

ETNP News

A Save Elm Thicket Publication Serving ETNP

This Issue Sponsored by Democrat for Justice of the Peace Pct. 5-2 Candidate Omar Narvaez (www.omarfordallas.com)



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MONUMENTS AT GARVIN CEMETERY DAMAGED; INCONSISTENT INFORMATION ON ZONING REQUEST GIVEN

The historical significance of the Garvin Memorial Cemetery to the Elm Thicket/Northpark neighborhood cannot be ignored seeing as how the freedmen who created and lived in Elm Thicket share their final resting place at the cemetery with Confederate soldiers at the turn of century. The burial plots of the Elm Thicket/Northpark freedmen were marked with metal rods or not at all. In other words, it is not certain where all the remains are located on that parcel of property.

While resting in peace is something that should be afforded to everyone once they have passed, builders and developers seem intent on denying just that to those interred at the cemetery located at 4000 W. Northwest Highway.



©Mimi Perez

A Texas Historical Marker is displayed for the Garvin Memorial Cemetery site at 4000 W. Northwest Highway between Midway Rd. and Marsh Ln.

Because Garvin Memorial Cemetery holds the remains of Civil War soldiers as well as freedmen from Ellum Thicket and other Freedmen communities in Dallas, the cemetery is recognized with a Texas Historical Marker. It is also recognized as a Dallas Landmark.

Garvin Cemetary Continued on Page 9

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ETNP News: Message from the Publisher

Hello ETNP Readers:

We hope this finds you all well. Spring has definitely sprung and it is nice to see so many neighbors pushing strollers, walking their pups or riding their bikes through the Elm Thicket/Northpark neighborhood. There is just something pleasant about sitting on the porch and watching everyone enjoy the neighborhood they call home.

As a friendly reminder, code enforcement will be inspecting our alleys to ensure emergency and service vehicles can get through without issues. Weeds and grass can be no more than 12 inches high. Homeowners are responsible for cleaning their section of the alley. That includes the right of way from the property line to the center of the alleyway. Also, tree branches need to be trimmed so they are a minimum of 15 feet above the alley.

Heavy trash pick up is always the first full week of the month. Using April as an example, we can begin to put out brush and heavy trash for pick up on Thursday, April 2 through Sunday, April 5. The city will pick up the bulk trash the week of April 6 since that is the first full week of April. If you put heavy trash out before that time or after the city has come through the neighborhood you risk getting a \$300-\$400 ticket. Unlike the high weeds, you will not receive warning note from a code enforcement. Putting heavy trash out early or after pick up is an automatic citation.



If you are new to the neighborhood and have not made your way to K. B. Polk Recreation Center then you need to make a point to swing by and see what events they have planned. To participate in any of the activities, you need to have a City of Dallas recreation card that you can get at K. B. Polk Rec. Center.

A sample of the activities that will be going on this month at the rec are: On Mondays and Wednesdays, there is the Walking Club that walks in the gymnasium. If you're looking for an accountability partner then this is the group for you. On Tuesdays and Thursdays there is rec pickleball from 10 am to noon. On Tuesdays there is Mahjong from noon to 2:30 pm.

Monday through Thursday, the Active Senior Adult Program meets from 10 am to 2 pm. They have field trips, guest speakers, birthday celebrations, bingo on Wednesdays, exercise classes and much more.

For the month of April, there will be arts and crafts classes for the seniors where they will learn to make bracelets, paper flowers, etc. It's guaranteed to be a fun time and you will learn how to do something different.

With Easter this coming Sunday, please know that I wish you a grace-filled and happy Easter and Passover.

