

Carter Booth, *Chair*
Daniel Miller, *First Vice Chair*
Susan Kent, *Second Vice Chair*
Bob Gormley, *District Manager*



Antony Wong, *Treasurer*
Valerie De La Rosa, *Secretary*
Amy Brenna, *Assistant Secretary*

COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

3 WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE

NEW YORK, NY 10012-1899

www.cb2manhattan.org

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Greenwich Village □ Little Italy □ SoHo □ NoHo □ Hudson Square □ Chinatown □ Gansevoort Market

December 1, 2020

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Mayor, City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Gale Brewer
Manhattan Borough President
1 Centre Street, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio and Borough President Brewer:

At its Full Board meeting November 19, 2020, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

Resolution to Support Exhibit in Central Park to Commemorate the Exonerated Five and Social Justice

In 1989, five Black and Latino children were falsely convicted of assaulting a jogger in Central Park. Antron McCray (15), Kevin Richardson (15), Raymond Santana (14), Korey Wise (16), and Yusef Salaam (15) were subjected to life devastating consequences as a result of this miscarriage of justice. These boys served out their sentences and were subsequently exonerated, following the confession of a prison inmate, Matias Reyes, for the crime. It later became a high-profile example of racial profiling, discrimination, and inequality in the media and legal system. The devastating experience not only impacted the lives of the youth and their families but had resounding ramifications throughout the City and the nation which are still being felt today; and

1. **Whereas**, on December 19th, 2002, the New York State Supreme Court vacated the convictions of the five youths based on indisputable evidence that included a confession from a serial rapist, Matias Reyes, and a positive DNA match to evidence found at the crime scene. These young men, who had survived a horrific injustice and violation of their young lives, were exonerated. In 2003, the Five, now men, filed civil law-suits against the City of New York, and the police officers and prosecutors who had worked toward their conviction, which NYC agreed to settle on June 19th, 2014; and
2. **Whereas**, no amount of money will give back the childhood that was stolen from these innocent young men.
3. **Whereas**, the brutal beating and rape of a white woman in New York City's Central Park provoked public outrage and sensational headlines during the prosecution and conviction of the five youths, promoting a proliferation of racial stereotyping and stigma to the youth of the Harlem community, as well as, Black and Latino males nationwide; and
4. **Whereas**, in 1989, a realtor named Donald Trump placed full-page advertisements in four New York City newspapers with the headline, "BRING BACK THE DEATH PENALTY. BRING BACK OUR POLICE!"; referring to the innocent youths as "wild criminals," calling for their execution and stating that he wanted them "to be afraid"; and

5. **Whereas**, When the five former teens convicted in the case were rightfully exonerated, many community leaders decried the miscarriage of justice that sent the Central Park Five to prison. The case became a flashpoint for illustrating racial disparities in sentencing and the inequities at the heart of the criminal justice system; and
6. **Whereas**, the injustice endured by the Exonerated Five is not unique. It fits a historical pattern of unjust arrests and wrongful convictions of Black and Latino young men in the United States. It occurs every day, in cities and towns across this country, when law enforcement targets Black and Latino people and forces them to experience humiliating and terrifying detentions, interrogations, physical brutality and unreasonable searches, without any evidence of criminal activity; and
7. **Whereas**, in response to community-based advocacy efforts in 2019, Manhattan Community Board 10 has held meetings and facilitated discussions with community stakeholders, community leaders, elected officials and city agencies to discuss the installation of an educational exhibit based on social justice and a commemoration to the resiliency of the Exonerated Five to be located in Central Park; and
8. **Whereas**, the Manhattan Community Board 10 Executive Committee authorized the formation of a Parks and Recreation subcommittee on March 25th, 2020 to further the process of the permanent exhibit; and
9. **Whereas**, the Manhattan Community Board 10 Parks and Recreation subcommittee will facilitate a process that, through a diverse dialogue information, will inform the format and content of a permanent exhibit to be located in NYC Central Park, including objectives, goals and corresponding stakeholders and community partners to bring the project to fruition; and
10. **Whereas**, Manhattan Community Board 10 on June 3, 2020 unanimously passed a resolution for the installation of a permanent exhibit to commemorate the Exonerated Five to be located in NYC's Central Park; now,

Therefore, be it resolved that Manhattan Community Board 2 supports CB10's June 2020 Resolution to Support an Exhibit in Central Park to Commemorate the Exonerated Five and Social Justice.

