



Legislation Text

File #: 22-122, **Version:** 1

TITLE:

Orange County Community Remembrance Coalition Historical Marker honoring Manley McCauley

PURPOSE: The purpose of this agenda item is for the Town Council to consider approving the installation of a historical marker in the vicinity of Town Hall to recognize Manley McCauley who was a lynching victim in Orange County. This request is being made on behalf of the Orange County Community Remembrance Coalition (OCCRC). Diane Robertson, Committee Co-Chair will make the presentation.

DEPARTMENT: Town Manager's Office

CONTACT INFORMATION: Anita Jones-McNair, amcnair@carrboronc.gov
<<mailto:amcnair@carrboronc.gov>>

INFORMATION: OCCRC is working directly with the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) to design, and offset expenditures for historical markers in Orange County to recognize the victims of lynching that occurred in the county community. OCCRC approved at their May 4, 2022 meeting to move forward with the next step of this historical marker request that requires Town Council approval.

The Orange County Community Remembrance Coalition formed organically in the summer of 2018, in response to the opening of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice at the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, AL. A group of friends and colleagues in Orange County, NC, convened a meeting to talk about the pressing need to recognize the sufferings and sacrifices of our foremothers and forefathers in ways that would respect them and their descendants, as well as the affected communities, past and present. (See Attachment B.) EJI is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society. (See Attachment C) A recently installed marker can be seen in Gwinnett, GA (Attachment D) and more community remembrances can be found highlighted in (Attachment E), including a number installed in other parts of North Carolina, (Attachment F.)

The Manley McCauley lynching occurred in the vicinity of Carrboro Town Hall. The following information about Mr. McCauley will be displayed on the marker:

On October 30, 1898, a mob of white men lynched a young Black man named Manly McCauley, only 18 years old, a few miles west of Chapel Hill. Mr. McCauley lived and worked in the same area where he was born on the farm of a white couple named Milton and Maggie Brewer. On October 26, Mr. McCauley and Maggie Brewer left the farm and headed south towards Pittsboro. After news spread that the two had left together, a group of as many as 30 white men joined Mr. Brewer to go in search of them. The mob found Mr. McCauley and Mrs. Brewer together about 40 miles away in Lemon Springs, seized them, and carried them back towards Chapel Hill. When the mob reached their neighborhood just outside Chapel Hill on October 30, Maggie Brewer

was returned to her parents' home, but Mr. McCauley disappeared. He was assumed to have been lynched. On November 6, that assumption proved true when Mr. McCauley's body was found hanging from a tree near where Hatch Road and Old Greensboro Road are today. Local white residents and officials left his body hanging for a week and a half. Mr. McCauley's death was ruled a homicide, and four white men, including Mr. Brewer and some neighbors, were tried for the lynching. All four men were quickly acquitted, and no one was held accountable for lynching Manly McCauley.

Thousands of Black people were victims of lynching across the United States as the promises of emancipation and Reconstruction gave way to racial terror and unparalleled violence following the Civil War. White Southerners who resisted equal rights for Black men, women, and children used terror and violence to uphold white supremacy and enforce racial subordination for Black people. Lynchings emerged as the most notorious form of racial terrorism and were often carried out before crowds of hundreds to thousands of white people as public spectacles. Many Black people were lynched for resisting economic exploitation, being accused of crimes-even when no evidence tied the accused to any offense-and for violating perceived social customs, including engaging in consensual, interracial relationships. The brutalized bodies of lynching victims were often abandoned for hours or days to instill further terror into the entire Black community. Local law enforcement were often complicit in lynchings by failing to protect Black people in their custody from white mobs, and state and federal officials largely tolerated lynchings by not holding white mob perpetrators accountable. Between 1865 and 1950, documented racial terror lynchings claimed the lives at least 120 Black people in North Carolina, including five victims killed in Orange County: Cyrus Guy, Dan and Jeff Morrow, and Wright Woods in 1869 and Manley McCauley in 1898.

Attached are three recommended sites for the historical marker in preference order. OCCRC recommends that it is installed at location G1 - first picture. (Attachment G).

The EJI will offset all expenses to purchase and customize the marker and pole. (See Attachment H.) The Council may choose to forward this request to the Appearance Commission for a courtesy review, however it is not a LUO requirement.

OCCRC requests that the Town's Public Works Department install the marker. OCCRC would also like to schedule an unveiling ceremony of the marker. The date will be determined.

FISCAL & STAFF IMPACT: There is no financial impact currently associated with this item except for supplies and labor for the marker install. Staff can work with OCCRC and EJI on the installation and unveiling.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the Town Council approve the request from the Orange County Community Remembrance Coalition to install a historical marker for Manley McCauley and authorized the Town Manager to sign any documents associated with the installation.