



LEGISLATIVE SPONSORS

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| <input type="checkbox"/> COMMISSIONER VALERIE WYNN | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMISSIONER PAUL BRONSON |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMMISSIONER ELAINE LUCAS | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMISSIONER MALLORY C. JONES, III |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMMISSIONER RAYMOND WILDER | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMISSIONER BILL HOWELL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMMISSIONER VIRGIL WATKINS, JR. | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMISSIONER AL TILLMAN |
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A RESOLUTION OF THE MACON-BIBB COUNTY COMMISSION TO DESIGNATE THE AREA DESCRIBED HEREIN AS AN “MLK SMALL AND MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESS DISTRICT,” TO BE KNOWN AS “MACON’S BLACK WALL STREET,” AS A PROJECT AND FOCUS AREA FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN MACON-BIBB COUNTY; AND FOR OTHER LAWFUL PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, following the Civil War, throughout the American South, local and state governments implemented a lawfully sanctioned system of segregation and economic inequity which was imposed against African-Americans and other racial and ethnic minority groups; and

WHEREAS, following the Civil War, more than four million former slaves found themselves in need of the basic necessities of life, including housing, food, income, and access to goods and services; and

WHEREAS, as a byproduct of these policies of forced segregation, dozens of “freedmen’s towns” were established across the United States, particularly in Texas and Oklahoma, as insular and isolated communities consisting of former slaves and their families; and

WHEREAS, one such freedmen’s town was known as “Greenwood,” located in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which began as the successful “Little Africa” community, and where residents were inspired by a 1905 visit from Booker T. Washington to develop a community to support the mutual prosperity and independence of the residents therein; and

WHEREAS, the Greenwood district was formally organized in 1906, and assisted in part by Ottaway W. Gurley, a wealthy black businessman who had acquired forty acres of land in Tulsa and dedicated that it would only be sold to persons of color; and

WHEREAS, by 1921, Greenwood was home to approximately 10,000 black residents, and included grocery stores, banks, libraries, attorneys, realtors, doctors, and other entrepreneurs who all contributed to the success and community affluence of Greenwood, which had come to be known as “Black Wall Street”; and

WHEREAS, on Memorial Day, 1921, there was an incident in which a 19-year-old black man named Dick Rowland was accused of assaulting a 17-year-old white female elevator operator; and

WHEREAS, the following day, Rowland was arrested, and spurred on by sensationalist news reporting, discussions of lynching Rowland spread throughout the Tulsa community; and

WHEREAS, passions flared between the group of white residents demanding to lynch Rowland and the group of black residents seeking to defend Rowland from the lynch mob, ultimately leading to an exchange of gunfire, which then escalated into a full invasion of the Greenwood district by armed white residents, shooting and burning the residents and property therein indiscriminately; and

WHEREAS, ultimately, upwards of 300 residents, mostly black, were slain in the Tulsa race massacre, and over 10,000 people were left homeless as a result of over \$2,000,000 in property losses, as valued at the time; and

WHEREAS, the Tulsa race massacre is remembered 100 years later as one of the lowest points in America's history of race relations; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is widely recognized as a central figure in the American civil rights movement, starting with the 1955 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama; and used his power of speech and nonviolent protest techniques to advocate for desegregation, voting rights, opposition to the Vietnam war, and economic justice; and

WHEREAS, in his 1964 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, Dr. King stated, "There is nothing new about poverty. What is new, however, is that we have the resources to get rid of it."; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King was assassinated in 1968 while in Memphis, Tennessee, supporting a strike by municipal sanitation workers seeking equal treatment and better working conditions; and

WHEREAS, it is the goal of the Macon-Bibb County Commission to support and fulfill the visions of Dr. King to empower small and minority-owned business by providing incentives and developing programs in order to remove barriers to entry into the business marketplace and mitigate against the risks that adverse conditions can cause developing businesses to close; and

WHEREAS, the Greenwood Bottom neighborhood, located in the Southern portion of Downtown Macon, was named after the Greenwood district in Tulsa, Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, the Macon-Bibb County Commission desires to see the Greenwood Bottom neighborhood thrive as a center of economic prosperity for small businesses and minority-owned businesses; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King once stated that, "Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase."; and

WHEREAS, the Macon-Bibb County Commission finds that designating a portion of the Greenwood Bottom neighborhood as an “MLK Small and Minority Business District,” to be known by the name “Macon’s Black Wall Street,” as shown in Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, and supporting the incubation and development of small and minority-owned businesses therein through the use of incentive and resource programs would be consistent with the visions of black prosperity and equity promoted by the residents of the Greenwood district in pre-1920s Tulsa, Oklahoma, and with the visions of Dr. King, as stated hereinabove; and

WHEREAS, it is the intention of the Macon-Bibb County Commission to use this Resolution to declare an intention to focus on the “Black Wall Street” district as an area for ongoing economic and physical development in the years to come; and

WHEREAS, the Macon-Bibb County Commission also recognizes resolving this issue will require community involvement and effort; and

WHEREAS, contemporaneously with this resolution, the Macon-Bibb County Commission is considering a resolution to accept grant funding for the purpose of hiring a consultant to develop and advise on programs for the purpose of supporting small and minority-owned businesses in the Macon’s Black Wall Street district designated herein; and

