

Coalition for the Protection of New Market Heights Battlefield Applauds Decision to Terminate Development Contract

VARINA, VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES, April 11, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- VARINA, VA – April 11, 2022 – Today the Coalition for the Protection of New Market Heights Battlefield applauded the decision of the nation's largest homebuilder, D.R. Horton, to terminate its contract to build 650 homes on the Civil War battlefield where U.S. Colored Troops demonstrated exceptional bravery and helped save the Union.

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It is our hope that DR Horton's decision will lead to preservation of this significant battlefield to enable future interpretations and memorialization of the U.S. Colored Troops.”

Jeff Dawes, Coalition for the Protection of New Market Heights Battlefield

“D.R. Horton's decision gives the County and its taxpayers a chance to develop a plan for long term preservation of this profoundly significant site in American history, especially significant because of the heroism and decisive role of U.S. Colored Troops fighting for their freedom on this battlefield,” commented Mark Perreault, who helped organize the Coalition.

D.R. Horton had proposed to build a development of 650 homes called The Ridings at Warner Farm within a highly significant battlefield landscape. The property is within the core of three battlefields: First Deep Bottom, Second Deep

Bottom, and New Market Heights. The National Park Service evaluated Second Deep Bottom and New Market Heights in 2009 as battlefields in Critical Need of preservation, meaning battlefields with strong integrity but that are threatened significantly by development.

The developer abandoned the project after the Coalition raised concerns that the project was out of compliance with permits issued by the Army Corps of Engineers, specifically that the project had not completed several elements of the cultural resources plan, which is a condition of the permit. The Corps and the Department of Historic Resources (DHR) agreed with the Coalition and informed the developer that full compliance must be met before any work at the property could be commenced.

“We appreciate the Corps and DHR taking our concerns seriously and enforcing the terms of the permit,” stated Marion Werkheiser, managing partner at Cultural Heritage Partners, PLLC, and attorney for the Coalition. “It is important to honor the African American soldiers who fought

here as we have soldiers who fought in other battles.”

The Battle of New Market Heights was characterized by significant heroism by the United States Colored Troops, and fourteen members of the company were awarded the Medal of Honor for bravery after the battle, out of only sixteen Army Medals of Honor that were awarded to U.S. Colored Troops during the whole Civil War. Congressman Donald McEachin has [noted](#) the pressing need to better recognize Virginia’s “Forgotten Fourteen,” and the Richmond City Council recently announced plans to honor the soldiers on Monument Avenue.

As a result of the bravery of the USCT soldiers, Confederate General Robert E. Lee shifted his troops northward to protect Richmond, weakening the Petersburg defenses and contributing to the city’s fall and ultimately to the defeat of the Confederacy. Between the three battles, over 10,000 soldiers were killed, wounded, or captured.

“It is our hope,” said Jeff Dawes of the Coalition, “that DR Horton’s decision will lead to preservation of this significant battlefield to enable future interpretations and memorialization of the USCT.”

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