

Information Item

Date: September 13, 2022

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Aaron King, Assistant City Manager

Subject:

Information on the Sale of Happy Hill Shotgun Houses/Lots to Triad Cultural Arts, Inc.

Strategic Focus Area: Livable Neighborhoods

Strategic Objective: No

Strategic Plan Action Item: No

Key Work Item: No



The City of Winston-Salem currently owns three parcels of land which total 0.52 acres in size and contain two original shotgun houses. The PIN#s of the parcels are: 6835-61-0800; 6835-61-0795; and 6835-61-1658. These lots are located within Happy Hill at the intersection of Humphrey Street and Free Street.

Triad Cultural Arts, Inc (TCA) contacted Council Member Scipio seeking to acquire the parcels and structures noted above in an effort to preserve the historic structures. TCA proposes the following intended uses for the two structures:

- 716 Humphrey Street: “The extant house located at 716 Humphrey Street will be utilized as an exhibit/museum space and will “serve as a womb and cradle from where culture is learned,” interpreting core themes to include Jim Crow era and the Civil Rights movement, reclaiming the legacy of those men and women who worked to make a life for their families, pre and post-emancipation. Video production will also be utilized to include oral history interviews and other media to tell the Happy Hill story to a 21st-century audience.”
- 720 Humphrey Street: “The relocated shotgun house which is now located at 720 Humphrey Street will be “reconstructed” and used as a welcome center to purchase tickets, souvenirs, and office space. The Center will also be used for programming and rentals to generate income to sustain the properties. The surrounding landscape will be used as an amphitheater space that prominent black landscape architect Walter Hood of Hood Design Studio has shown interest in designing. The grounds would serve as an outside exhibit space, a space for outdoor concerts and other community gatherings. From the community perspective, the project will lift these shotgun houses out of obscurity and herald their architectural style as an iconic symbol of Black American freedom that remained intact. The neighborhood still exists and stands as a symbol of the pride and dignity of former and current residents. The site would be an additional venue for African American Heritage Tourism Industry. The Happy Hill site provides an opportunity to expand the conversation about southern black life.”

The proposed uses listed above would allow the City to sell the lots/structures in question to TCA (a non-profit) pursuant to NCGS 160A-279 in the amount of \$1, provided the proposed center and exhibit/museum are open to the public as required by G.S. 160A-488.