



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 18, 2020

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of the nomination of the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery to the National Park Service African American Civil Rights Network

ISSUE: Consideration of the nomination of the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery to the National Park Service African American Civil Rights Network.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council

1) Ratify the nomination of the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery to the National Park Service African American Civil Rights Network; and

(2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: The Alexandria Archaeology Commission (AAC) has unanimously voted to nominate Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery to the National Park Service African American Civil Rights Network. The African American Civil Rights Network Act of 2017, sponsored by Congressman William Lacy Clay (D-MO) and signed into law in January 2018, authorizes the National Park Service to coordinate and facilitate Federal and non-Federal activities to commemorate, honor and interpret "...the history of the African American Civil Rights movement; the significance of the civil rights movement as a crucial element in the evolution of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and the relevance of the African American Civil Rights movement in fostering the spirit of social justice and national reconciliation."

DISCUSSION: The AAC believes that Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery represents a unique and compelling example of civil rights from the 19th century and a highly acclaimed example of how city archeology can bring these stories to light. In 1864, the United States Colored Troops (USCT) successfully

petitioned for the disinterment and reburial of 118 USCT from the Contrabands and Freedmen Cemetery to Alexandria National Cemetery. This notable event - the earliest civil rights action in Alexandria - is part of the site's significance and National Register status.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no fiscal impact to the City of Alexandria.

STAFF:

Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager

Gretchen Bulova, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria.