



NAACP Nashville Branch

1308 Jefferson Street - Nashville, TN 37208
(615) 329-0999 (office) (615) 329-4366 (fax)

August 11, 2017

Open Letter to:

The Honorable Megan Barry, Mayor
Nashville and Davidson County

Members, Metropolitan Council
Nashville and Davidson County

Members, Board of Parks and Recreation
Nashville and Davidson County

Dear Mayor Barry, Members of the Metro Council and Members of the Parks Board:

I write this letter on behalf of the officers, Executive Committee and general members of the Nashville Branch NAACP. The subject at hand is Fort Negley Park and the proposed private for-profit development of that area.

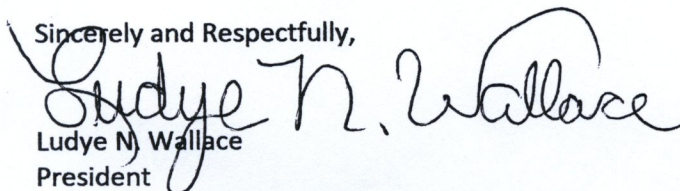
Fort Negley Park is pivotal to Nashville's African-American heritage. As you are probably aware, the Fort was built in 1862 using African-American freedmen and escaped slaves "impressed" into service. These men, women and children lived, labored and died at the site. Nashville recognized its significance to the history of African-Americans to such a degree that we applied for the site to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. We should be proud that the site enjoys that distinction. Further, our recognition of its significance caused Nashville to designate the area as a Historic Landmark District in 2005. Fort Negley is the only Civil War era fort that is intact.

With its historic background, Nashville would make a terrible mistake to convert any portion of Fort Negley Park to private, for-profit development. Not only would it be a mistake, any such development beyond preserving the site as a park would be a blatant disregard for the role that the Union Army played in fortifying Nashville during the Civil War. As Tennessee State University history professor, Dr. Bobby Lovett says, "This is a sacred site."

Private commercial development at Fort Negley Park is not in the city's best interest. The land under Greer Stadium should be returned to Fort Negley Park and not given up for private development. Nashville and the whole world will benefit from a true public park dedicated to and honoring the special sacrifice of African-Americans in the struggle for freedom and the role they played in fortifying the city.

Thank you for your service to the people of Nashville and Davidson County. I remain,

Sincerely and Respectfully,


Ludye N. Wallace
President