

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM5.10	ACTION			Ward: 11
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Authorization to Release Section 37 Funds from the Development at 231-237 College Street and 177-189 Huron Street to fund the creation and installation of a Heritage Plaque commemorating the Universal Negro Improvement Association - by Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy, recommends that:

1. City Council increase the Approved 2019 Operating Budget for Heritage Toronto by \$2,100.00 gross, \$0 net, fully funded by Section 37 community benefits obtained from the development at 231-237 College Street and 177-189 Huron Street (Source Account: XR3026-3700836), to fund the creation and installation of a heritage plaque commemorating the Universal Negro Improvement Association (Cost Centre: HG0001).

Summary

In the first decades of the 20th century, Black citizens in Toronto's small, close knit community struggled to find meaningful employment, decent housing, and fair treatment within the City's largely white, Anglo-Saxon population. Among organizations established to unify and give voice to the community was the Universal Negro Improvement Association. The Universal Negro Improvement Association was founded by in 1914 in Jamaica by Marcus Garvey with the purpose of uniting Blacks around the world and repatriating them to Africa. Thirty-two Divisions were charted throughout Canada. On December 1, 1919, Toronto's Black community received a Universal Negro Improvement Association charter establishing Division 21.

In 1925, members purchased the three-story brick building at 355 College Street. With only a few hundred Black families in Toronto, most of them living in the Bathurst and College area, the Hall quickly became an important community-building venue and hosted civic meetings, legal clinics, theatrical events, employment workshops, concerts, dances and fashion shows.

Marcus Garvey visited Toronto three times and addressed Universal Negro Improvement Association members at the Hall. In an effort to train future Universal Negro Improvement Association leaders, in 1937 Marcus Garvey launched the School of African Philosophy in the

building. Division 21 connected Toronto and Canada to the wider Black Nationalist movement and remained active until 1982.

An application has been approved by Heritage Toronto for the installation of a commemorative plaque, recognizing the historic significance of the Universal Negro Improvement Association Hall, formerly located at 355 College Street. The centenary of the Toronto Chapter of the Universal Negro Improvement Association will be celebrated in December 2019. This application has been endorsed by the Ontario Black History Society and St. Stephen's Community House.

The City of Toronto secured funds under Section 37 of the Planning Act with the owners of the development at 231-237 College Street and 177-189 Huron Street, authorized by site-specific Zoning By-law 806-2015. The by-law and the associated Section 37 Agreement provides that certain funds shall be used specifically a variety of community benefits including for streetscape improvements in the immediate area. Both instruments also provide that in the event that some or all of the cash contributions have not been used for the intended purpose within three (3) years of the By-law coming into full force and effect, the unused cash contributions may be redirected for another purpose, at the discretion of the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the local Councillor, provided that the purpose is identified in the Toronto Official Plan and will benefit the community in the vicinity of the lands. Three years have passed since the By-law came into full force and effect. Accordingly, this Motion proposes to redirect \$2,100 from the unused cash contribution for streetscape improvements to fund the creation and installation of a heritage plaque commemorating the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Funding for other non-profit arts, cultural, community or institutional facilities is a purpose identified in the Official Plan.

As Heritage Toronto is a directly funded City agency and not considered an "outside party", no undertaking is required to be signed by Heritage Toronto governing the use of the funds and financial reporting.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM5.10