AGENDA COVER MEMO

Memorandum Date: 4/10/2024

Order Date: 4/23/2024

TO:	Board of County Commissioners
DEPARTMENT:	Public Works
PRESENTED BY:	Dan Hurley, Public Works Director Latiffe Amado, Equity Program Manager
AGENDA ITEM TITLE:	DISCUSSION & ACTION / Sundown Across the Bridge Monument Project – Letter of Support to the Black Cultural Initiative

I. MOTION

Approve signing a Letter of Support to the Black Cultural Initiative for the Sundown Across the Bridge Monument Project.

II. AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

In July 2020, the Board became aware of the history of Lane County's first Black neighborhood, which was destroyed at the direction of the Lane County Board of County Commissioners in 1949 to make way for a new Ferry Street Bridge. This neighborhood has been referred to by various names including the "Ferry Street Village," the "Across the River" community, or the "Across the Bridge" community. In 2021, the Board passed an Order and Resolution to acknowledge this historic racial injustice and to resolve to honor the history of Lane County's first Black neighborhood. The Black Cultural Initiative (BCI) is now moving forward with a monument project to honor this history in collaboration with Lane County, the City of Eugene, the NAACP, and elders of historic Black families in the community. BCI has requested a Letter of Support from the Board to demonstrate Lane County's commitment to the project.

III. BACKGROUND/IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION

A. Board Action and Other History

In the 1940s, African-Americans could not locate safe housing within the city of Eugene due to widespread deed restrictions against selling or renting to people of color and "sundown town" racism by white supremacists. For these reasons, early

Black residents in Lane County established a neighborhood across the Willamette River in an area known as “Willakenzie”, which was not annexed into the city of Eugene until after 1960.

In 1948, Lane County issued notices to vacate the property within six months to make way for the construction of a new Ferry Street Bridge.

On July 16, 1949, Lane County obtained a Court Order demanding specific areas in the neighborhood to be vacated within 10 days. The Court Order required razing of a small number homes in an area delineated by certain riverfront streets.

On August 24, 1949 a bulldozer entered the Ferry Street Village and razed all of the homes in the area and the neighborhood church. Although many of the dozens of residents were prepared, many escaped with only the processions they were able to rescue in a few minutes. Most of the residents were displaced to three new sites on the boundaries of the city of Eugene where there was often no water, electric, or sanitary services.

A Eugene Register-Guard article reported that there were 101 people living on the site, 65 of which were "colored" and 36 were white. *(County Court Tells Ferry St. Villagers to Start Moving, Eugene Register-Guard, July 14, 1949.)* It is worthwhile to note that the white families living in the Village were likely marginalized economically. The Eugene Register-Guard published a photo in 1949 of a group of children gathered around a water pump at the Village with a caption describing the white children as children of migrant workers.

Today, there is no visible physical evidence of the Ferry Street Village or any installations there to educate the public about the history of Lane County’s first Black neighborhood. The historic site is now developed as the northwest portion of Alton Baker Park, a portion of Country Club Road, and commercial properties located across from the park. Alton Baker Park was dedicated in 1967 to honor Alton F. Baker, a white business owner who founded the Register-Guard newspaper and was a champion for creating a park on the north side of the river.

On July 21, 2020, the Board requested staff to draft an Order to acknowledge the history of the land this area and to work with the NAACP and the City of Eugene to explore incorporating a memorial into a walking tour of the Black experience in the area.

On February 2, 2022, the Board passed an Order and Resolution (21-02-02-04) to acknowledge the destruction of Lane County’s first Black neighborhood and to resolve to honor the history of the Ferry Street Village.

July 16, 2024, will mark 75 years since the date that Lane County obtained a Court Order demanding specific areas in the neighborhood to be vacated within 10 days. July 24, 2024, will mark 75 years since Lane County’s first Black neighborhood was razed.

B. Policy Issues

Lane County government has a responsibility to both acknowledge its role in perpetuating injustice and adopt programs, policies, and funding to address inequities. On June 9, 2020, the Board approved a Resolution (20-06-09-06) in support of the Black Lives Matter movement and included a commitment to communicate with the community, including county employees about the root causes of racial inequities as well as the corrective action that has been or will be taken.

C. Board Goals

With Order and Resolution 20-06-09-06, the Board established a goal to honor the history of the Ferry Street Village with a memorial.

D. Financial and/or Resource Considerations

When the Board passed Order and Resolution 20-06-09-06, the Board committed $10,000 to develop plans for a memorial. This money has not been spent. The City of Eugene completed public outreach related to the project but is not intending to bill Lane County for this work. BCI is requesting a contribution of $15,000 - $20,000 from Lane County for the memorial. Staff will include this request for consideration as part of the FY2024-25 budget process.

The total cost of the project is currently estimated at $100,000 - $150,000. BCI is also requesting a $20,000 contribution from the City of Eugene.

