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## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

3 WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE

NEW YORK, NY 10012-1899

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

April 8, 2022

Hon. Eric Adams  
Mayor  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Mark Levine  
Manhattan Borough President  
1 Centre Street, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Christopher Marte  
NYC Council Member  
106 Lafayette Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10013

Hon. Erik Bottcher  
NYC Council Member  
224 West 30<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1206  
New York, 10001

Hon. Carlina Rivera  
NYC Council Member  
254 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10009

Dear Mayor Adams and Borough President Levine, Council Member Marte, Council Member Bottcher, and Council Member Rivera:

At its Full Board meeting March 24, 2022, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

### Resolution to Mark Land of The Blacks

1. **Whereas**, In October 2020, Community Board 2 (CB2M) unanimously passed the *Resolution to Commemorate African Lands*, acknowledging the existence and historical significance of the Land of The Blacks community that encompassed the neighborhoods now known as Chinatown, Little Italy, SoHo, NoHo, and Greenwich Village, and to support the marking of those lands to broaden public memory of NYC's African past; and
2. **Whereas**, in February 2022, CB2M invited [Black Gotham Experience](#) (BGX) to present historical information regarding the 17th century African presence in its district; and
3. **Whereas**, BGX, an expert on the Black and African history of New Netherland, New Amsterdam and early New York City, identified numerous unmarked sites within CB2M that hold tremendous historical significance; and
4. **Whereas**, by the 1640s, the "Land of The Blacks" encompassed over 130 acres of CB2M's district in a strong and vibrant community made up of twenty-eight parcels owned by free Black men and women; and

5. **Whereas**, Anthony Portuguese owned much of the land now occupied by Washington Square Park and NYU, and Catelina Antony owned part of what is now Chinatown, including Hester Street and the intersection of the Bowery and Canal Street; 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 (see attached map); and
6. **Whereas**, processes to fund *Commemorative Structures to Mark Land of the Blacks* sites in [Council District 1](#) and [Council District 3](#) have been submitted to [Participatory Budgeting](#) for FY 2023; and
7. **Whereas**, in August 2020, the Washington Square Park Conservancy (WSPC) began work to establish a partnership with Black Gotham Experience in developing signage/markers/public art to acknowledge Washington Square Park’s place as part of NYC’s Black history; and
8. **Whereas**, last year, proclamations were issued by Manhattan Borough President, Gale Brewer and Senator Brad Hoylman declaring July 13th, *Black Vision Day* in recognition of that day in 1643, Catelina Antony and Domingo Antony became the first two landowners of African descent in the Dutch territories known as New Netherland; and
9. **Whereas**, there has been much progress and community buy-in since CB2 passed its first resolution in support; and
10. **Whereas**, the [Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#) has granted \$300,000 to Kamau Studios LLC, including its flagship storytelling project, the Black Gotham Experience to create a visual body of original artifacts called the BGX Collection that traces the impact of the African Diaspora on New York and the world; and
11. **Whereas**, Black Gotham Experience presented a plan to mark the sites by method of 28 flags and flagstaff; and

**Therefore be it Resolved**, that Community Board 2 Manhattan reaffirms its call to permanently mark Land of The Blacks, including the sites of the 28 African-owned parcels, and to mark those sites by flag and flagstaff as presented by Black Gotham Experience.

**VOTE: Unanimous; with 39 Board Members in favor.**





Jeannine Kiely, Chair  
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Mar Fitzgerald, Chair  
Equity Race & Justice  
Community Board #2, Manhattan

JK/EM

c:

Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman  
Hon. Carolyn Maloney, Congresswoman  
Hon. Kathy Hochul, Governor New York State  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator  
Hon. Brian Kavanaugh, NY Senator  
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NY Assembly Member  
Hon. Yuh-Line Niou, NY Assembly Member  
Hon. Jumaane Williams, NYC Public Advocate  
Hon. Adrienne Adams, NYC Council Speaker  
Kamau Ware, Black Gotham Experience (BGX)  
Robyn D'Avignon, Assistan Professor of History, NYU  
Sheryl Woodruff, Community Developmen Director, Washington Square Park Conservancy  
Grace Harman, Communications Manager, Washington Square Park Conservancy  
Andrew Berman, Executive Director, GVSHP