Vote: Passed, with 45 Board Members in favor.

1 Recusal (C. Sullivan)

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,



Carter Booth, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Patricia Laraia, Co-Chair
Equity Working Group
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Mar Fitzgerald, Co-Chair
Equity Working Group
Community Board #2, Manhattan

CB/EM

cc: Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman
Hon. Nydia M. Velázquez, Congresswoman
Hon Carolyn Maloney, Congresswoman
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator
Hon. Brian Kavanagh, NY State Senator
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NY State Assembly Member
Hon. Yuh-Line Niou, NY State Assembly Member
Hon. Inez Dickens, NY State Assembly Member
Hon. Scott Stringer, NYC Comptroller
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan. Borough President
Hon. Corey Johnson, NYC Council Speaker
Hon. Margaret Chin, NYC Council Member
Hon. Carlina Rivera, NYC Council Member
Hon. Bill Perkins, NYC Council Member
Hon. Jumaane Williams, NYC Public Advocate
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, NYC Comptroller
Cecily Harris, Board Chair, CB10
Karen Horry, Chair, Parks & Recreation Committee

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Hon. Gale Brewer
Manhattan Borough President
1 Centre Street, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Margaret Chin
NYC Council Member
101 Lafayette St., 9th Fl
New York, NY 10013

Dear Mayor de Blasio, Borough President Brewer and Councilmember Chin:

At its Full Board meeting November 19, 2020, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

Resolution to Commemorate African Land in CB2

1. **Whereas**, Community Board 2 invited [Black Gotham Experience](#) (BGX) to present historical information regarding the 17th century African presence in the neighborhoods that are now Community Board 2; and
2. **Whereas**, Black Gotham Experience, an expert on the Black and African history of New Netherland, New Amsterdam and early New York City, identified numerous unmarked sites within CB2 that hold tremendous historical significance; and
3. **Whereas**, Washington Square Park contains monuments to four historical figures and events, but not one honors the African presence that existed therein; and
4. **Whereas**, existing park monuments pay tribute to following: 1) a statue depicting and plaza name for Italian patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi 2) a bust and pedestal of mechanical engineer Alexander Lyman Holley 3) a memorial flagstaff bearing the names of nineteen World War 1 soldiers; and 4) the famous Roman Triumphal Arch bearing multiple likeness of George Washington¹, revolutionary war hero, celebrated general, first president of the United States, and slave owner, for whom the entire park is named; and
5. **Whereas**, the development of public acknowledgement (i.e., signage/markers/public art) to recognize Washington Square Park's place as part of NYC's Black history has support from the [Washington Square Park Conservancy](#); and

¹ <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/washington-square-park/monuments>

6. **Whereas**, by the 1640s, the “Land of the Blacks” encompassed what today are Chinatown, Little Italy, SoHo, NoHo, and Greenwich Village, and Black land ownership continued into the time of New York City. From 1643 to 1716, **twenty-eight parcels totaling over 130 acres were owned by free Black men and women**²; nearly 200 years before Garibaldi visited New York and 133 years before the United States existed; and
7. **Whereas**, Anthony Portuguese received much of the land now occupied by Washington Square Park and NYU (p. 3, map 1), and Catelina Antony owned part of what is now Chinatown, including Hester and the intersection of the Bowery and Canal Street (map 2); Manuel Gerrit de Reus, owned eight acres bounded to the north near Cooper Square, Bond Street to the south, and between the blocks of Bowery and Lafayette (map 3); and
8. **Whereas**, Catelina Antony was one of the first Black landowners and the first Black woman landowner in New Netherland in 1643³; and
9. **Whereas**, two of the aforementioned individuals owned the land that is now occupied by Washington Square Park. On September 5, 1645, Anthony Portuguese settled on a 12-acre parcel bordered roughly by Waverly Place, West Third, LaGuardia Place, and Sullivan Street. Manuel Trumpeter received an eighteen-acre parcel on December 12, 1643 that overlapped with the current northeast edge of the park⁴; and
10. **Whereas**, these sites should be appropriately monumentalized by a permanent exhibit, marking Black land ownership in CB2.; and
11. **Whereas**, these markers and monuments will be the first public acknowledgement of Black landowners during the time of New Netherland, before the creation of the United States of American and New York City; and
12. **Whereas**, Markers are sustainable, utilize interactive technology and can evolve over time; and
13. **Whereas**, these monuments embody values that Community Board 2 cherishes, and will sit harmoniously with the other monuments in the park and neighborhoods; now,

Therefore, be it resolved that CB2 honors and recognizes this buried, forgotten and ignored history and its role in shaping the neighborhoods that we know today.