Your neighbor,
Mimi

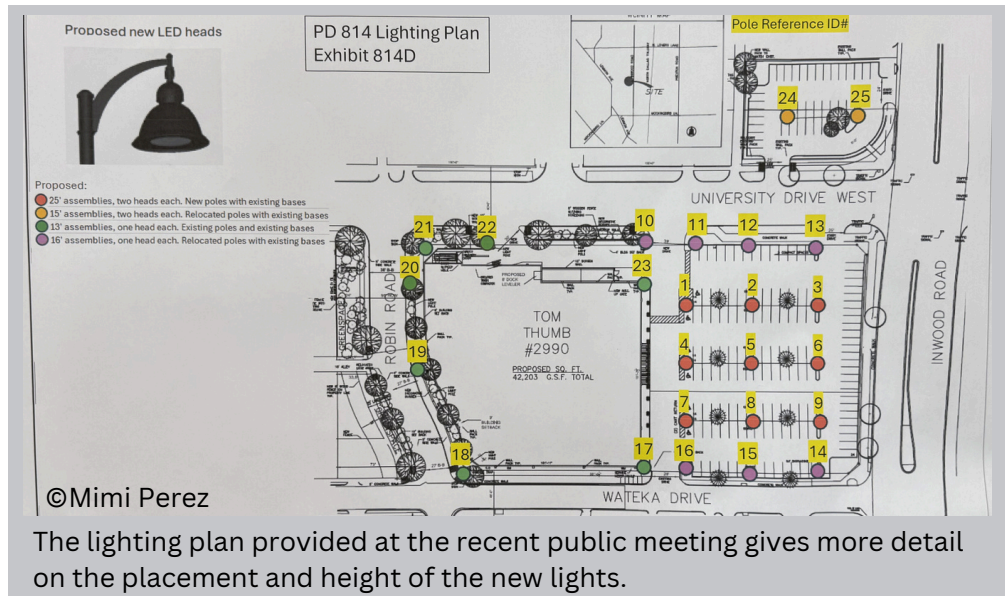


Tom Thumb Seeks Zoning Change to Improve Lighting and Safety

The Tom Thumb grocery store at the corner of University Blvd. and Inwood Rd. (7117 Inwood Rd.) is seeking a zoning change to update the lighting of their parking lots and the store perimeter. As of this publication date, Tom Thumb representatives have held two public meetings to discuss the project.

They wish to raise the interior light poles from their current height of 15 feet to 25 feet, The perimeter light poles around the store and in the north employee parking lot will be raised from 12 feet to between 13 and 16 feet depending on the location of nearby neighbors.

The light study indicates the lights will comply with Dallas code requirements because they are shielded and pointing straight down. Tom Thumb hopes to replace the older light fixtures, which are no longer producing as much light as they originally did, to improve safety for those shopping at the store after sundown. When asked at the public meetings about having the lights dim after everyone has left the store, the representatives said they will look into that option.



The lighting plan provided at the recent public meeting gives more detail on the placement and height of the new lights.

No date has been set for the City Plan Commission hearing, but city staff has recommended the change. Once a CPC hearing date is set, *ETNP News* will make the announcement via email and/or in a future issue of this newsletter.

Dr. Walter Ree McMillan Honored with Texas Historical Marker; McMillan Family Made Ellum Thicket Their Home

Dr. Walter Ree McMillan (1873-1958) was a pioneer in the expanding of medical care to African-Americans in Dallas during the Jim Crow Era when conditions were difficult to access these services. In 1923, he opened the McMillan Sanatorium which not only housed surgical and medical offices but also contained insurance and other business to serve the community. He also mentored other African-American doctors and nurses who became prominent in their field.

It was these accomplishments that led to [Remembering Black Dallas, Inc.](#) to unveil a Texas Historical Marker on March 27 with a gathering of Dr. McMillan's family at the Dallas Central Library. The official marker location will be at 2404 N. Hall St. near the Freedman's Cemetery Memorial at Lemmon Ave. and Central Expressway.



Posters with Dr. McMillan, the McMillan Sanatorium building, and the Texas Historical Marker were unveiled at the Dallas Central Library on March 27. Picture courtesy of Remembering Black Dallas, Inc.

Members of Dr. McMillan's family, including his granddaughter, Katherine McMillan, made Ellum Thicket her home for many years and the family name is well known among the legacy residents. *ETNP News* is reaching out to Mrs. McMillan to gather more information for a future story on this pioneering doctor and his family's connection to our neighborhood.

K. B. Polk Seniors Page

Joyful Goldies Stay Active with Several March Events



Photo by Bowl & Barrel Staff



©Rec Center Staff

Members of the Joyful Goldies took a field trip to the Bowl & Barrel and had a fun time knocking down those pins. Many of the seniors participated in Adult Arts and Crafts classes that were held at the rec center during the month of March. For more information on how to become a part of the senior program or to find out what other activities are planned for April, please call the K. B. Polk Rec Center at 214-670-6308.

