

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Planning to Begin for Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe

Talbot County Council Names Committee to Oversee Project

The Talbot County Department of Parks and Recreation has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority to develop both a master plan and an interpretive plan for the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe.

The official groundbreaking for the County-owned park was held on February 14, 2018, which was the 200th birthday of native son Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, who later changed his name to Frederick Douglass. It covers 107 acres on the Tuckahoe Creek just south of the town of Queen Anne in the northeast corner of Talbot County.

A 66.96-acre parcel was purchased in 2006 with \$1.8 million from Maryland Department of Natural Resources Program Open Space. The Council is appreciative of the family of George C. and Naomi H. Moore for their generous donation of another 40.2 acres of wetlands adjacent to this parcel in 2011, bringing the total to 107.16 acres.

The MHAA grant will allow Talbot County to engage members of the community and develop a plan for developing the infrastructure for a recreational park. In addition, it will identify places to tell the story of Frederick Douglass and to give more information about the Tuckahoe watershed and landscape.

In his first book, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, the author himself writes, "I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot County, Maryland." The Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe is located just upstream from the farm where, many believe Douglass was born in 1818.

"I am really looking forward to this endeavor," says Parks and Recreation Director Preston Peper. "The Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe is a blank slate, full of possibilities. This planning process will help us determine the best use of this property and allow us to honor a great man. It's exciting."

Council president Corey Pack agrees. “The work we do now will set the course of the future for this park,” he says. “There will be ample opportunity for the public to participate in the planning process and to present their ideas for the park.”

Late last year, the Talbot County Council appointed a committee to work with County staff and their consultants on the development plan for the Douglass Park. Members of the committee are as follows.

Dale Glenwood Green is a Professor of Architecture and Historic Preservation at Morgan State University and is Partner in the Architectural firm of Sulton Campbell Britt & Associates, PC. He serves as the Chairman of the Governor’s statewide ethics commission for community initiatives for the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture.

County Manager **Andy Hollis** is the chief administrative officer of the County. Under the direction of the Council, he directs and supervises the administration of all agencies of the County government, unless otherwise stated by charter or law. Hollis resumed the County Manager position in 2015 after his term on the County Council ended. Before being elected to the Council, he served as County Manager for 11 years.

A resident of Easton, **Kim Kearns** is representing the Talbot County Park Board on this committee.

Eric Lowery currently serves as president of the Easton-based Frederick Douglass Honor Society. He is a long-time resident of the Unionville community and is employed at Chesapeake College.

Kenneth Morris is the great-great-great grandson of Frederick Douglass and the great-great-grandson of Booker T. Washington. He is the co-founder and president of the Atlanta-based nonprofit Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives (FDFI). Morris also serves as the chairman of the 16-member Frederick Douglass Congressional Bicentennial Commission.

Local preservationist and historian **Priscilla Bond Morris** is one of the founding members of Historic Easton, Inc. In 2018, she researched and wrote the content for Talbot County’s new FrederickDouglassBirthplace.org website. Priscilla is a native of Claiborne, Maryland, and is an avid gardener.

Corey Park is serving his third elected term on the Talbot County Council, after having been appointed in 2007 to fill an open seat, and currently serves as Council president. He recently retired from the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services where he has been employed since 1994.

Preston Peper currently serves as Director of Parks & Recreation for Talbot County. He oversees all of Talbot County’s parks and public landings, as well as the Community Center. During his tenure, Peper has revamped the department’s budget, created a marketing program, increased programming, and was instrumental in the creation of the Oxford Conservation Park.

Marci Ross serves as the assistant director of tourism development for the State of Maryland where she manages the state's Welcome Centers Program, call center, and outreach efforts, as well as the marketing grant program. She played a key role in developing the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center in Cambridge and has successfully advocated for tourism attraction signage along Maryland's highways in every corner of the state.

Mark Turner has served as a commissioner in the town of Queen Anne for more than 10 years. He is trained as an architect and works in health care design and construction for CRGA Architecture firm in Annapolis.

Cassandra Vanhooser currently serves as Director of Economic Development and Tourism for Talbot County. Under her direction, Talbot Tourism won the coveted "Visit Maryland Award" in 2015 from the Maryland Office of Tourism Development for their *Escape to Talbot County* rebranding campaign. In 2018, the department was again honored by the Maryland Office of Tourism Development for leveraging partnerships for the Frederick Douglass 200th birthday celebration.

The first meeting of the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe Committee will be held on Wednesday, January 30, 2019 in the Bradley Meeting Room, located in the South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 North Washington Street, Easton..

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