Be it further resolved that CB2 fully supports commemoration of the significant and appropriate ceremonies and activities that celebrate and broadens public memory of NYC’s African and [Lenape](#) shared past; and to elevate awareness of the Land of the Blacks, it’s residents, stories, history and culture.

Vote: Unanimous, with 46 Board Members in favor.

Black Landowners in Manhattan’s “Land of the Blacks”

In the 1640s, a group of enslaved Africans petitioned the Dutch West India Company for their freedom. They were granted “half-freedom” and received tracts of land, ranging from two to eighteen acres, in the unsettled area north of the city. This so-called “Land of the Blacks” actually comprised several communities. Freed slaves received land grants; those who had served as soldiers in New Amsterdam’s defense were particularly favored.

² <https://herb.ashp.cuny.edu/items/show/787st>

³ <https://ny.curbed.com/2017/10/4/16413696/bowery-nyc-history-lower-east-side>

⁴ <https://gvshp.org/blog/2018/02/16/north-americas-first-freed-black-settlement-right-in-our-neighborhood/>

The land these freed slaves came to inhabit—over 130 acres or 100 square city blocks—formed New York’s first Black community.

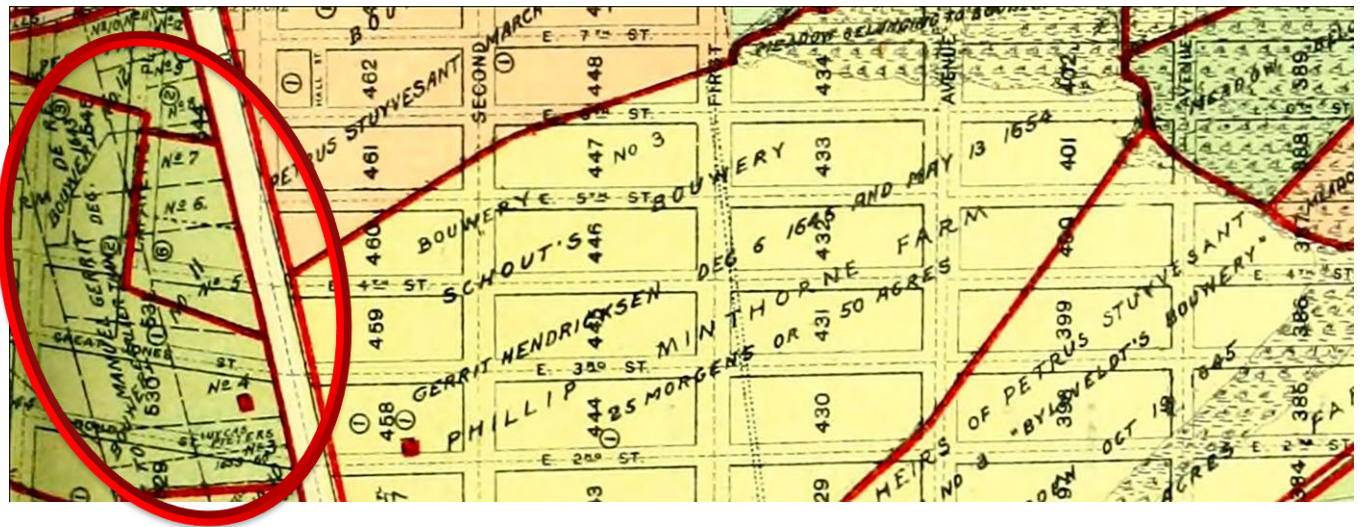
LANDOWNER	ACREAGE	DATE GRANT RECEIVED
Catalina Anthony (widow of Jochem)	8	July 13, 1643
Domingo Anthony	12	July 13, 1643
Gleyn (Little) Manuel	10	ca. December 1643
Manuel Gerrit de Reus	12	ca. December 1643
Marycke (widow of Lawrence)	6	December 12, 1643
Gracia D’Angola	10	December 15, 1644
Simon Congo	8	December 15, 1644
Jan Francisco	8	December 15, 1644
Pieter San Tomé	6	December 15, 1644
Manuel Groot (Big Manuel)	8	December 21, 1644
Cleyn (Little) Anthony	6	December 30, 1644
Paula D’Angola	6	December 30, 1644
Anthony Portuguese	12	September 5, 1645
Anna D’Angola (widow of Andries)	6	February 8, 1647
Francisco D’Angola	6	March 25, 1647
Anthony Congo	6	March 26, 1647
Bastiaen Negro	6	March 26, 1647
Jan Negro	6	March 26, 1647
Manuel the Spaniard	4	January 18, 1651
Mathias Anthony	2	December 1, 1655
Domingo Angola	4	December 2, 1658
Claes Negro	2	December 2, 1658
Assento Angola	2	December 2, 1658
Francisco Cartagena	2	December 2, 1658
Anthony of the Bowery	2	ca. 1658
Anthony the Blind Negro	2	ca. 1658
Manuel Sanders	4	ca. 1662