Print & Play Puzzle Corner: April Springtime Word Search

N E A X H B A S K E T V Y E Y
 M U N R C A P R I L F O O L S
 V E L E B H D Y T X D P T H I
 B U R C V O O T P E E P S U Q
 E U A A A T R C A N B Y L N S
 A L T M I N S D O X E W W T V
 S C Z T D N D E A L D D O J S
 T F E P E B B Y A Y A A T E H
 E P G I F R U O C S C T Y A O
 R Q G Z B D F N W M H G E R W
 A T S Q F L C L N S I R Z T E
 S U N S H I N E I Y C E A H R
 V U Y Q L J A E Y E K E H D S
 G O O D F R I D A Y S N G A J
 B A S E B A L L F H W C C Y J

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| AprilFools | Easter |
| ArborDay | Eggs |
| Baseball | GoodFriday |
| Basket | Green |
| Bunny | Hunt |
| Butterflies | Peeps |
| Candy | Rainbows |
| Chicks | Showers |
| Chocolate | Sunshine |
| EarthDay | TaxDay |

Answer Key can be found at www.save-etnp.org/etnp-news.

ETNP History: The Garvin Cemetery Forever Linked to Elm Thicket's Freedmen Buried There

Originally Published in Sept. 2023 edition of *ETNP News*:

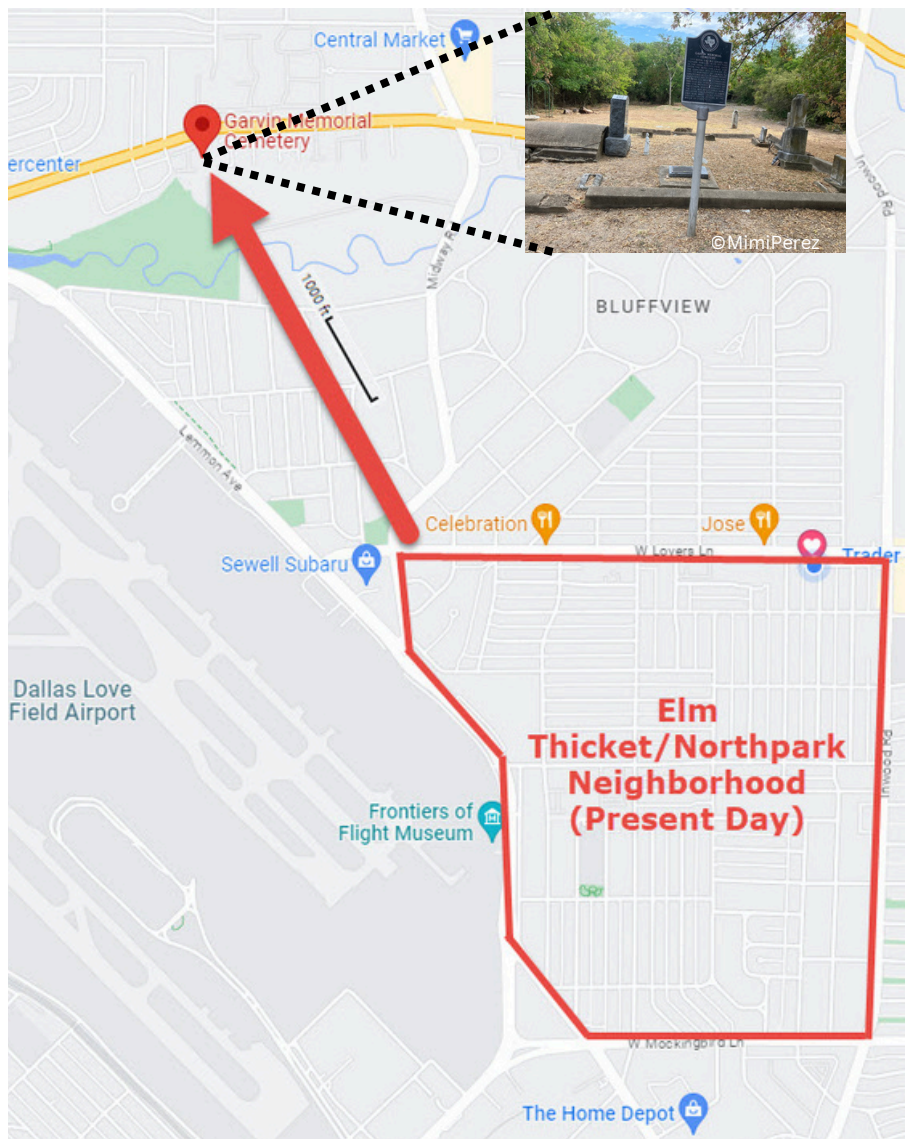
Although many residents know that Elm Thicket began as a freedman's community around the turn of the century, few know that several of those early freedmen settlers were buried about a mile away in Garvin Cemetery in the Cochran Chapel area.

