



NEWS from the Shelby County Mayor's Office

Lee Harris, Mayor

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTY MAYOR LEE HARRIS TO SIGN “FOREVER LEASE” BETWEEN ORANGE MOUND ARTS COUNCIL AND SHELBY COUNTY

Orange Mound Arts Council and Shelby County Government enter into a “forever lease” for formerly blighted property in Orange Mound

Memphis, TN – On Wednesday, June 24, 2020, Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris will sign a long-term (fifty-year) lease agreement between the Orange Mound Arts Council (OMAC) and Shelby County Government for property located at 2471 Park Avenue Memphis, TN 38114 at 10:00 a.m. The “forever lease” arrangement provides that Shelby County will lease the property for free to the Orange Mound Arts Council for the next 50 years. The Orange Mound Arts Council will use the property to expand creative art options in the Orange Mound community. In addition to the lease signing, Shelby County officials will present the Orange Mound Arts Council with art supplies for kids and creative programming. County Mayor Lee Harris, Commissioner Milton, and Mary Mitchell are expected to speak. A brief tour of the renovated space will follow.

Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris: “I am pleased Shelby County will partner with the Orange Mound Arts Council on this venture to bring more of the creative arts to this neighborhood and its youth. What was formerly blighted property in the Orange Mound Community will be reinvented as a platform for showcasing African American art and creative community programming. The Orange Mound Arts Council and ArtUp have worked for years to showcase



the historic art of Orange Mound, one of the first African-American neighborhoods in the United States. I am excited about the work they will continue to do in their new space.”

Shelby County Commissioner Reginald Milton: "It is important we preserve the rich history of African American culture. Through this partnership, not only are we able to showcase historic Orange Mound Art, but we are also investing in the community.”

Orange Mound Arts Council Executive Director Mary Mitchell: "OMAC and the Historic Orange Mound Heritage and Preservation Society extends our gratitude and sincere appreciation to Mayor Harris, the Shelby County Commissioners, and staff for the gift grandeur to our beloved community. Our community’s first cultural center will present activities from this sacred place that will transform the city, the county, and the world, just as Orange Mound has transformed since its conception in 1890.

6th Generation Orange Mound Resident and Art Curator Paul Thomas: “Since 1890, the history of Orange Mound has changed lives. The first Afro American community in America found and developed exclusively by Afro Americans. The time is now to restore the historic community to its glory. If there is no Orange Mound there is no Memphis. The investment in this new property will help restore hope and self-esteem to the future of the community and Memphis.”

Press are encouraged to attend. This event will comply with the local health department’s social distancing guidelines, and face coverings are strongly encouraged.

(end of release)