⁵ <https://robcanobbio.files.wordpress.com/2020/01/1643-1664.-black-landowners.pdf>

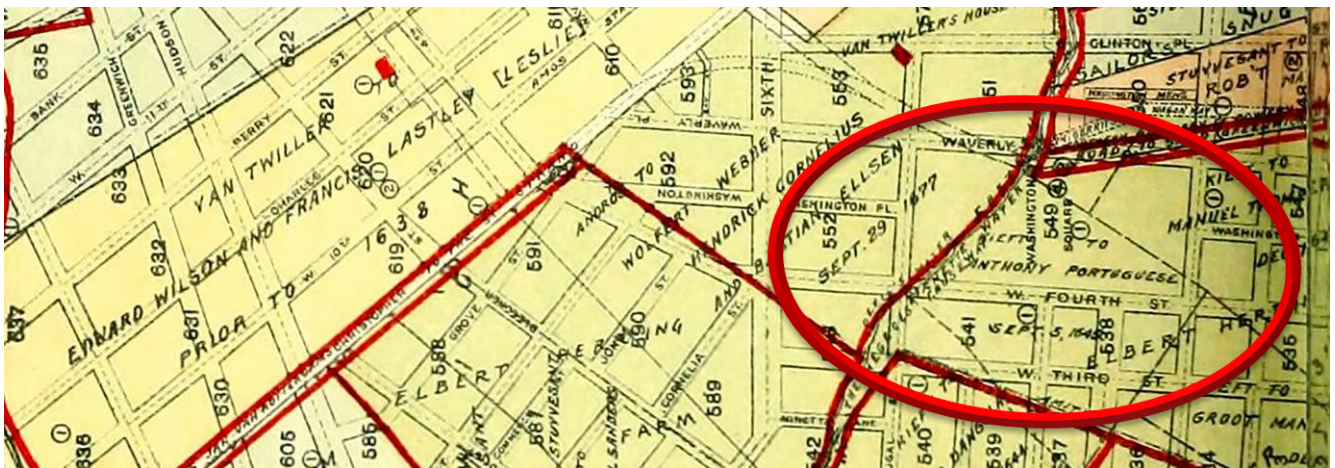
Catelina Antony - 13 July 1643



Manuel Gerrit de Reus - December 1643



Anthony Portuguese - 5 September 1645



Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,

Carter Booth, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan

Patricia Laraia, Co-Chair
Equity Working Group
Community Board #2, Manhattan

Mar Fitzgerald, Co-Chair
Equity Working Group
Community Board #2, Manhattan

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Hon. Jumaane Williams, NYC Public Advocate
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, NYC Comptroller
Andrew Berman, Executive Director Village Preservation
Edward Berenson, Chair, Department of History, NYU
Harry Bubbins, East Village & Special Projects Director Village Preservation
Kamau Ware, Founder of Karmau Studios
Michael A. Gomez, Director, NYU Center for the Study of Africa and the African Diaspora
Renske Ebbers, Advisor, Dutch Culture
Robyn d'Avignon, Assist. Prof of History, NYU
Sheryl Woodruff, Deputy Chair, Washington Square Park Conservancy