

City Council – Action Request Form

Date: August 12, 2025

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

From: Charles Hendrick, Engineering Manager
Aaron King, Assistant City Manager

Council Action Requested:

Resolution Authorizing the Acceptance of an Easement for a Civil Rights Trail Marker by Donation (East Ward)

Strategic Focus Area: Community Advocacy and Engagement

Strategic Plan Objective: CAE4: Engaging residents and fostering civic pride

Summary of Information:

The Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission (HRC) received from the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission (AAHC), a North Carolina Civil Rights Trail historic marker. The proposed marker highlights State v. Darnell, a case heard by the North Carolina Supreme Court in 1914 to consider African American tobacco worker William Darnell's appeal of a conviction for residing in a house on a block where the majority of the houses were occupied by white residents. Darnell was in violation of an ordinance requiring residential racial segregation passed by the Winston Board of Aldermen in 1912. The decision in State v. Darnell invalidated similar ordinances in Mooresville and Greensboro and likely prevented other municipalities from passing similar ordinances enforcing segregation. Darnell's house was located at 1105 Highland Avenue, on the northeast corner of the intersection of Highland and 11th Street. He sold his lot to the City in 1921, which used the land for the expansion of Woodland Avenue/Brown Elementary School.

Committee Action:

Committee	Finance 8/12/2025	Action	Approval
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For	Unanimous	Against	
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Remarks:

Today, the site is home to Brown School Lofts. Due to the size of the pole and the location of the sidewalk and property line, the HRC proposes to install the marker on the site of the Brown School Lofts, Tax PIN 6836-50-8749 owned by ASPIRE adjacent to Highland Avenue, just north of the intersection with 11th Street. To ensure that the City of Winston-Salem retains control of the Historic Marker, the City has requested that ASPIRE grant an easement over 200 square feet of their property. The easement is for the express purposes of accessing, maintaining, repairing, replacing, removing, and/or allowing members of the general public to view the Historic Marker. ASPIRE has reviewed the draft Grant of Easement and consents to its terms.

Staff recommends City Council now affirm or agree to accept the Grant of Easement, attached as Exhibit A. This action will safeguard the perpetual retention of the Historic Marker at this location, the Brown School Lofts. The attached resolution authorizes the City to accept the Grant of Easement by donation.