

RESOLUTION

FORT BEND COUNTY RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF HALTING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FORT BEND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS JAMES REESE CAREER AND TECHNICAL CENTER TO ALLOW FOR CURRENT HISTORIC CEMETERY TO BE LEFT UNDISTURBED

WHEREAS, on April 6, 2018, the Fort Bend Independent School District (FBISD) announced that a historic cemetery was found at the future site of the FBISD’s James Reese Career and Technical Center located at the intersection of University Boulevard and Chatham Avenue in Sugar Land;

WHEREAS, archaeologists subsequently discovered remains belonging to 95 individuals, who are believed to be African-American prisoners forced to perform hard labor as part of the state’s brutal convict-leasing system;

WHEREAS, various states would lease prisoners to owners of plantations and other industries including governmental bodies, who paid minimal fees for the labor and covered the cost of workers’ food and shelter;

WHEREAS, in the late 19th century and early 20th century, the town, located along the Brazos River, served as the epicenter of the country’s sugar industry. The convict-leasing system flourished throughout the region, targeting former slaves who were leased by the state;

WHEREAS, we recognize the tragic reality and plight of those individuals buried at this location and pay respect to those unjustly captured into the convict-leasing system;

WHEREAS, on February 6, 2019, the Fort Bend Historical Commission unanimously voted to oppose the removal of the cemetery dedication; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fort Bend County Commissioners Court hereby encourages the Fort Bend Independent School District (FBISD) to allow the 95 bodies currently buried at the cemetery to remain undisturbed. Additionally, it be encouraged that a memorial be constructed at the location to honor and recognize those negatively impacted by the Texas Convict-Leasing System.

Approved this __th day of _____, 2019.

KP George, County Judge

Vincent Morales, Commissioner, Precinct 1

Grady Prestage, Commissioner, Precinct 2

Andy Meyers, Commissioner, Precinct 3

Ken R. DeMerchant, Commissioner, Precinct 4

Laura Richard, County Clerk