Certificate. *University of Richmond, 2020*
B.A. History & International Social Justice. *Virginia Commonwealth University, 2014*
<https://wisemantyr.github.io/>
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/tyler-wiseman/>

Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR

From: Alexandra Sward <alix.sward@live.com>
Sent: Monday, November 16, 2020 8:30 AM
To: PDR Land Use Admin
Subject: Ordinance No. 2020-217 Public Comment

CAUTION: This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

To Mr. Ebinger:

I am a Museum District resident and I would like to formally oppose the ordinance that would turn Marcus David-Peters Circle into a public park. The fact that this ordinance was introduced without outreach to the activists and residents who have inhabited the Circle indicates that this is merely a measure to implement curfews and give RPD permission to clear out the Circle at sundown each night. Given the violent and at times unlawful ways RPD responded to peaceful protests on Monument Ave over the summer, I'm sure you can understand that this is a legitimate fear for those of us who gather in the Circle.

Sincerely,
Alexandra Sward
571-235-4945