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Buckhead Heritage Objects to Application to Remove Historic African-American Cemetery from Buckhead's Frankie Allen Park

An application has been made to the Urban Design Commission by Community Renewal LLC for a Certificate of Appropriateness III to remove graves from the Mt. Olive Cemetery, located at 431 Pharr Road N.E., adjacent to Frankie Allen Park.

Mt. Olive Cemetery is all that remains of the Macedonia Park neighborhood – one of Buckhead's few historic black communities.

There will be a public hearing on the Application on June 10, 2009 at 4 p.m. at Atlanta City Hall, City Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, 55 Trinity Avenue, S.W.

"Buckhead Heritage is saddened to learn of an attempt to remove one of the last remnants of African-American history in Buckhead," said Christine McCauley, Executive Director of the Buckhead Heritage Society. "We hope the landowner will be amenable to finding some alternative solution that will not negatively affect the Mt. Olive Cemetery."

The area, known as Macedonia, was first settled by freed slaves after the Civil War. In 1921 developer John Owens created an African-American subdivision named Macedonia Park. Macedonia was a thriving community and included 400 residents, three churches, two grocery stores, barbers, a blacksmith, and restaurants.

In the 1940s, Fulton County began to systematically remove residents by condemning and purchasing the properties in Macedonia to make way for a park. By 1951, there were only two residents left. Bagley Park, the home of Buckhead Baseball, was built in 1952 and was named after William Bagley, a prominent black businessman and resident of Macedonia Park. Bagley Park was renamed Frankie Allen Park in 1980 after beloved umpire Frankie Allen.

Located at the entrance to Frankie Allen Park, this .22 acre-historic cemetery contains approximately 45 marked and unmarked African American graves.

"We know the value of historic cemeteries from our work at Harmony Grove Cemetery: they function to provide opportunities for heritage tourism; they provide greenspace and tree canopy; and, if properly maintained, they enhance the value of surrounding properties," said Buckhead Heritage President Wright Mitchell. "It would be a shame to lose such an important historic and natural resource in the center of Buckhead's commercial district."

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