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February 13, 2018
3:00 p.m.
(AMENDED)

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the City Council
FROM: Council President Anna Lopez Brosche
RE: Task Force on Civil Rights History

On January 24, 2018, the Times-Union Editorial Board published an article *Civil Rights Trail Skips Us* citing the creation of a new U.S. Civil Rights Trail which reads:

This editorial page has been commenting in recent months on Jacksonville's proud history involving its African-American residents and its civil rights history. Much of the impetus for this emphasis is based on the lack of attention this history has been given in Jacksonville. A new example of this forgotten history comes in the announcement of a new U.S. Civil Rights Trail. It covers 14 states and more than 100 historic landmarks. Yet Florida is not included, despite all the great history in this state, but especially in the Jacksonville and St. Augustine areas. Where are our civil rights memorials? A Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro, N.C., the site of sit-ins in 1960, is now a civil rights museum. Jacksonville had sit-ins near Hemming Park. Where's our civil rights museum? The Ritz does a lot but it deserves more funding and support. For instance, plaques are not enough at James Weldon Johnson's homesite in LaVilla or for A. Philip Randolph in the Prime Osborn Convention Center. The shame is that the rest of the nation is unlikely to know that James Weldon and Rosamond Johnson, writers of "Lift Every Voice and Sing," wrote this classic in Jacksonville for Stanton students. Jacksonville is the site of major educational institutions for African-Americans including Edward Waters College, Stanton and Darnell-Cookman schools. Florida and Jacksonville need to be on the Civil Rights Trail. First, Jacksonville must act with more than plaques.

There have been 18 individuals inducted into the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame; six of those individuals, one-third of all inducted, are from Jacksonville: Dr. Arnett Elyus Girardeau Jr., Earl M. Johnson, Rutledge Henry Pearson, Sallye Brooks Mathis, James Weldon Johnson, and Asa Philip Randolph. Indeed, Jacksonville has a rich civil rights history that should be more widely known and celebrated, including tourism promotion efforts at the national, state, and local levels.

While I understand that Visit Florida is taking action to rectify Florida's exclusion from the recently created U.S. Civil Rights Trail, my research and discussions leading to such efforts suggests we have an opportunity to leverage these events into a positive outcome for our community. I am hereby establishing a Task Force on Civil Rights History and have asked The Honorable Warren Jones and Ju'Coby Pittman to serve as co-chairs of a 27-member body representing people in the community who have a keen interest in serving and carrying out its mission.

CHARGE: Make recommendations for how the City of Jacksonville can better reflect and educate about its rich civil rights history.

CHAIRS: The Honorable Warren Jones, Duval County School Board, Co-chair
Ju'Coby Pittman, Clara White Mission, Co-Chair

MEMBERS: Tony Allegretti, Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville
Dr. Alan Bliss, Jacksonville Historical Society
Dr. Richard Danford, Jacksonville Urban League
Ennis Davis, moderncities.com
Brenda Frinks, Black EXPO
Dr. Tim Gilmore, Florida State College at Jacksonville
Dr. Marvin Grant, Edward Waters College
Chris Hand, Eavenson, Fraser, Lunsford & Ivan
Maria Hane, Museum of Science and History
Rhiley Hodges, Paxon School for Advanced Studies
The Honorable Rodney L. Hurst, Sr.
Brenda Hutchins, Black History Calendar
Rahman Johnson, Edward Waters College
John Lumpkin
Eric Mann, YMCA
Bishop Rudolph W. McKissick, Sr.
Hope McMath, Yellow House
Marsha Phelts
Marcus Pollard, Jacksonville Jaguars
Isaiah Rumlin, Jacksonville Branch of the NAACP
Darnell Smith, Florida Blue
Monica Smith, Visit Jacksonville
Adonnica L. Toler, Ritz Theatre and Museum
Lloyd Washington, Durkeeville Historical Society
Alton Yates

DEADLINE: I look for this body to bring forth a final report of recommendations by June 30, 2018.

I would like to thank The Honorable Warren Jones and Ju'Coby Pittman for agreeing to co-chair this task force and lead us in our work, and I appreciate the willingness of the members to devote the necessary attention to this very important issue for our community as a whole. Collectively, I look forward to the opportunity to shine a brighter light on our right civil rights history.

ALB/js

cc:

Council Members/Staff

Cheryl Brown, Director/Council Secretary

Jeff Clements, Chief, Research Division

Carol Owens, Chief, Legislative Services Division

Jessica Matthews, Legislative Supervisor

Paula Shoup, Information Systems Administrators

Kyle Billy, Council Auditor

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