

RESOLUTION NO.

CITY OF PEORIA

Peoria, Illinois _____, 2020

A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING 3917 SW ADAMS STREET AS FREEDOM & REMEMBRANCE PARK”

WHEREAS, in 1836, the site of 3917 SW Adams Street was part of a larger tract of land in the 3900 block that was acquired by Aquila Moffatt in 1836 and became known as Moffatt’s Cemetery. Between 1874 and 1905 approximately 2,733 persons were buried in the cemetery.

In 1905, Dr. Elmer Eckard of the Peoria City Board of Health ordered the closure of the cemetery, and the site became abandoned. Records show that in the 1950s, many monuments were sold or crushed. Residents of the area noted that the site was cleared of brush and trees and bulldozed as the site was prepared for commercial development and street expansions. Around 100 individuals were transferred to other cemeteries from 1887-1936, including nine members of the Moffatt family. However, approximately 2,600 Peoria residents remain on the site. Including 62 Civil War veterans and Nance Legins-Costley, the first enslaved person that Abraham Lincoln helped free when he won her case before the Illinois Supreme Court in 1841.

The site of 3917 SW Adams Streets was previously owned by the United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers, and Allied Workers Local #69 and was approved for purchase by the City Council at the February 22, 2023, meeting.

A group of volunteers, led by Bob Hoffer, have led the charge to create the Peoria Freedom & Remembrance Memorial, which includes three historical markers from the Illinois State Historical Society which will feature the history of Moffatt Cemetery, the names of the Union soldiers, and the story of Nance Legins-Costley. The goal of this volunteer group was to establish a “fitting tribute to these forgotten citizens of Peoria, Illinois.” Their campaign has resulted in recognition from the Abraham Lincoln Association, the William G. Pomeroy Foundation, and the Illinois State Historical Society. Mr. Hoffer has given multiple interviews and has received support from all over the United States for this project. We honor their work in remembering the first residents of our city.

The site will include the memorial, comprised of three historical markers, a lit flagpole, and a storyboard.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS, THAT:

Section 1. The foregoing recitals are hereby found as fact and incorporated herein by reference.

Section 2. The City Council hereby expresses appreciation for the PEORIA FREEDOM & MEMORIAL’s volunteers contributions to the City of Peoria by recognizing 3917 SW ADAMS STREET as FREEDOM & REMEMBRANCE MEMORIAL PARK.

Section 3. That this Resolution shall be effective immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS THIS _____ DAY OF April
2023.

APPROVED:

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

EXAMINED AND APPROVED

Corporation Counsel