



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
REGULAR MEETING

#17-0010

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of
the Fort Lauderdale City
Commission

FROM: Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM, City Manager

DATE: February 7, 2017

TITLE: Resolution Expressing Support for the Nomination of the North Woodlawn Cemetery to the National Register of Historic Places, Authorizing Transmittal to the State, and Providing an Effective Date

Recommendation

It is recommended the City Commission approve a Resolution expressing support for the nomination of the North Woodlawn Cemetery located at 1901 NW 9th Street (Folio #: 504204220010), Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33311, to the National Register of Historic Places, authorizing transmittal to the State, and providing an effective date.

Background

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) submitted a Florida Nomination Proposal requesting consideration for the nomination of the North Woodlawn Cemetery to the National Register of Historic Places to the State Historic Preservation Officer (see Exhibit 1, page 17). In accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and Florida Certified Local Government Guidelines (FCLG), the State Historic Preservation Officer, responsible for identifying and nominating eligible properties in the State of Florida to the National Register, is required to consult with local authorities, notify the property owner, and obtain an evaluation from the Historic Preservation Board (HPB) acting in the place of the State Historic Preservation Review Board. The City of Fort Lauderdale is both the local authority and property owner.

On August 1, 2016, the HPB reviewed the nomination proposal (Historic Preservation Board Case H16004, attached as Exhibit 1) and by a vote of 8-0 approved the proposed nomination of the North Woodlawn Cemetery National Register application. HPB minutes are attached as Exhibit 2. The HPB considered the information provided in the application packet, i.e. the Narrative Description, Physical Description, the Statement of Significance, application of criteria, other provided evidence (photos, maps, public records etc.), and the memorandum prepared by Merrillyn Rathbun, the City's Historic Preservation Consultant (Exhibit 3). Ms. Rathbun qualifies as a history and architectural history professional in accordance with the National Park Service,

Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Architectural History as published in 48 Federal Registry 44716-01, previously published in the Code of Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 61. The following is an excerpt of the consultant's memorandum:

Property Background

North Woodlawn Cemetery is located in a remote northwest section of Fort Lauderdale. Established in the mid-1920s on land donated by James H. Dillard, it served the City's African-American community. The City and all of the State of Florida were under strict racial segregation until the 1960s. At that time African-American residents were restricted to the northwest section of Fort Lauderdale.

The original size of the cemetery is unknown; however, 1940 records show that it was five acres and included a potters' field. Many of the graves are unmarked and others have homemade markers (folk art) provided by the families. By the 1950s the cemetery owners had run out of money, and the property was poorly maintained. At the request of the African-American community the City opened a municipally maintained cemetery to serve the Black community. The City seized the Woodlawn property in 1996 and the cemetery was closed to burials. The City of Fort Lauderdale designated the cemetery as a local historic resource in 1996¹ (70-H-95).

Description of Proposed Project

The applicants are applying for listing of the cemetery in the National Register of Historic Places. As the City of Fort Lauderdale has Certified Local Government (CLG) status, the City of Fort Lauderdale Historic Preservation Board and the City's highest elected official are required to review and comment on the applicant's request for listing. Board members have been provided with copies of the Woodlawn Cemetery application for listing in the National Register.

National Register Bulletin 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*; U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (revised 1995) states four criteria (A through D) for listing properties in the National Register. The applicants are requesting listing under three, Criterion A, Ethnic (Black) Heritage, Criterion C, African-American Folk Art (homemade grave markers), and Criterion D, information.

Bulletin 15 describes Criterion A as applying to a property having association with events important within the historic context of a community. It can refer to a pattern of events, which in this case is what the applicants describe as Ethnic Heritage (Black) i.e. the Fort Lauderdale African-American community in the time of segregation. To meet Criterion C, which refers to design and construction, the applicant's narrative describes the homemade grave markers as "exceptional and unique African-American folk art" to meet this criterion's requirement of possessing high artistic value. The applicants maintain that Criterion D, information, is met because of the possibility of

¹ Local historic designation is not a requirement for listing in the National Register.

providing “scientific information” on community burial patterns and the cemetery’s distinctive design features.

Resource Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

Strategic Connections

This item is a *Press Play Fort Lauderdale Strategic Plan 2018* initiative, included within the Neighborhood Enhancement Cylinder of Excellence, specifically advancing:

- Goal 6: Be an inclusive community made up of distinct, complementary, and diverse neighborhoods.

This item advances the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale Vision Plan 2035: We Are Community*.

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – HPB Application

Exhibit 2 – HPB Minutes

Exhibit 3 – Consultant Memorandum

Exhibit 4 – Resolution

Prepared by: Linda Mia Franco, AICP, Principal Planner

Department Director: Anthony Gregory Fajardo, Sustainable Development