

TASK FORCE ON CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY

Repository Subcommittee Meeting

Agenda

Monday, April 23, 2018

10:00 AM

Conference Room A, Suite 425, City Hall

Tape No. _____

**Jeff Clements, Chief of Research Division
Research Assistant: Yvonne P. Mitchell**

The Honorable Rahman Johnson, Co-Chair

Adonnica Toler, Co-Chair

John Lumpkin

Lloyd Washington

Richard Danford

Dr. Marion Grant

Meeting Convened:

Meeting Adjourned:

Call to Order

Introductions

Purpose of Meeting

Repository Location Suggestions:

- Snyder Memorial Church
- Ritz Theatre
- Old Stanton
- City building across street from Ritz

Public Comment

Announcements

Next Meeting

Adjournment

Note: Other items may be added at the discretion of the chair

**Next Repository Subcommittee Meeting is Monday, May 7, 2018
Next Task Force on Civil Rights History is Wednesday, May 9, 2018**

In long-empty church, activist sees potential for museum of Jacksonville's civil rights past

By Steve Patterson

Posted Apr 21, 2018 at 4:05 PM

Updated Apr 21, 2018 at 6:54 PM

Fifty-eight years after blacks and whites met in a church to negotiate integrating Jacksonville lunch counters following a riot, a city task force is considering whether that church should become a museum.

Snyder Memorial, a one-time Methodist church, was a sanctuary for some blacks who were beaten with ax handles and baseball bats by whites attacking downtown lunch-counter demonstrations in 1960. Meetings between white businessmen, ministers and black activists began months later, as downtown merchants felt the pinch of a black boycott.

The building on the edge of Hemming Park was suggested as a museum site this month by a task force member who was a sit-in organizer and took part in the talks that followed, Rodney Hurst.

"It just makes sense," said Hurst, a civil rights activist and former City Council member. "It's a city-owned building and it has civil rights history."

The task force on Jacksonville's civil rights history is supposed to recommend steps to build knowledge of local civil rights history and cultivate tourism involving civil rights sites. The task force has no power to decide Snyder's future, only to recommend choices to Council President Anna Lopez Brosche.

So far, nothing has even been recommended about the 1903-vintage building, which has been vacant for years and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

But the building at 226 N. Laura St., in easy eyeshot of City Hall, exemplifies the kind of site Jacksonville could end up promoting to build interest in the city's racial history. A museum there would borrow from the approach already used to draw tourists to sites like the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tenn., where Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated; the bombed 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala., where four schoolgirls were killed; and the Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro, N.C., where sit-ins sparked copycat efforts nationally.

"I think Snyder Memorial could be the long game for this. And that's really exciting to me," said Chris Janson, a University of North Florida education professor who runs the school's Center for Urban Education and Policy.

Janson works with Hurst on projects that incorporate local black history into education programs, such as a mural project being painted by high-school-age artists in the city's Eastside. He said Jacksonville's legacy is comparable to those in cities that are already recognized for their roles in civil rights struggles.

Hurst said Snyder Memorial, by being in downtown's heart, could be used as a central place to familiarize visitors with the stories of a range of people who were important to civil rights advances, such as educator-attorney-writer James Weldon Johnson and labor leader A. Philip Randolph, who helped push President Harry Truman to integrate the armed forces in 1948 and was a key figure in organizing the 1963 March on Washington, where King delivered his "I have a dream" speech.

Snyder Memorial doesn't have to be the only route to telling those stories, though.

A separate effort is under way, for example, to honor Johnson and his brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, who jointly created "Lift Every Voice and Sing," the 1900-vintage hymn that was later labeled the Negro National Anthem. The men were born in a now-demolished house in LaVilla, and other members of the task force were working before the panel's creation to have the site declared a national landmark with displays to memorialize the men.

The square-block of vacant property around the former home site is the city-owned Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing Park, where the LaVilla Jazz and Heritage Festival is scheduled Sunday from noon to a little after 7 p.m. around Forsyth and Johnson streets.

Task force members have had other ideas about using buildings, too, including converting Old Stanton, the large segregation-era schoolhouse at 521 W. Ashley St., into a museum and document repository. The 62,000-square-foot building was deeply important to generations of black Jacksonville, but the century-old building would need extensive renovation and Brosche quickly said the task force should consider other possibilities.

Snyder Memorial needs work too, but was livable enough to open to the public when One Spark and Jacksonville Jazz Festival events happened at Hemming Park. The city has owned it since 2004, but has perpetually wondered what to do with it, offering it for sale at one point but finding no suitable takers.

Whether interest in the old church can survive even within the task force may become clear in coming weeks, as subcommittees think through issues involving depositories and finances to achieve task force goals will begin meeting.

Steve Patterson: (904) 359-4263



OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

117 WEST DUVAL STREET, SUITE 425
4TH FLOOR, CITY HALL
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202
904-630-1377

April 19, 2018

TASK FORCE ON CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY SUBCOMMITTEES - AMENDED

Civil Rights History Inventory (Timeline)

The committee shall: 1) create an inventory of people, places, things, and situations reflective of civil rights history; and 2) prioritize inventory to identify people, places, things, and situations that should receive local, state, and federal historic designation.

Committee Members:

Dr. Tim Gilmore, Co-Chair
Rodney Hurst, Co-Chair
Dr. Brenda Simmons-Hutchins
Isaiah Rumlin
Bishop R. McKissick

Inventory Subcommittee Meeting Location/Time

Second and Fourth Tuesday at 11:30 a.m.
St. James Bldg @ City Hall, Suite 425, Conference Room A
117 W. Duval Street

Civil Rights History Marketing

The committee shall: 1) develop a marketing plan for civil rights history; 2) identify parties to establish possible marketing partnerships, and 3) determine options for creating a civil rights trail.

Committee Members:

Tim Allegretti, Co-Chair
Monica Smith, Co-Chair
Alton Yates
Dr. Alan Bliss
Marsha Phelts
Brenda Frinks
Rhiley Hodges

Marketing Subcommittee Meeting Location/Time

Second and Fourth Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.

St. James Bldg @ City Hall, Suite 425, Conference Room A

117 W. Duval Street

Civil Rights History Finance

The committee shall: 1) develop a budget; and 2) identify a variety of potential funding sources.

Committee Members:

Chris Hand, Co-Chair

Marcus Polland, Co-Chair

Maria Hane

Darnell Smith

Hope McMath

Eric Mann

Finance Subcommittee Meeting Location/Time

Second and Fourth Wednesday at 9:00 a.m.

Lynwood Roberts Room, 1st floor, St. James Bldg @ City Hall, 117 W. Duval Street

Civil Rights History Repository

The committee shall: 1) determine where the inventory and historical information should live; 2) identify physical locations that should house items based on inventory.

Committee Members:

Adonnica Toler, Co-Chair

Rahman Johnson, Co-Chair

John Lumpkin

Lloyd Washington

Richard Danford

Dr. Marion Grant

Repository Subcommittee Meeting Location/Time

Second and Fourth Monday at 10:00 a.m.

St. James Bldg @ City Hall, Don Davis Room, First Floor

117 W. Duval Street

cc: Council Members/Staff
Cheryl Brown, Director/Council Secretary
Carol Owens, Interim Chief, Legislative Services Division
CITYC & COJ.NET
Media