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**Joint Board Matter with Chairman McKay,  
Supervisor Lusk, and Supervisor Smith  
Historical Marker Contest**

Members of the Board,

Today, we are proposing launching a Historical Markers Contest for Fairfax County. Fairfax County's Historical Marker Program began in January 1998 when the Fairfax County History Commission approved a design and agreed to fund a distinctive marker for Fairfax County.

There are currently 53 historical markers that commemorate people, places, or events of regional, statewide, or national significance in Fairfax. Of those markers, the following currently represent the African American community: Bethlehem Baptist Church, Carrolltown, Cartersville Baptist Church, David R. Pinn Community Center, Laurel Grove Colored School and Church, Luther P. Jackson High School, Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Odrick's Corner, The Pines, and Shiloh Baptist Church.

The Inaugural Historical Marker Contest will focus on the African American history of Fairfax County, and allow new stories to be shared with our community. It will help ensure a more comprehensive and inclusive retelling of the diverse and rich stories that helped create the Fairfax County of today. The program will focus on narratives and oral histories of our African American communities, whose history,

culture, and accomplishments in the county are underrepresented in our history books, lessons, and markers. We hope the program can be expanded in future years to focus on other underrepresented stories of Fairfax County.

In 2020, Governor Northam initiated an African American Historical Markers contest for the state markers program. The Governor's office provided teachers with resources to guide history discussions, promoted Black History Month events around the Commonwealth, and initiated the competition for students to submit ideas for new historical markers to the Department of Historic Resources.

With Board support, we plan to launch a similar Historical Marker contest for students in Fairfax County. Together with representatives from Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), Fairfax County History Commission Historical Markers Committee, Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS), Office of Public Affairs (OPA), our Chief Equity Officer, and with community input, we have developed a plan for a Historical Markers Contest focusing on our county's African American history.

Embracing the One Fairfax policy, this contest will focus on using primary sources, secondary research, and the oral history of the Fairfax Community to select markers that tell untold stories of the richness of our Fairfax County community.

While this project, open to all County students, will be incorporated into the FCPS social studies K-12 curriculum, the contest will be open to ALL students who currently reside in Fairfax County. Inviting students to engage in this process will allow for a deeper understanding of history, and a chance to participate in and engage with their local government.

The contest for the nine Magisterial Districts will be built into the FCPS social studies curriculum by coordinators and teachers to facilitate learning Virginia and U.S. History as a PBLI (Project based learning initiative).

**MOTION:**

Therefore, we move, that the Board direct the Fairfax County History Commission, with support from Office of Public Affairs, Department of Management and Budget, Facilities Management Department, and the Fairfax County Equity Office, to work together with Fairfax County Public Schools, and the Fairfax County School Board to administer a Historical Marker Contest for the students of Fairfax County.

We request that the Board receive a formal plan for the contest including:

- A formation of a committee, to include representatives appointed by each member of the Board of Supervisors (10), as well as representatives from FCPS Student Equity Leads (3), George Mason University (1), NAACP Youth Council (1), and the Black Chamber of Commerce (1), to help outline the rules of the contest, and to vote on the historical markers to be placed in each district next year.
- A consideration item for funding of the contest where up to nine historical markers at \$2,700 are included in the FY 2023 budget.

We request that this be completed by November 1, 2021, in preparation for the beginning of the contest in January 2022.