
*Hon. Jumaane Williams
New York City Public Advocate*

*Hon. Eric L. Adams
Brooklyn Borough President*

*Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke
Ninth Congressional District*

*Congressman Hakeem Jeffries
Eighth Congressional District*

*Senator Velmanette Montgomery
Twenty-Fifth Senatorial District*

*Senator Roxanne Persaud
Nineteenth Senatorial District*

*Senator Kevin Parker
Twenty-First Senatorial District*

*Senator Zellnor Myrie
Twentieth Senatorial District*

*Assemblyman N. Nick Perry
Fifty-Eighth Assembly District*

*Assemblywoman Tremaine Wright
Fifty-Sixth Assembly District*

*Assemblyman Walter T. Mosley
Fifty-Seventh Assembly District*

*Assemblywoman Latrice Walker
Fifth-Fifth Assembly District*

*Assemblyman Charles Barron
Sixtieth Assembly District*

*Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte
Forty-Second Assembly District*

*Council Member Alicka Ampry- Samuel
Forty-First Council District*

*Council Member Mathieu Eugene
Fortieth Council District*

*Vacant
Forty-Fifth Council District*

*Council Member Inez Barron
Forty-Second Council District*

*Council Member Robert Cornegy
Thirty-Sixth Council District*

*Council Member Laurie Cumbo
Thirty-Fifth Council District*

*Assemblywoman Diana Richardson
Forty-Third Assembly District*

*Assemblywoman Jaime Williams
Fifty-nine assembly District*

*Assemblywoman Mathylde Frontus
Forty-Six Assembly District*

BROOKLYN BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS COALITION

May 13, 2019

Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl
The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA)
31 Chambers St.,
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioner Finkelpearl,

We write to you to address the evolving situation regarding the Weeksville Heritage Center in Brooklyn. As you are aware, historic Weeksville was first established in 1838, just 11 years after New York State abolished slavery. The Center, named after the historic community, was founded in the 1960s by the late Dr. Joan Maynard, and has been an integral part of the Black history of Brooklyn and New York alike.

Located in the epi-center of three culturally rich historic black communities, including Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, and Crown Heights, directly across from Kingsborough Houses and near Boys and Girls High School. The Weeksville Heritage Center serves as a local cultural headquarter, and is home to cultural artifacts that contextualize historic Weeksville as well as celebrates the self-supporting community of African-American freed men, which grew to become the second-largest free Black community in Antebellum America.

Today, over 6,000 school children and 8,000 adults visit Weeksville's historic Hunterfly Road houses annually, as well as its 19,000 sq.ft. cultural arts building, 700 sq.ft. arts gallery, and 200-seat performance space (there were twice as many visits in 2018 than in 2017).

Weeksville is now facing critical operating needs, and as a result, has engaged the public in fundraising efforts. Without an influx of financial support, they are at risk of closing their doors in July 2019. The community has raised \$30,000 within the first week, and while we commend and praise the public support demonstrated here, this cannot be how New York City funds one of its prized Black institutions.

Given its storied past and culture, we strongly urge you to consider the inclusion of Weeksville Heritage Center into the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG). We can no longer deny one of Brooklyn's cherished historic cultural institutions from inclusion in the CIG, when other Black cultural institutions across Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx – including The Studio Museum, El Museo, Jamaica Arts Center, and the Bronx Museum of the Arts – have been afforded inclusion.

The borough of Brooklyn is long overdue to receive such a designation – one that provides the very financial stability that Weeksville now needs.

As members of Brooklyn Black Elected Officials Coalition (BBEOC), we are a voice for the vibrant African American community in Brooklyn, and we are committed to improving the quality of life for families and children we are honored to represent. Please feel free to reach out to BBEOC by emailing famtaylor3@aol.com or by calling Anita Taylor 917-544-6839.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Yvette D. Clarke in black ink.

Congress Member Yvette D. Clarke

Handwritten signature of Jumaane Williams in black ink.

Public Advocate Jumaane Williams

Handwritten signature of Laurie F. Cumbo in black ink.

Majority Leader New York City Council
Laurie Cumbo

Handwritten signature of Eric L. Adams in black ink.

Brooklyn Borough President Eric L.
Adams

Handwritten signature of Walter T. Mosley in blue ink.

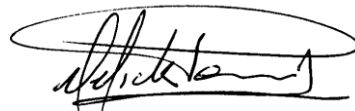
Assembly Member Walter Mosley

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Senator Kevin Parker

Handwritten signature of Velmanette Montgomery in black ink.

Senator Velmanette Montgomery

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Assembly Member N. Nick Perry



Assembly Member Tremaine Wright



Council Member Robert Cornegy



Assembly Member Latrice Walker



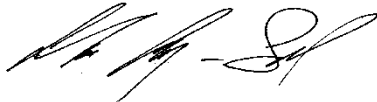
Assembly Member Jaime Williams



Senator Zellnor Myrie



Congress Member Hakeem Jeffries



Council Member Alicka Ampry-Samuel



Assembly Member Charles Barron



Assembly Member Mathylde Frontus



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