



WILDWOOD

July 19, 2023

MEMORANDUM

To: Wildwood Historic Preservation Commission Members

From: Department of Planning and Parks

Re: Memorial Plaque for Madison Valley (formerly Old Slave Road) (**Ward One**)

Cc: The Honorable James R. Bowlin, Mayor
Thomas Lee, City Administrator
John A. Young, City Attorney
Rick Brown, P.E. and P.T.O.E., Director of Public Works
Melanie Rippetoe, Assistant Director of Planning and Parks
Travis Newberry, Senior Planner

BACKGROUND >>>

At its July 29, 2022 meeting, the Historic Preservation Commission approved a request by property owners to change the street name of what was then "Old Slave Road" to "Madison Valley." Additionally, it was recommended by Commissioners that a memorial plaque honoring Elijah Madison also be installed in this general area (on public property). The Administration and Public Works Committee voted to approve the requested street name at its August 2, 2022 meeting, and also forwarded the recommendation to install the memorial plaque to City Council. City Council eventually approved the street name change request on January 9, 2023, via Amended Bill #2749B, with a requirement to install a historic plaque or marker on public space at or near Madison Valley by the end of 2023.

While initially the focus of the memorial was Elijah Madison, recent direction from Historic Preservation Commission Members indicated that a broader application was desired, thereby honoring the greater history associated with the surrounding community and the many individuals significantly associated with it. At the April meeting of the Commission, Members approved the following verbiage for a one-sided historic representation of a similar type to the Wildwood Historic Community Markers:

Honoring Those Who Served in the **USCT United States Colored Troops**

More than 8,000 enslaved men in Missouri joined the United States Colored Troops (USCT) during the Civil War (1861-1865) on behalf of the Union, including many who had previously

worked the large hemp plantations at present-day Madison Valley (named in honor of Elijah Madison) and Wild Horse Creek Road, just north of Babler State Park. In Missouri, despite the Emancipation Proclamation, slave ownership remained legal because the state was part of the Union. However, in 1863, the War Department passed Order No. 135, which allowed enslaved men to emancipate through enlistment, even without owner consent. Corporal Elijah Madison, and Privates Stapleton Madison, Louis Rollins, Sr, Henry Hicks, Henry Anderson, Warren Hawkins, Reuben West, Norman Hawkins, and James Green, all enlisted so they and others could be free. Slavery was officially abolished in Missouri on January 11, 1865. Many of these men returned to the area after the war as farmers and community leaders and are buried in Mount Pleasant Baptist Church Cemetery.

At the June 22, 2023, meeting of the Commission, Members directed the Department to make a few small revisions to the text based on suggestions from the Cultural Division of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Additionally, it was noted by the Department that Ms. Ellen Reichert, member of the Wildwood Historical Society and Faust Park volunteer, was researching and assembling a list of all enlistees in the United States Colored Troops (USCT) for the Bonhomme and Meramec Townships. This list has since been provided to the Department and contains fifteen (15) individuals.

On May 5, 2023, the Department of Planning met with three (3) individuals from Missouri State Parks to discuss Babler State Park as one (1) potential location for the historic marker. On May 8, 2023, the proposed verbiage was placed on the City Council agenda as an Information Item and resulted in no comments, thus signaling to the Commission that it can proceed. On June 19, 2023, the Commission visited two (2) marker locations, including a strip of public right-of-way, just south of the intersection of Spiceberry Lane and Wild Horse Creek Road, and an existing pull-off area along Wirth Drive, within Babler State Park. The Babler State Park location was subsequently approved by the Commission at its June 22, 2023, meeting. Mr. Chris Ferree, Park Superintendent, has been advised of this action and is working with the Department on next steps, including the organization of a Public Information Meeting for August.

MARKER CONTENT UPDATE >>>

This revised verbiage has been presented for review and comment to Colonel Gregory, Chief of the St. Louis County Police Department, and to Ms. Rosslyn White and her family members, descendants of Elijah Madison. Ms. White may be present at the meeting this evening and wish to comment, with the Chair's permission, during the discussion on this agenda item.

