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April 6, 2022

Susan Donoghue
Commissioner
New York City Department of Parks & Recreation
830 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Re: **Letter of Support to “Say Their Names” Augmented Reality Exhibit - San Diego African American Museum of Fine Art**

Dear Commissioner Donoghue:

Manhattan Community Board 10 is writing this letter to recommend the “Say Their Names” Augmented Reality Exhibit as proposed by the San Diego African American Museum of Fine Art (SDAAMFA) in Central Park.

Augmented reality (AR) augments the viewer’s surroundings by adding digital elements to a live view, often by using the camera on a smartphone. SDAAMFA presented to the Parks and Recreation Committee on March 9th. The exhibit is experienced entirely through an app downloaded onto the user’s mobile device, and does not involve any physical presence in the Park. SDAAMFA has been in communication with the Arts & Antiquities division at Parks and Central Park Conservancy. NYC Parks Arts & Antiquities, which oversees permits to install art in NYC parks, advised that this new concept in exhibition, since it is not physical, would have no reason to require a permit.

The proposed project would run for a month in the Fall of 2022 or Spring of 2023 and be geo-located at the site of the current Seneca Village exhibit from West 82nd to West 89th Streets and at the northern end of the park near 110th Street.

SDAAMFA is seeking to present and preserve the art of African Americans globally and to broaden the knowledge and understanding of the visual arts specifically by collecting, preserving and displaying works of art by and about African Americans; by creating and hosting quality traveling exhibitions; by collecting and preserving fine art and by developing and helping to foster an appreciation of art through meaningful public programs, symposia, and other educational programs.

AR is an immersive digital experience in which digital objects or snippets are placed on top of real-world objects of environments. The information is enriched with the help of data that flows to the device through the internet. The imagery or data that is placed on the real-world environs is augmented and is non-physical.

The “Say their Names” Memorial is a nationwide, grassroots initiative to honor Black lives lost in the struggle against systemic racism. The memorial began in Portland, Oregon and is an outgrowth of the protests that began nationwide in 2020. The informal outcry is now an organization called “Say Their Names Memorial”. The organization’s goal is to make sure that we never forget the victims and that we put a name to each face.

The exhibit consists of 50 pedestals with 4 photos affixed to each for a total of 200 photos. The information for each photo is provided via QR Codes. Visitors will download a GPS based APP on their phone, point the camera to a specific location, and will be able to see a pedestal with the individual, their name, age and the circumstances of his or her death. The Augmented Reality allows one to experience the memorial without the physical structures actually being present.

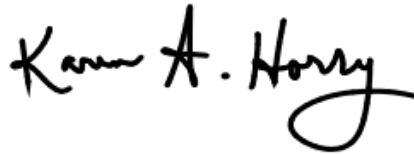
Manhattan CB10 finds the project, which will encapsulate an historic and unique social justice messaging to be of merit and would provide a virtual eclectic aspect to the Central Park visit.

On April 6th, The General Board had quorum and voted by common consent, 31 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions and 0 recusals to support the “Say Their Names” Augmented Reality Exhibit.

Sincerely,



Cicely Harris
Chairperson
Manhattan Community Board 10



Karen Horry
Chair -Parks and Recreation Committee
Manhattan Community Board 10

Cc:

Gaidi Finni
Director
San Diego African American Museum of Fine Arts (SDAAMFA)

Matt Drury
Director of Government Relations
NYC Department of Parks & Recreation

Steve Simon
Chief of Staff Manhattan Borough Commissioner
NYC Department of Parks and Recreation