



Legislation Text

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DATE: January 27, 2016

TO: Board of Mayor and Aldermen

FROM: Eric Stuckey, City Administrator
Lisa Clayton, Parks Director

SUBJECT:

Consideration of Carter Hill Battlefield Park Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding (01/26/16 Worksession)

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information to the Franklin Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BOMA) concerning the formal request to enter into an agreement and memorandum of understanding with the Battle of Franklin Trust, Franklin's Charge, Inc., the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County, the Carter House Association Inc., and the Civil War Trust collectively be referred to as the Battlefield Organizations to actively work with the City to create and enhance a Civil War battlefield park open to the public known as the Carter Hill Battlefield Park.

Background

Located along Columbia Ave (U.S. Highway 31) generally running between East Fowlkes Street and Strahl Street on the west side of Columbia Ave and running immediately south by Cleburne Street on the east side of Columbia Ave. The ground just east of Columbia Pike, where the Carter cotton gin once stood, was witness to some of the Battle of Franklin's most furious fighting. The main Federal line of defense cut diagonally through this area and was held by a brigade of 23rd Corps troops under the command of Gen. James Reilly. His men were assaulted by elements of Gen. Patrick Cleburne's Division and Gen. Samuel French's Division and the Confederate troops briefly penetrated the Federal line. A vicious counterassault led by two Kentucky regiments and a new Ohio regiment helped push the Southern troops back and secure the main line. Fighting raged around the cotton gin and along the line for hours and upwards of 2,000 men became casualties on this ground, which was long covered by five houses, a strip mall, a Pizza Hut, and a Domino's pizza. Confederate generals Cleburne and Hiram Granbury both lost their lives on this part of the battlefield and Confederate Gen. George Gordon was captured. In addition, at least six Medals of Honor were earned by U. S. soldiers on this ground.

For decades this portion of the battlefield was recalled by survivors with difficulty. They could never forget the horrible scenes which played out there, and the modern reclamation efforts are fulfilling the wishes of some of the survivors who wanted the battlefield preserved so that future generations would never forget what

happened at Franklin, as our terrible war played out its final scenes.

In 2003, Franklin was removed from the list of America's ten most endangered battlefields. In 2004, preservationists and the City of Franklin created one of America's most unique public-private partnerships and literally began reclaiming sections of Franklin's Civil War battlefields. The Carter Hill Battlefield Park is the next step of that effort.

In November of 2014, community leaders from the battlefield preservation efforts approached the City of Franklin Board of Mayor and Aldermen with a proposal (attached) the creation of the Carter Hill Battlefield Park. Key to this proposal is the acquisition of two properties located immediately south of the Carter House (the Lovell tracts) for \$2.8 million. To date, an American Battlefield Preservation Program (ABPP) Grant of approximately \$1.3 million has been obtained and approximately \$500,000 in other private donations has been raised. It is proposed that in exchange for \$1.5 million from the City that the City would receive 11 properties valued at \$6.97 million. This property along with property already owned by the City and the State of Tennessee-owned Carter House property would comprise a 20-acre battlefield park (Carter Hill) to be operated by the City of Franklin.

By the end of 2015, the following elements of the Carter Hill Battlefield Park plan are in place:

- The MOU with the American Battlefield Protection Program has been signed by all parties.
- ABPP has confirmed that the Lovell buildings may be removed and/or demolished after Franklin's Charge follows certain procedures.
- A marketing plan for the disposition of the structures located on the Lovell property is being drafted and will be submitted to ABPP and Patrick McIntyre (SHPO) in January 2016.
- ABPP has funded \$1,280,000.00 to be applied to the Lovell purchase.
- Drafts of the deeds to the Battlefield Property (excluding Lovell) have been completed and will be circulated to the City of Franklin in January 2016.
- A Memorandum of Understanding between the Battlefield Organizations and the City of Franklin regarding the transfer of the Carter Hill Battlefield Property to the City and the seven year payment of the \$1,500,000 purchase price has been developed (under consideration by BOMA).

Financial Impact

The financial impact of this project is being considered in three categories: development of the park from the master plan; operations/personnel and capital request (attached). The funding components include:

- **Acquisition (\$1.5 million).** The proposal is for the City's payment of \$1.5 million be spread out over seven years (approximately \$214,300 per year). Funding would be expected to come from the City's Hotel/Motel Tax Fund and need be appropriated in future budgets.
- **Site Development (\$116,290).** These are costs associated with putting up fencing, establishing a trail system within the park and other various site development casts. Many of these components may be able to be completed by City staff. Funding for this work could be provided through either capital

funding, the City's general fund, or the Hotel/Motel Fund.

Operations (\$59,153 per year). The additional operating costs associated with the new park will provide for the maintenance, mowing and upkeep of the park and facilities.

Recommendation

Staff recommends Staff recommends entering into an agreement and memorandum of understanding with the Battlefield Organizations for the acquisition and development of the Carter Hill Battlefield Park.