The land for the cemetery was purchased in 1851 by William M. Cochran and then inherited two years later by his son, John, in 1853.

The site was eventually established as a cemetery in 1874 and became known as the Garvin Cemetery due to its association with the Garvin Family. James Garvin, a Civil War veteran, relocated from Missouri to Dallas after the war and bought property in what became known as the Smith Hall neighborhood.

The part of the cemetery where the Garvin family and other Civil War veterans were buried is considered the first tract of the cemetery. The second tract was established in 1894 when John Cochran, also a Civil War veteran, donated the land to the area's African-American community which included Elm Thicket, and possibly Mathis Town, Meadows Town, and Farmers Branch.

Although documentation from as late as 1940 shows the location of where these freedmen were buried, there were no freedmen burial records that could be found when the site was researched for a Texas Historical Marker in 1980. The only physical record were metal posts driven into the ground to mark the location of a burial which was common in early cemeteries of that period. The best record of the freedmen burial grounds at Garvin Cemetery



Garvin Cemetery location (4000 W Northwest Highway) shown in proximity to the current ETNP neighborhood.

ETNP History: Freedmen Cemetery (from Page 5)

is an oral history provided by Ms. Cynthia Jones in 1992.

In 1992, Ms. Jones sent a letter and map of the “Old Negro Cemetery” to Frances James, a local cemetery historian. In that letter Ms. Jones stated that her grandfather, who was 96 years old and still living at the time, told her that John Cochran had given the land to the local African-Americans to be used as a cemetery. She was able to hand draw a map based on her grandfather’s descriptions which showed the John Lee home site adjacent to the Garvin Cemetery. Ms. Jones also noted that her great, great grandparents, as well as others from the Elm Thicket area, namely the Greens, Turners, and Shepards were also buried in this cemetery.



Historic cemetery property with Civil War veterans and freed slaves at 4000 W NW Highway is up for sale by developers.

The site was eventually designated a Dallas Landmark by the City of Dallas Office of Historic Preservation in 2007.

Currently, the entire Garvin Cemetery is threatened by developers. Does that sound familiar? There is a For Sale sign on the property and attempts to sell the land have apparently been ongoing since 2006.

We can hope that land doesn’t sell, but it might be the time to start asking our elected representatives questions about the future of the gravesite forever linked to the Elm Thicket/Northpark neighborhood and its descendants.

References:

City of Dallas Office of Historic Preservation

<https://dallascityhall.com/departments/sustainabledevelopment/historicpreservation/Pages/Garvin-Cemetery.aspx>

Dallas Morning News, October 10, 2017

<https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/commentary/2017/10/10/now-in-dallas-we-might-just-build-townhomes-atop-the-confederate-dead/> (Subscription Required)

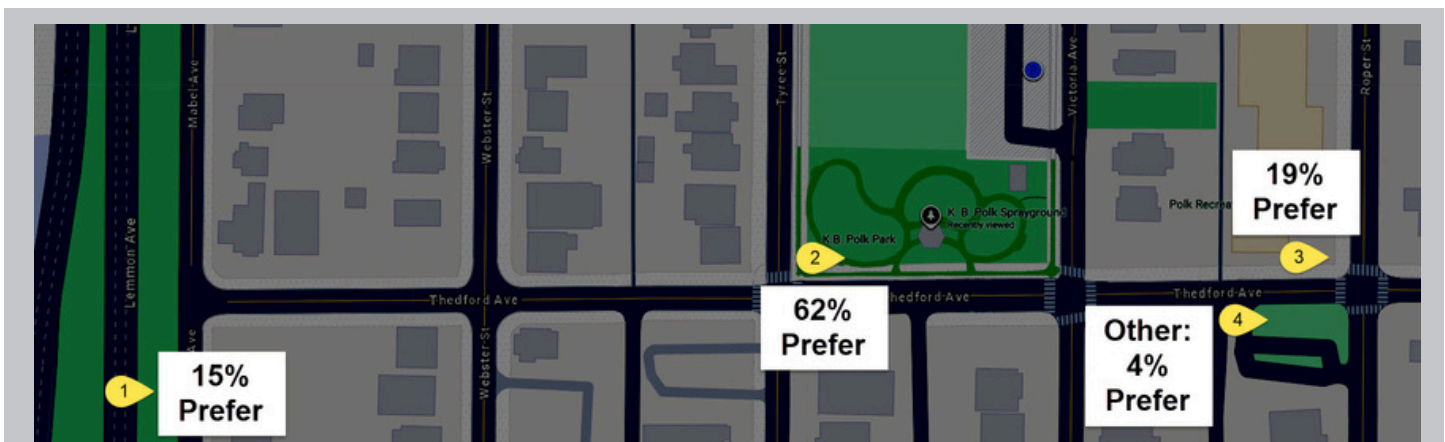
ETNP News Readers Overwhelmingly Wish to See New Historical Marker Placed at K. B. Polk Spraypark

