

Liberia

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stands, said the Happy Hill neighborhood was sacred ground that carries the history and heritage of African Americans who were brought to this country on slave ships.

"Four hundred years ago, our ancestors were stolen and brought to this nation. They suffered horrible atrocities but this ground, like other grounds where we live, is sacred and it's filled with their spirit of freedom," Scipio said. "It was that freedom spirit that made it possible for us to be here today. If they didn't have it, we would have never been born because they would've given up. And now, in the 21st century, feel the spirit of freedom that is on this space and it is bringing forth hope, possibilities and once again a spirit of freedom."

"The spirit of not to be poor anymore, not to be ignorant anymore, not to be isolated anymore, not to say I can't do anymore. That's the spirit that's still on this ground and we must



Before the marker unveiling on Saturday, Sept. 21, members of the Liberian Organization of the Piedmont and others marched through the streets of the neighborhood originally known as Liberia.

be reminded of who we came from and how they struggled and endured."

The Honorable Lawrence Morris, delegate from the Republic of Liberia, said he was excited to be on hand for the marker unveiling. He said, "I'm very pleased to be here today and we want to say thank you for doing this for all the generations to come."

"This is something that we cannot sit back and just let history pass. The fact that we can commemorate this time and remember and pass on

to other generations speaks

volumes."

The marker honoring the African Americans who were relocated to Liberia is located at the corner of Liberia and Free Streets. The marker reads, "In October 1836, 18 formerly enslaved and five free African Americans left Salem for Millsberg, Liberia. Seventeen of these emigrants had been owned by Friedrich Schumann, laboring on his plantation here on the high ground south of Salem. In 1872, after the Civil War and Emancipation, the Salem Congregation established a neighborhood for



Ben Piggott and Amatullah Saleem lead the libation ceremony during the marker unveiling on Saturday, Sept. 21.

freedmen on Schumann's former plantation. The neighborhood initially was known as Liberia, recalling those who had emigrated. By 1876, it

was popularly known as Happy Hill. Today's Liberia Street in Happy Hill follows the path of an 18th-century farm road on that plantation.

HAWS preparing to apply for \$30 million grant

The Choice Neighborhoods grant would be used redevelop Cleveland Ave. Homes

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

If at first you don't succeed try, try, try, and try again.

That seems to be the mindset of the local housing authority when it comes to the Choice Neighborhoods grant. For the fourth time the Housing Authority of Winston-Salem (HAWS) will apply for the federal grant they plan to use to transform Cleveland Avenue Homes.

The Choice Neighborhoods grant is a \$30 million federal grant designed to replace outdated public housing units with mixed housing, including apartments townhouses, and single-family homes. To apply for the grant, applicants are required to partner with the city, who will handle projects such as roads, streetscapes and parks.

Last year, in a last minute effort to apply for the grant, HAWS made their presentation to the city less than 24 hours before the application was due and submitted the application just before midnight. HAWS also applied for the grant in 2017 and 2016, each time failing.

This year, to help with the application process and case management services for residents, HAWS is working with McCormick Baron Salazar, one of the nation's leading for-profit developers and asset manager of economically-integrated urban neighborhoods, and Urban Strategies, a not-for-profit organization that specializes in human services development, planning and strategy implementation.

Throughout the week, representatives from all three organizations have been meeting with residents, elected officials, local clergy, business owners, and others with a vested interest in the East Winston community, to hear what they would like to see their community look like.

According to representatives from McCormick Baron Salazar (MBS), they will take what they hear during the different meetings with stakeholders and create a plan for future development that will be presented to the community. During the community meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 24, Sandra Seals, MBS senior vice president of project management, said the application for the grant is due November 4.

Grant recipients will be announced the first quarter of 2020. If HAWS is awarded the grant, case management for residents will begin within 30 days.

Several residents had real concerns about the grant and the possibility of gentrification.

Marquita Wisley questioned why HAWS would wait until now to reach out for community input when they've known about the grant for more than two years.

"Why hasn't the Housing Authority, why hasn't the city, why hasn't anybody decided that the residents were important enough or mattered enough to do something in the interim while we were waiting to build up to the grant process?" Wisley said. "It's not like you didn't know the grant process was coming around again. I understand there's a process where they say now the grant is released and you can apply, but in that meantime what were you guys doing?"

Today, Thursday, Sept. 26, the Housing Authority of Winston-Salem, McCormick Baron Salazar and Urban Strategies will hold a community-wide presentation and discussion. During the event, the plan generated from various meetings throughout the week will be presented to the community. The community-wide presentation and discussion is scheduled for 4 p.m. at Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church.

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