

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE October 11, 2019

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Update on the Working Group for the Recontextualization of Fair Park History and Memorial to Victims of Lynching in Dallas County**

This memorandum is to make you aware of two upcoming meetings to designate a location for a memorial to victims of lynching in Dallas County and update you on other items requested by City Council resolution on confederate monuments in April 2018 (attached).

The recommended location of the memorial to victims of racial lynching is Martyr's Park at 265 Commerce Street. The Art and Culture Advisory Commission will be briefed on Thursday, October 17th and the Park Board will be asked to approve the placement of the artwork in the park at their Thursday, October 24th meeting.

## Background

By resolution in April 2018, City Council directed the creation of a working group to recommend the scope to contextualize the full history of Fair Park and memorialize the lynching of Allen Brooks.

The three primary areas of focus were:

- 1) Recontextualization of Confederate images at Fair Park: The Working Group held a series of public meetings and community forums to listen to Dallas residents share their memories of important, and often untold, history of Fair Park and the immediate neighboring areas. Additionally, several historians and institutions such as the Dallas Historical Society and Remembering Black Dallas researched key events in the Park's history.

The research process resulted in a preliminary scope of work recommendation for additional signage and interpretation (via technology and other appropriate means). The key pieces should include: The Native American land and origins of the area, The Hall of Negro Life and the 1936 Centennial, Segregation Era Events, the Integration of Fair Park (and including Juanita C. Craft's role), the Impact of the Expansion of the Fair on surrounding areas, and lastly, Latinx cultural history at the Fair. The next step is for the Office of Arts and Culture Public Art and Park & Recreation staff to work with Fair Park First and identify resources to support the plan.

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- 2) Initiate a public art project to memorialize victims of racial violence: The Working Group recognized that there are many victims of racial violence that need memorialization. The original focus was on Allen Brooks, but they quickly realized that several other lynchings should also be memorialized. They evaluated more than five possible locations for the site of this public art, and at the September 24, 2019, meeting the location for this piece of art to be placed in Martyr's Park (265 Commerce Street, Dallas, 75201) was approved. This will now be briefed to Arts & Culture Advisory Commission and Park and Recreation Board, which must approve the location. This will move into our public art process with a series of public meetings and formal call for proposal from eligible artists. The estimated cost is \$120,000 and will require City Council approval in 2020.
- 3) Equal Justice Initiative: As an outgrowth of the research for the memorial above, the Office of Arts and Culture staff and members of the Working Group are finalizing our application for the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) in Montgomery, Alabama. This process will include placing a historic marker at the site of Allen Brook's lynching and to identify and then place a marker at the site of William Taylor's lynching. Then, Dallas may bring the Dallas County monument back to Dallas. EJI only opened this application in 2019, and the Dallas application should be submitted by the end of November 2019.

Special thanks to the wonderful volunteers who served on this Working Group, attending numerous meetings, public meetings and various community events to inform this work. Working Group members include: Joli Robinson (Chair), Buddy Apple, Dealey Campbell, Arthur Greg, Jon Rollins, Craig Holcomb, Dr. George Keaton, Coy Murchison, Melissa Prycer, Albert Valtierra, and Matt Wood.

We will continue to update the City Council on implementation efforts as these plans move forward. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me or Jennifer Scripps, Director of the Office of Arts and Culture, at (214) 670-2828.

  
Joey Zapata  
Assistant City Manager

[Attachment]

c: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager  
Chris Caso, City Attorney (Interim)  
Mark Swann, City Auditor  
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary  
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge  
Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager  
Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager

Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager  
Nadia Chandler Hardy, Assistant City Manager and Chief Resilience Officer  
Michael Mendoza, Chief of Economic Development and Neighborhood Services  
M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer  
Laila Alequresh, Chief Innovation Officer  
M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Chief of Equity and Inclusion  
Directors and Assistant Directors

**WHEREAS**, the enslavement of African-Americans was the primary cause of the Civil War, which divided our country over 150 years ago; and

**WHEREAS**, the Confederacy lost its war against the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the formerly enslaved continued to face discriminatory laws, legal practices, and unpunished violence specifically aimed at preventing them from achieving equality from Reconstruction through the Jim Crow Era; and

**WHEREAS**, even after the economic, social, and legal gains made by the Civil Rights Movement, blacks were still denied equality by a society that discriminated against them even when hard-won laws called for equal treatment; and

**WHEREAS**, Confederate monuments, along with public places, including parks, and streets that are named for prominent Confederates continue to be symbols of our country's division, and create racial barriers in our city; and

**WHEREAS**, these Confederate monuments, symbols, images, and public places, including parks, and streets named for Confederate figures distort the violent and oppressive history of the Confederacy and preserve the principles of white supremacy; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Dallas strives to be a welcoming and inclusive city for all its residents and visitors; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Dallas is developing a comprehensive City equity policy for an equitable, inclusive and welcoming Dallas through its resilience and welcoming communities projects; and

**WHEREAS**, the display of public Confederate monuments glorifying Confederate causes does not promote a welcoming and inclusive community and is against the public policy of the City of Dallas; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Dallas convened a Mayor's Task Force on Confederate Monuments ("Task Force") for a robust public discussion of the history of the Confederate monuments, symbols, names, and commemorations, and the City of Dallas' policy regarding the standards for public commemoration of persons, places, and historical events; and

**WHEREAS**, the Confederate Monument Task Force convened five public meetings and gathered public input to make recommendations for consideration by the City Council; and

**WHEREAS**, the Task Force recommendations were briefed in public meetings to the Public Art Committee of the Cultural Affairs Commission on October 10, 2017, the Cultural Affairs Commission on October 12, 2017 and the City Council's Quality of Life, Arts, and Culture Committee on October 23, 2017; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council discussed the Task Force recommendations at briefing meetings on November 1, 2017 and March 21, 2018.

**Now, Therefore,**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DALLAS:**

**SECTION 1.** That the City Manager shall form a working group of local artists, historians, designers, educators, and community members to recommend **(1)** the scope for adding a full historical context to Confederate art and symbols at Fair Park and commemorating the Hall of Negro Life, including appropriate signage, markers, digital tour guides, public art, educational programming and/or exhibitions; and **(2)** a proper memorial of the lynching of Allen Brooks at the corner of Akard Street and Main Street to be located at Pegasus Plaza.

**SECTION 2.** That Dallas streets with names linked to the Confederacy, including Lee Parkway, Gano, Stonewall, Beauregard, and Cabell, shall not be renamed because of the significant residents' opposition on Lee Parkway, the contributions to Dallas of the Gano and Cabell families, and the unclear origins and associations (based on inconclusive City of Dallas records and archives) of the Beauregard and Stonewall street names.

**SECTION 3.** That this resolution shall take effect on April 25, 2018, and it is accordingly so resolved.

