Request to Place Historical Marker on County Property

Briefing Date: Jun 2 2020  
Funding Source:  
Originating Department: Planning and Development  
Prepared by: Rick Loessberg,  
Recommended by: Rick Loessberg.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
Under the State’s historical marker program, county historical commissions serve as the first level of review for marker applications. The County’s Historical Commission has recently received an application for a marker that would acknowledge the lynching of Allen Brooks in 1910. The Commission’s marker committee has conditionally approved this application, subject to the County also approving the application (this is because the State has a requirement that the owner of the property where the marker would be placed must give its consent and because it has been proposed that the marker would be placed adjacent to Old Red since that is from where the mob that killed Mr. Brooks forcibly removed him). So that the Commissioners Court can consider this request, the following information has been prepared.

OPERATIONAL IMPACT:
Both staff and Historical Commission members have been actively involved in reviewing and revising the application which seeks to not just acknowledge what happened (while awaiting trial, a mob overwhelmed the deputies that were protecting Brooks, threw him out of a second-story window, and then dragged him down Main Street to Akard where he was hung from an archway that spanned the width of Main), but to also provide proper context. It discusses that while Dallas did not have the harsh reputation of other southern cities, discrimination and segregation still existed. It also discusses that while there has since been progress, it did not just magically happen, that it should not be taken for granted, and that more is still needed.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:
The applicant will cover the cost of having the marker cast; the County will only have to install the marker which is minimal and which the County has previously done before for other markers on its property.

LEGAL IMPACT:
It has been proposed that the marker would be installed on the grounds near the southeastern corner of Old Red as this is where Mr. Brooks was awaiting trial. As there is presently already another marker near this space, it may be necessary to also slightly relocate this existing marker.

**PROJECT SCHEDULE:**
Recommended marker applications must be submitted to the State by June 15. It is anticipated that the State will make its decisions in Spring 2021. If the State approves this application, it will then take about six months to draft the marker inscription (the County will have the opportunity to review it) and to have the marker cast.

**ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE:**
The County's administrative plan recommends that the County undertake activities that will make it the destination of choice for businesses and residents. Recognizing one's history is always important, and for those elements that are reprehensible, it is especially important that they be acknowledged so that one can truly move forward, avoid repeating or perpetuating what has previously occurred, and assess (and perhaps appreciate) what progress has since been made.

**RECOMMENDATION:**
It is recommended that the Commissioners Court approve the proposed State marker application for the lynching of Allen Brooks, authorize the Director of Planning & Development to sign any documents related to this application on behalf of the County, and authorize the placement of the proposed marker on County property adjacent to Old Red.

**MOTION:**
On a motion made by TBD, and seconded by TBD, the following order will be voted on by the Commissioners Court of Dallas County, State of Texas:

Be it resolved and ordered that the Dallas County Commissioners Court does hereby support the submission of an application for a Texas Historical Marker that would acknowledge the 1910 lynching of Allen Brooks; authorize Rick Loessberg, the County's Director of Planning & Development, to execute any documents related to this marker application on behalf of the County; and should the application be approved by the State, authorize the placement of the marker on Dallas County property adjacent to the Old Red Courthouse.

**ATTACHMENTS:**
None