



**Date of Council Meeting: October 26, 2015**

**TOWN OF LEESBURG  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

**Subject:** Historical Marker and Memorial on Courthouse Grounds

**Staff Contact:** Kaj Dentler, Town Manager  
Kate Trask, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation

**Council Action Requested:** Work session discussion.

**Staff Recommendation:** None at this time.

**Commission Recommendation:** Not Applicable.

**Fiscal Impact:** To be determined upon Council direction.

**Work Plan Impact:** To be determined upon Council direction.

**Executive Summary:** Town Council requested a work session discussion on the status of the proposed historical marker and a courthouse memorial recognizing the enslaved that were sold on the Courthouse steps, and those from Loudoun County who fought during the Civil War on the side of the Union. This recognition is also intended to acknowledge the factual role that the courthouse site played in the Underground Railroad network.

**Background:** At the request of the Loudoun County Chapter of the NAACP, the County of Loudoun Board of Supervisors approved the placement of a historical marker and a memorial on the courthouse grounds. The County approved the use of \$50,000 for the future memorial, and approved use of this funding for the historical marker if needed. See Attachments #1 and #2.

Currently, the President of the Loudoun County Chapter of the NAACP, Phillip Thompson, is working with the Courthouse Grounds Committee to erect a historical marker on the courthouse grounds. Per his letter dated, September 7, 2015, the goal is to provide historical reference to the Courthouse grounds being used for the sale of slaves and to the placement of the Courthouse grounds on the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service as a National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Site. See Attachment #3.

**Attachments:**

1. September 2, 2105 Minutes. See Item #12. County of Loudoun Board of Supervisors.
2. September 2, 2015 Action Item: County of Loudoun Board of Supervisors, Request for General Funds to Support the Construction of Memorial(s) on the Courthouse Grounds.
3. September 7, 2105 Letter from Loudoun County NAACP Chapter President.

*This item was deferred.*

Staff Contacts: Paul Mounier, Kathleen Leidich & Joe Kroboth, Transportation and Capital Infrastructure

11. BOARD MEMBER INITIATIVE: AMENDMENT TO THE RULES OF ORDER – MEETING ATTENDANCE FOR ADVISORY BOARDS

Chairman York moved that the Board of Supervisors direct staff to amend the Rules of Order to allow the Board to remove an appointee from a committee, commission, or board should the leadership of said entity recommend removal due to excessive absences. The removal will be considered by the Board after the district office of the nominating Supervisor has the opportunity to pursue corrective measures. (Seconded by Supervisor Higgins. The motion passed 8-0-1, Vice Chairman Buona absent for the vote.)

Staff Contact: Robin Bartok, Staff Aide to Chairman York

12. BOARD MEMBER INITIATIVE: REQUEST FOR GENERAL FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MEMORIAL ON THE COURTHOUSE GROUNDS

Chairman York moved that the Board of Supervisors support and work with the Loudoun County community in their desire to design and plan a memorial(s) on the courthouse grounds that honors and remembers the enslaved that were sold on the courthouse steps and those individuals from Loudoun County who fought for the Union during the Civil War.

Chairman York further moved that \$50,000 from the General Fund be used for the construction of the memorial(s), but held in reserve until the remaining portion of the monies needed has been raised.

Chairman York further moved that, if needed, funds from the \$50,000 be used for the placement of a historical marker recognizing the Loudoun County Courthouse as making a significant contribution to the understanding of the Underground Railroad in American history and is part of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. (Seconded by Supervisor Williams.)

Supervisor Reid requested that the motion be divided.

(Chairman York's motion to support the design and plan of a memorial passed 8-0-1, Vice Chairman Buona absent for the vote.)

(Chairman York's motion to approve funding of \$50,000 from the General Fund passed 7-0-1-1; Vice Chairman Buona absent for the vote, Supervisor Reid abstained.)