Honoring Those Who Served in the United States Colored Troops

More than 8,000 enslaved men in Missouri joined the United States Colored Troops (USCT) during the Civil War (1861-1865) to fight for the Union, including many who had previously worked the large hemp plantations at present-day Madison Valley, just north of Babler State Park. Statewide, slave ownership remained legal after the Emancipation Proclamation because

it did not apply to border states like Missouri, which did not join the Confederate States of America. However, in 1863, the War Department passed Order No. 135, thereby allowing enslaved men to emancipate through enlistment, even without owner consent. Locally, Corporal Elijah Madison, and Privates Stapleton Madison, Louis Rollins, Sr, Henry Hicks, Henry Anderson, Warren Hawkins, Reuben West, Norman Hawkins, and James Green, all enlisted so they and others could be free. Slavery was officially abolished in Missouri on January 11, 1865. Many of these men returned to the area after the war as farmers and community leaders and are buried in Mount Pleasant Baptist Church Cemetery, not far from Madison Valley.

Additionally, based on the research conducted by Ms. Reichert, an additional seven (7) individuals have been identified for inclusion. Ms. Reichert will be presenting on this research project this evening. The full list of names is as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Henry Anderson | 9. Richard Hughes |
| 2. Lewis Brown | 10. Elijah Madison |
| 3. Robert Brown | 11. Stapleton Madison |
| 4. Clinton Gallaway | 12. Thomas Randall |
| 5. James Green | 13. Louis Rollins, Sr. |
| 6. Warren Hawkins | 14. Alfred Smith |
| 7. Norman Hawkins | 15. Reuben West |
| 8. Henry Hicks | |

Given this new information, and the partnership with Babler State Park, the Department is recommending the marker be two (2)-sided, include the full list of names, a map as suggested by members, and a QR Code embedded into the band on it, which would lead to a webpage with the list of names, any additional names discovered after-the-fact, and a more thorough history. The Department is presently working with Engraphix to determine the best approach for incorporation of the QR Code.

Tonight, the Department requests discussion and action from Members on this new recommended direction for the historic marker.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING >>>

The Department is recommending that a public information/input meeting be held in Babler State Park in mid-August to present area history, background on the historic marker (including the impetus for it) and invite input from interested parties.

Commissioners are requested to review the following contact list for the meeting and make additional suggestions to it:

- Mayor Bowlin
- Wildwood City Council
- Wildwood Historic Preservation Commission
- Admin/Public Works Committee

- Area residents within 3,000 feet of Madison Valley and the historic marker location.
- Westland Acres Community
- Union Baptist Church
- Chesterfield Historic Preservation Committee
- Descendants of named individuals/enlistees
- Babler State Park representatives
- Wildwood Historical Society
- St. Louis County Historian
- Individuals who have made comment to the City on this matter

For a full list of next steps and an updated timeline, Commissioners are invited to review the revised project schedule (attached).

IN CLOSING >>>

If any of the Commission Members should have comments or questions regarding this information, please feel free to contact the Department of Planning and Parks at (636) 458-0440. A presentation is planned on these matters at tonight's meeting. Thank you for your consideration of this information and discussion of the same.



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MADISON VALLEY HISTORIC MARKER (HONORING THE USCT) PROJECT SCHEDULE

- Aug 2023** Hold a public information meeting at a facility close to the proposed marker location (preferably at Babler State Park).
- Promote on City's social media, in e-newsletter, and other sources.
- Aug 2023** Public Hearing at the Historic Preservation Commission meeting, followed by action on Department's recommendation report.
- Sept 2023** Present the Historic Preservation Commission's recommendation report to the Administration and Public Works Committee for its review and endorsement.
- Sept 2023** Present the combined recommendation reports from the Historic Preservation Commission and the Administration and Public Works Committee, and a draft bill, to the Wildwood City Council for Public Hearing and first reading.
- Oct 2023** Proceed with second reading of bill and final action on it.
- Oct-Nov 2023** Develop a final proof of marker and content with Engraphix and initiate fabrication of signage.
- Dec 2023** Display or install Historic Marker and organize an unveiling ceremony.