E. Health Implications

When people live in fear of violence connected to racism, anti-Semitism, and other forms of bigotry, their stress levels are higher – which can lead to adverse health outcomes including cardiovascular disease and higher rates of infant mortality. Constructing a memorial to honor Lane County's first Black neighborhood will acknowledge past racism and provide hope for a more equitable future.

F. Analysis

A memorial to the Ferry Street Village will not fix the irreparable harm and generational trauma caused when Lane County displaced dozens of Black families into homelessness in 1949. However, acknowledging Lane County's role in carrying out this injustice is important to recognizing past harms and institutional racism. Staff have participated in several meetings with City of Eugene since the 2021 Resolution and support the current proposal by BCI to move the monument project forward in collaboration the City of Eugene, the NAACP, and elders of historic Black families in the community.

G. Alternatives/Options

Option 1: Approve the Chair to sign a letter of support to BCI for the Sundown Across the Bridge Monument Project.

Option 2: Do not approve the letter of support.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends Option 1, to approve the Chair to sign a letter of support to BCI for the Sundown Across the Bridge Monument Project.

V. TIMING/IMPLEMENTATION

BCI is requesting Lane County to identify potential funding by May 31, 2024, and to commit with a $15,000 - $20,000 contribution to the project by July 1, 2024.

VI. FOLLOW-UP

If approved, Staff will send the signed Letter of Support to BCI and will work through the budget process to identify potential funding for the project to meet the request.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

Draft letter of Support

Link to the February 2, 2021 Board Packet containing more historical information.

LANE COUNTY

PUBLIC SERVICE BUILDING / 125 EAST 8TH AVENUE / EUGENE, OR 97401 / (541) 682-4203 / FAX (541) 682-4616

April 23, 2024

Dear Black Culture Initiative,

On behalf of the Lane County Board of County Commissioners, I am writing to express our full support for the "Sundown Across the Bridge Monument Project" which acknowledges and honors the erased history of Ferry Street Village and Eugene's founding Black families. As stewards of our community's well-being and history, we recognize the importance of acknowledging past injustices and striving for reconciliation.

The historical narrative outlined in your project proposal, coupled with the sentiments echoed in our 2021 Board Order No: 21-02-02-04, serves as a stark reminder of the injustices endured by Black communities in Lane County. The forced displacement and destruction of Eugene's first black neighborhood, the Ferry Street Village, are stains on our collective history that cannot be ignored.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the displacement, adding even more significance to this endeavor. We want to be timely in our efforts to honor the living survivors of that displacement, ensuring that their stories are acknowledged and they can celebrate the erection of this monument.

Our predecessors' actions in the 1940's, which led to the displacement of Black families and the erasure of their history, represent a painful chapter in Lane County's past. As the current governing body, we acknowledge the harm caused and the responsibility we bear to address it.

The erection of a monument in Alton Baker Park, dedicated to acknowledging and honoring the erased history of Ferry Street Village and Eugene's founding Black families, is a crucial step towards reconciliation and healing. This monument will serve as a lasting tribute to the resilience and contributions of Black communities in Lane County while also ensuring that their stories are not forgotten.

We will work to identify funding to support this project through our FY24-25 budget process. We understand the financial commitment required to bring this initiative to fruition and are dedicated to ensuring its success.

Thank you for your dedication to this important initiative. Together, let us continue to strive for racial justice and equity in Lane County.

Sincerely,

Laurie Trieger
Board Chair
Lane County Board of County Commissioners

Sundown Across the Bridge

A Monument Project

April 22, 2024

Acknowledging and Honoring the Erased History of
Ferry Street Village and

Eugene's Founding Black Families

Prepared By: Irene Rasheed

The Request

- To have the foundational pioneering Black families neighborhood displacement and destruction properly acknowledged by the City of Eugene and Lane County – via the erection of a monument Alton Baker Park.

- That Lane County participate commit a *minimum* of $20,000 toward the design and fabrication of said monument
- That Lane County participate in a commemoration event of the 75th year anniversary of that injustice on July 21, where the county will acknowledge their part in that history and apologize for it.

- That Lane County will commit a combination of human, financial, and in kind resources toward the July 21st commemoration ceremony.

- That Lane County will appoint one representative to participate in the ceremony on behalf of the county.

*** PLEASE NOTE THE COMMEMORATION CEREMONY WILL ALSO BE THE TIME WHERE THE PUBLIC WILL BE INFORMED OF THE MONUMENT PROJECT AND THE HISTORY BEHIND ITS CREATION, AS WELL AS THE FINACIAL COMMITMENTS MADE BY THE CITY AND COUNTY AND ANY PUBLIC PROJECT SPONSORS.**

Time Line – Lane County

Assign a point person to specifically track and ensure adhering to the execution of this timeline - ASAP

- **April 30**, 2024 - Provide a letter of support stating the County's full endorsement of the commission of a statue/sculpture monument and any funding requests attached specifically and singularly to its creation
- **May 13, 2024** – Pinpoint County representative for Commemoration Ceremony, financial contribution, and review "needs list" for in-kind to determine in-kind contributions to the ceremony.
- **May 31**, 2024 - Pinpoint County funding for creation of a true official monument in statue/sculpture form
- **July 1**, 2024 Explicitly state and commit to a minimum of $15-20k in funding for the monument project (July is the anniversary of the month the families were given 10 days to vacate their homes and settlement in - now - Alton Baker Park)

