News Release

For immediate release
Tuesday, September 12, 2023

City receives grant for historical Oak Hill cemetery

City Manager Ken Larking today announced that the city has received a grant to reset, repair, and clean memorials in the historical Oak Hill cemetery located in the Almagro community.

The grant, in the amount of $26,485, comes from the Virginia Department of Historic

Resources through the Virginia Historical African American Cemetery and Graves Fund. The Oak Hill cemetery is one of 33 cemeteries in Virginia to receive funding.

"The Almagro neighborhood has been an extremely important focus area for City Council members, so much that we specifically called out the neighborhood in our Plan Danville efforts," City Manager Ken Larking said. "Also, I know how much the Almagro neighborhood loves this cemetery. It's a very picturesque area."

The funding, which was sought by the City of Danville's Community Development Department, will allow for repair and cleanup of 200 memorials in two areas of the cemetery, as well as the trimming of trees damaged by storms. Additional funds will be sought to address other areas in the cemetery.

Local historian Karice Luck-Brimmer said African American places of burial are historical treasures.

"When you are walking through an historic cemetery such as Oak Hill, you are tracing the last footprints of your ancestors," she said. "For a researcher like myself, cemeteries offer a unique glimpse into the past and are excellent biographical resources. Our cemeteries are part of the cultural landscape that have long been desecrated and under

cared for and are in danger of being lost all across the country. As a community, we have a vital role in ensuring that our burial places are preserved."

The Oak Hill cemetery was established in 1901; however, there have been burials since before the 1900s, when the cemetery was part of the Almagro community. The cemetery has a total of 30.3 acres and was acquired by the city in 1931.

There have been 11,390 burials at Oak Hill. The cemetery remains active. Five acres of land remain to be developed, which will amount to approximately 2,000 graves.

The cemetery is one of eight owned and managed by the City of Danville.

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