Staff Contact: Robin Bartok, Staff Aide to Chairman York

Date of Meeting: September 2, 2015

#12

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
ACTION ITEM  
BOARD MEMBER INITIATIVE**

**SUBJECT:** Request for General Funds to Support the Construction of Memorial(s) on the Courthouse Grounds

**ELECTION DISTRICT:** Countywide

**CRITICAL ACTION DATE:** At the Pleasure of the Board

**STAFF CONTACTS:** Robin Bartok, Staff Aide to Chairman York

**PURPOSE:** To support the placement of a memorial(s) in recognition of the enslaved that were sold on the Courthouse steps and those from Loudoun County who fought during the Civil War on the side of the Union, and reserve \$50,000 for the construction of the memorial(s), and support placement of a historical marker recognizing the Loudoun County Courthouse as part of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Chairman York recommends approval

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**BACKGROUND:** Three brick courthouses – dating from 1761, 1811 and 1895 have served Loudoun County on the same site. Auctions of enslaved people were once held on the steps. Today the Loudoun County courthouse has the distinction of being designated an Underground Railroad Network to Freedom site by The National Park Service. This designation was granted because the courthouse is where two trails took place that illustrates the struggle for freedom and equality. Two free African-American men, Leonard Grimes and Nelson Talbott Gant, were tried there for helping women and children escape from slavery; Leesburg attorney John Janney took part in these two trials. In 1840, Janney obtained the least punishment possible for free-born carriage-driver Leonard Grimes for stealing enslaved Patty and her six children on behalf of Patty’s free husband. In the second trial, Janney successfully argued the 1846 acquittal of freed slave Nelson Talbott Gant for stealing his enslaved wife Maria with the help of Underground Railroad agents in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

African-Americans from Loudoun County played important roles during the Civil War. They did not just stand by passively as spectators or cheerleaders for the Union during the war. They played a pivotal role in shaping their own destiny and the outcome of the war. They served as soldiers, sailors, nurses, spies, and scouts. At least two hundred and fifty African-American Soldiers and a dozen sailors from Loudoun County served in the Union military during the war. Some of these brave men would see action and ultimately give their lives in some of the most significant battles of the war.

Of all the special units that were formed to combat Confederate partisan rangers in Virginia during the Civil War, the Blazer Scouts, the Jesse Scouts, Cole's Maryland Cavalry and others — probably the most promising was the Loudoun Rangers, an independent cavalry unit drawn from the largely Quaker and German farming communities of northern Loudoun County, Virginia. The Loudoun Rangers, also known as Mean's Rangers for their commander, Samuel C. Means, was a partisan cavalry unit raised in Loudoun County, Virginia, that fought for the Union during the American Civil War. The Rangers have the distinction of being the only unit raised in present-day Virginia to serve in the Union Army. The Loudoun Rangers were formed in the spring of 1862, when the Union Army first occupied Loudoun County as part of its campaign in the Shenandoah Valley. Returning with the army was local unionist, Samuel Means, who had been run out of the county the previous year by local Confederates. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton issued Means orders to raise a company of men to serve as independent command, of which he would serve as captain, for special service in Loudoun and along the Virginia-Maryland border. Recruiting operations were established in the northern Loudoun Valley, an area of strong unionist sentiment, eventually leading to the formation of 2 companies. For the first two years of service the Loudoun Rangers served as partisans, often in conjunction with Cole's Maryland Cavalry (1st Potomac Home Brigade) fighting their confederate counterparts, such as White's Comanche's, Mosby's Rangers and John Mobberly's renegade band in and around Loudoun. In 1864 the Rangers were absorbed into regular service, leading to Means' departure. Daniel Keyes subsequently took his place as leader of the outfit. During the final years of the war the Rangers were attached to the Union army in the Shenandoah Valley and took part in the Valley Campaigns of 1864 under General Phillip Sheridan. As the war in the valley came to an end, the Rangers returned to their partisan role and were eventually effectively broken up in April 1865 when a detachment of Mosby's Rangers raided their camp at Castleman's Ferry and captured the better part of the command. The Rangers were officially mustered out of service the following month.

It is important to have a balanced depiction of the turbulent Civil War history that occurred in Loudoun County. In front of the courthouse stands a statue of a Confederate soldier. The statue was designed by F.S. Sievers, and dedicated to the courthouse in 1908. It serves as a memorial to the many Rebel soldiers who died fighting for the cause in which they believed. To achieve the balance needed and to tell more of the story, it has been suggested that a memorial(s) to those that died trying to stop slavery, including the formerly enslaved and escaped slaves that joined the Union forces, along with the other Loudoun County residents who were members of the Union Army, be constructed.

