

Amy Harvey

From: CHRIS BLUE
Sent: Wednesday, November 13, 2024 9:17 AM
To: Amy Harvey
Subject: FW: Request to Petition the Council

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Christopher C. Blue
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From: Dr. Michelle Laws <malaws007@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 12, 2024 11:13 AM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Cc: CHRIS BLUE <CBLUE@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: Request to Petition the Council

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Dear Chapel Hill Town Council,

I hope that you all are doing well. I am writing at this time on behalf of a group of Chapel Hill and Carrboro natives who make up the CHC Public Housing Legacy Group. Members of this group all either grew up in or lived for different periods of time in a public housing community in Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Many of us, like myself are members of families that have long and deep roots in Chapel Hill and Carrboro including the Cotton, Foushee, Holeman, Pierce, Edwards, Hargraves, Farrington and Fearington families. Many of our family members worked as service workers in different sectors in the town --housekeepers for the university and hospital, domestic workers for mostly white families, and as cooks and servers in restaurants throughout both towns. Up until the late 1980s it was many of our family members who were also low-wage town workers including public works, bus drivers, and recreation center staff. And, similar to today, even though they worked to support the economic advancements and progress of both towns, many of our family members could not afford to own property in Chapel Hill. Thanks to public housing, which was built to support many of the low-wage workers, our families were able to live, raise their families, and build a strong knit community in the town's public housing.

As many of us have watched the history of Blacks in both Chapel Hill and Carrboro be highlighted and commended in many beautiful ways, those of us who grew up and lived in Chapel Hill's public housing feel that our rich history and legacy has been lost and ignored. When memorializing and commemorating the contributions of Blacks in Chapel Hill, it is sufficed to say that the half has not been told.

We are petitioning the town council to consider and begin the appropriate process to move forward a request from the CHC Public Housing Legacy Group to commission a mural of members of Chapel Hill public housing on the front wall of the gym at Hargraves Center.

Hargraves Center for many of us as youth was a place of refuge, a safe place, the place where we got our first jobs as camp counselors. It was a place where the "boys from the hood" showcased their athletic skills and talents. It was a place where girls and boys got their first kisses and "hooked up" (smile). It was where we had family reunions and learned how to swim (my dad Luther Foushee was one of the first life guards there). I can go on reminiscing about the many wonderful ways Hargraves served as a beacon of joy, hope, and positive socialization for the youth and families who lived in public housing and how we too contributed to its richness and value.

It is our hope that you will add us to your list of memorials and tributes that are long overdue for the contributions we and our families have made to our great town. Thank you for your time and consideration of this petition.

Yours truly,
Dr. Michelle Laws

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"Love, service, and hope are the greatest measures of success. If we fail to love, fail to help people in their time of need, and fail to shine our light the brightest in the darkest of times, then we have failed in all things that matter in life." Dr. Michelle Laws