Time Line – City of Eugene

Assign a point person to specifically track and ensure adhering to the execution of this timeline **- Completed**

- **February 23**, 2024 - Provide a letter of support stating the City's full endorsement of the commission of a statue/sculpture monument and any funding requests attached specifically and singularly to its creation **- Completed**
- **April 1**, 2024 - Progress on archival of records of foundational Black families in the City Government archives **– In Process**
- **May 13, 2024** – Pinpoint a City representative for Commemoration Ceremony, financial contribution, and review "needs list" for in-kind to determine in-kind contributions to the ceremony.
- **June 3**, 2024 - Pinpoint City funding for creation of a true official monument in statue/sculpture form
- **July 1**, 2024 Have the website for Alton Baker Park (specifically the history page)but other pages of similar context edited to include the honest history of the Black families displaced from that area as part of the history of the park **– In Process**
- **July 1**, 2024 Explicitly state and commit to a minimum of $20k in funding for the monument project (July is the anniversary of the month the families were given 10 days to vacate their homes and settlement in - now - Alton Baker Park)

The Time Line – Black Cultural Initiative

With the guidance of Ms. Parker, The Black Cultural Initiative Commits to:

- Ongoing until project completion: Advocate on the behalf of the Black community and those who were displaced in 1949 to ensure the legacy of their family and the other pioneering Black families is honored, and the surviving elders.
- **April 22**, 2024 Conduct a community survey of the Black community and field their suggestions from 3 or 4 locations and design for the statue **– In Process**
- **May 24**, 2024 Find suitable Black Oregonian artists – ideally from or living in Eugene - with the skill to create an outdoor monument of this size and field estimates for the project along with drafts of the proposed monument **– Artist Bio and Monument Design Frameworks Attached**
- **May 28**, 2024 Present proposed monument sketches to the three surviving elders (if their health allows) **– In Process**
- **July 1**, 2024 Working with local and state Black led organizations raise funds for the monument
- **July 15**, 2024 Present a full proposal with timeline to the City

Monument Drafts

With Cost Estimates & Artist Profile

Artist Profile - Percy Appau

Percy Appau is a talented artist residing in Eugene. Oregon who works in mixed media including metal work, woodwork, paint, clay sculpture, etc. His work investigates the cross-cultural topologies of different places. Unique to his practice is a blend of design exploration of two distinct cultures coming together to create a new language or aesthetic. He has worked with Aid to Artisans as a design coordinator to assist local artisans in Ghana, helped develop products to meet the demands of the wholesale markets in the United States, United Kingdom, and other parts of Europe, and possesses an MFA degree in Applied Craft + Design from Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA) in Portland, Oregon. He has earned his BFA in Multimedia Design from the University of Oregon, associate in graphic design at Lane Community College, and Industrial Design from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana.

https://appau.com/

Design 1

Mixed medium Granite and relief in Bronze FOUR FIGURES

Modeling 2000 per side (4 sides)

- Mold making/investments $2500 a piece
- Casting / Patina $3000 per piece
- Black Cost of Granite $300 per square foot 48” square by 6ft ie. 86.87 square feet
- Artist Fee: 25000 Contingency: 15000 Total: 103,000
- Engineering $5000-8000 (pricing depends on the engineer) Calibrating inner stainless structure

Artist Fee: $25000 Contingency: $15000

Total: $104,000

Design 2

Mixed medium Granite and relief in Bronze THREE to FOUR FIGURES

Modeling $2500 per figure 6ft by 17”
5pcs of sculpture sculpting a month per piece

- Mold making/investments $2000 a piece
- Casting / Patina $3000 per piece
- Engineering $5000-8000 (pricing depends on the engineer) Stainless structure
- Installation: Fountain plus installation $10000

Artist Fee: $25000 Contingency: $15000

Total: $103,000 – 150,000

Design 3

Variable medium Granite and relief in Bronze SIX to EIGHT FIGURES

Modeling $2500 per figure 6ft by 17” 5pcs of sculpture sculpting a month per piece

- Mold making/investments $2000 a piece
- Casting / Patina $3000 per piece
- Engineering $5000-8000 (pricing depends on the engineer) Stainless structure

Artist Fee: $25000 Contingency: $15000

Total: $125,000 – 175,000

General Scale

Basic Monument Timeline

- **Milestone 1:** Conceptual Refined Proposal- 1 month
- **Milestone 2:** Developed Design: Pages- 3 months 3-D Modeling 6-months
- Investments and casting: 4 months
- **Milestone 3:** Final Design Meeting Construction Drawings month Engineering 2 weeks
- Permitting - TBD
- Fabrication: 3 weeks
- Mid-point check six months inception Installation: TBD