In addition to supporting the placement of the memorial(s) on the Courthouse Grounds, Chairman York is suggesting that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) reserve \$50,000 from the General Fund to support the construction of the memorial(s). Such funds would not be released until all fundraising efforts are completed. This is the same proposal that was done with another proposed project. The BOS in support of the Patriot Project, a memorial honoring Loudoun County's Revolutionary War participants, designated \$50,000 from the general fund balance towards the completion of this memorial upon the successful completion of the fundraising efforts. It is being proposed that \$50,000 be put aside from the general fund balance to be donated towards the completion of this memorial(s) following the completion of any fundraising efforts to fund this project.

In addition to the memorial(s), the NAACP, Loudoun Chapter, and other members of the community are working with Judge Horne and Gary Clemens, Clerk of the Court, to add a historical marker along the sidewalk to inform the public that this is a certified Underground Railroad site. On December 30, 2003, the National Park service certified the Loudoun County Courthouse as making a significant contribution to the understanding of the Underground Railroad in American history and met the requirements for the inclusion in the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. Cost for the historical marker should be around \$1,000 and may qualify for State funding. Chairman York would propose that should the marker not qualify in whole or part for State funding that we use funds from the reserved funds for the memorial(s).

**ISSUES:** None

**FISCAL IMPACT:** \$50,000 from the General Fund

**DRAFT MOTION(S):**

1. I move that the Board of Supervisors support and work with the Loudoun County community in their desire to design and plan a memorial(s) on the courthouse grounds that honors and remembers the enslaved that were sold on the courthouse steps and those individuals from Loudoun County who fought for the Union during the Civil War, and

I further move that \$50,000 from the General Fund be used for the construction of the memorial(s), but held in reserve until the remaining portion of the monies needed has been raised, and

I further move that, if needed, funds from the \$50,000 be used for the placement of a historical marker recognizing the Loudoun County Courthouse as making a significant contribution to the understanding of the Underground Railroad in American history and is part of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

2. I move an alternate motion

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Certificate of acceptance of Loudoun County Courthouse into National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom

# CERTIFICATE OF ACCEPTANCE

*Presented to*

*Loudoun County Courthouse*

The National Park Service has evaluated this SITE as making a significant contribution to the understanding of the Underground Railroad in American history and it meets the requirements for inclusion in the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom



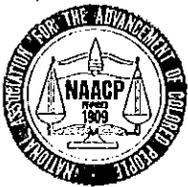
*David N. Given*

David N. Given, Acting Regional Director  
Midwest Region, National Park Service

December 30, 2003



NATIONAL  
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD  
NETWORK TO FREEDOM



**LOUDOUN COUNTY NAACP UNIT#7084**

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September 7, 2015

Jeremiah M. Lorrig, Chairman  
Loudoun County Courthouse Grounds Committee  
Office of the County Administrator  
1 Harrison Street, S.E.  
Mailstop #02  
Leesburg, VA 20175

Re: Placement of a Historical Marker on Courthouse Grounds

Dear Mr. Lorrig:

I am writing on behalf of the Loudoun County NAACP regarding our efforts in conjunction with the Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Black History Committee to place a new historical marker at the Loudoun County Courthouse Grounds. On Wednesday September 2, 2015, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors voted to approve the placement of a historical marker and eventually a memorial on the Courthouse Grounds. As part of my testimony, I ensured the Board of Supervisors that we would work with the Loudoun County Courthouse Grounds Committee on these efforts.

Thus representatives of our effort would like to come to your September 22, 2015 meeting to discuss our proposed plans for the placement of a State of Virginia approved Historical Highway Markers on the Courthouse grounds. Our goal is to provide a historical reference to the Courthouse grounds being used for the sale of slaves and the placement of the Courthouse grounds on the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service as a National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Site. Our original plans were for the placement of the markers outside the Courthouse grounds, but, after a meeting with Mr. York, Mr. Clemens and Judge Horne; it was decided that we should place a marker inside the Courthouse grounds near the present historical marker.

We look forward to meeting with the Courthouse Ground Committee. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely

Phillip E. Thompson  
President Loudoun Branch of the NAACP

Cc: Loudoun NAACP Executive Committee  
Black History Committee  
Board of Supervisors  
Clerk of the Court  
File