

February 9, 2026

President Natali Fani-Gonzalez
Montgomery County Council
Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Topic: Support the County Executive FY27 and FY27-32 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Budget \$150,000: Forty African American Historical Markers

Good evening Montgomery County Council President and Councilmembers,

My name is Anita Neal Powell, President of the Lincoln Park Historical Foundation, and the author of several publications. The *“African American Heritage: A Journey through History and the African American Historical Map of Sites and Places in Montgomery County.”*

Thank you for the opportunity to exercise my voice before you in a public space this evening to express my support of allocating \$150,000 in the County Executive FY27 and FY27-32 CIP budget. The funds will be used to research, identify, and install up to 40 African American historical markers, across all seven councilmanic districts.

This initiative began in 2016 under the leadership of former Council President George Leventhal whose commitment to honoring Black history from a different perspective. Primarily by connecting historically black communities, churches and schools with community stories and lived experience. Information passed from generation to generation led to the creation of an online community map and video, first presented as the inaugural of the Black History Month series which continues today.

This was the beginning of an awesome project to identify communities hidden and not seen in plain sites to create historical markers. The idea was initiated by Tom Hucker, former Councilmember. Community leaders who worked on this project included: Ms. Christine Clarke from Poolesville (Jerusalem), Mr. Warren Fleming from Damascus (Holsey Road), Ms.

Patricia Tyson and the late Ms. Charlotte Coffield from Silver Spring (Lyttonsville), as well as me, Anita Neal Powell from Rockville (Lincoln Park). We started our journey to reconnect historically black communities into its rightful place in Montgomery County's history by ensuring that the stories of historically Black communities are recognized and preserved.

We used communities identified in the "African American Historical Map of Sites and Places, in Montgomery County, MD" mentioned earlier, as one of our research tools. We boarded a bus and traveled to each of the five councilmanic districts to document oral histories from community leaders, including the late Harvey Ziegler of Damascus who transitioned in 2022 at the age of 102.

In closing, I respectfully request your support to approve the proposed budget of \$150,000 to continue the work that we have already started, by adding up to 40 historical markers. This will help to ensure that the history and contributions of African American communities in Montgomery County are properly commemorated and integrated into our shared heritage; and throughout the seven councilmanic districts in Montgomery County, MD.

Thank you and good night.

Anita Neal Powell
President
Lincoln Park Historical Foundation, Inc.