WHEREAS, this resolution is necessary and proper to promote or protect the safety, health, peace, security, and general welfare of the Macon-Bibb County government and its inhabitants.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Macon-Bibb County Commission, and it is hereby so resolved by the authority of the same that Macon-Bibb County declares the area designated in Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, to be an “MLK Small and Minority-owned Business District,” to be known as “Macon’s Black Wall Street,” and that it shall henceforth be a focus and priority of the Macon-Bibb County Commission to develop incentives and programs that will allow this district to develop into a center for the incubation and success of small and minority-owned businesses, provided that nothing in this Resolution shall be construed as immediately creating any benefits, rights, or programs other than designating and establishing the boundaries of this district at this time.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Macon-Bibb County Commission hereby declares that the foregoing preamble and whereas provisions set forth hereinabove constitute, and shall be considered to be, substantive provisions of this Resolution and are hereby incorporated by reference into this provision.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in the event scrivener’s errors shall be discovered in this Resolution or in the Exhibits hereto after the adoption hereof, the Macon-Bibb County Commission hereby authorizes and directs that each such scrivener’s error shall be corrected in all multiple counterparts of this Resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Macon-Bibb County Commission grants the Mayor the authority to take any and all further actions necessary to carry out the intents and purposes of this Resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that except as specifically provided herein, any and all ordinances or resolutions or parts of ordinances or resolutions in conflict with this Resolution shall be and the same hereby are repealed, and this Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its adoption.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED this Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its approval by the Mayor or upon its adoption into law without such approval.

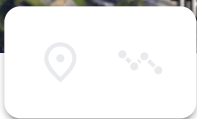
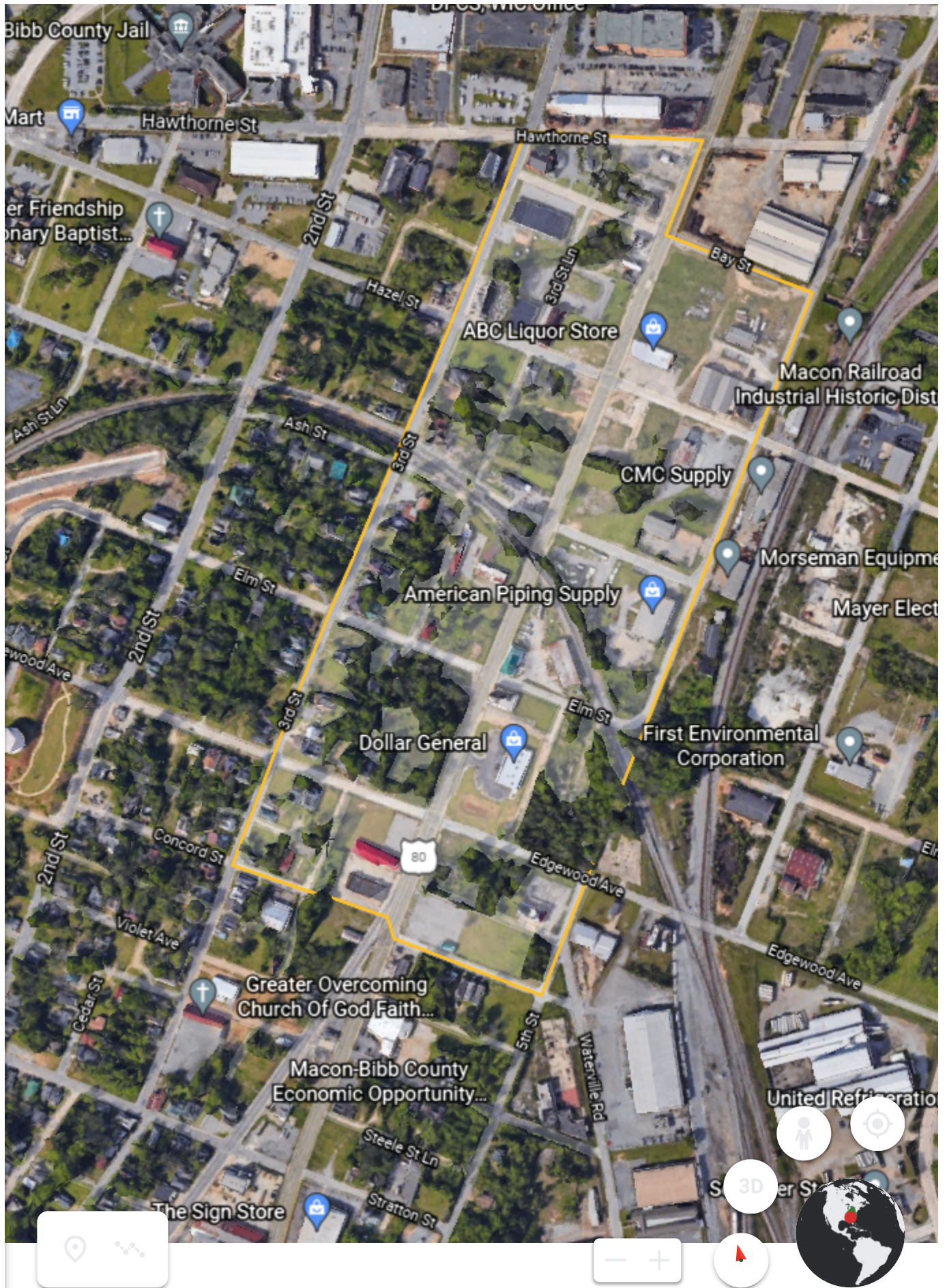
SO RESOLVED this ____ day of _____, 2021.

LESTER M. MILLER, MAYOR

ATTEST: _____
JANICE S. ROSS, CLERK OF COMMISSION

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EXHIBIT A



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