Last month, *ETNP News* asked our readers where in the neighborhood they would like to see the new Texas Historical Marker placed for the Hilliard Memorial Golf Course. The results of the on-line and in-person survey found that the overwhelming majority of the respondents (62%) wish to see it placed at the K.B. Polk Spraypark.

The second most popular location was the K. B. Polk Recreation Center (19%), followed by the proposed parkway between Lemmon Ave. and Mabel Ave. (15%), and a write-in for The House of Prayer Missionary Baptist Church (4%) which is across the street from the Rec Center.

One survey respondent suggested an Ellum Thicket Historical Plaza be created at the K. B. Polk Spraypark where all the historical markers could be placed. By doing so, there could be one location where people could go and learn about the history of our beloved Ellum Thicket neighborhood.

ETNP News provided these survey results to Jonathan Maples, President of the Elm Thicket/Northpark Neighborhood Association and asked if the neighborhood association would consider changing the marker's proposed location from the Lemmon/Mabel parkway to the K.B. Polk Spraypark. As of publication, Mr. Maples has not responded to our multiple requests for comment.



These survey results were provided to the Elm Thicket/Northpark Neighborhood Association and to President Jonathan Maples. No date has yet been announced for the new marker's unveiling, but Mr. Maples previously stated an announcement will be made approximately 60 days in advance.

Let *ETNP News* help you grow your business in 2026!

Contact us at etnpnews@gmail.com and ask about our limited-time neighborhood business rates with half-page ads as low as \$20 a month for a 3-month run!

K. B. Polk Rec Center Has Busy March with Easter Eggtravaganza, Food Distribution, and Majong



Top: Easter Eggtravaganza participants line up for a fun photo with the Easter Bunny. Middle-Left: State Rep. Rafael Anchia gets in on the Eggstravaganza festivities and hands out goodies for the kids. Middle-Right: Hundreds of Easter eggs await the rush. Bottom-Left: Senior volunteers prep for the Catholic Charities of Dallas monthly food distribution. Bottom-Right: Mahjong players pose for the camera while enjoying a game.

Garvin Cemetery Description and Damage (from Page 1)

The *Dallas Morning News* published an opinion column, “Cemetery cursed with developers,” by Robert Wilonsky on April 1. In that column, it was evident that some sort of brush clearing operation damaged the headstones dating back to the mid-1870s. The article also stated that a rezoning case was filed with the city for the property.

Using the opinion piece of Mr. Wilonsky and conducting our own research, this is what the *ETNP News* found out. Garvin Memorial Cemetery is considered Tract A. That is where a number of Civil War soldiers and family members' gravesites are located and contained within a concrete border. Tracts B and C make up the remainder of the property that Andrew Strange of Andrew Strange and Sons Development wish to build upon with the rezoning from R-10 to townhomes.

The problem is there are additional marked graves on Tract C and no one is sure where the burial plots of all the freedmen are located within Tract B.

Headstones Damaged, City Gets Involved

On March 21, a work crew, allegedly under the direction of Mr. Strange, went to Garvin Memorial Cemetery to clear brush and trees. A vigilant neighbor noticed the work being done and contacted the City of Dallas. Before Code Compliance arrived, the neighbor had the crew stop their work.

Before that happened, however, the crew using a Bobcat mower allegedly damaged several headstones in the cemetery. The damaged headstones are located on Tract C. When Code Compliance arrived on March 25, a Notice of Violation sign was posted since a “Certificate of Appropriateness” permit was not obtained prior to the work due to the historic nature of the cemetery. A trash violation was also issued since the mowing created debris and trash. A “Stop Work Order” was also issued by the city.

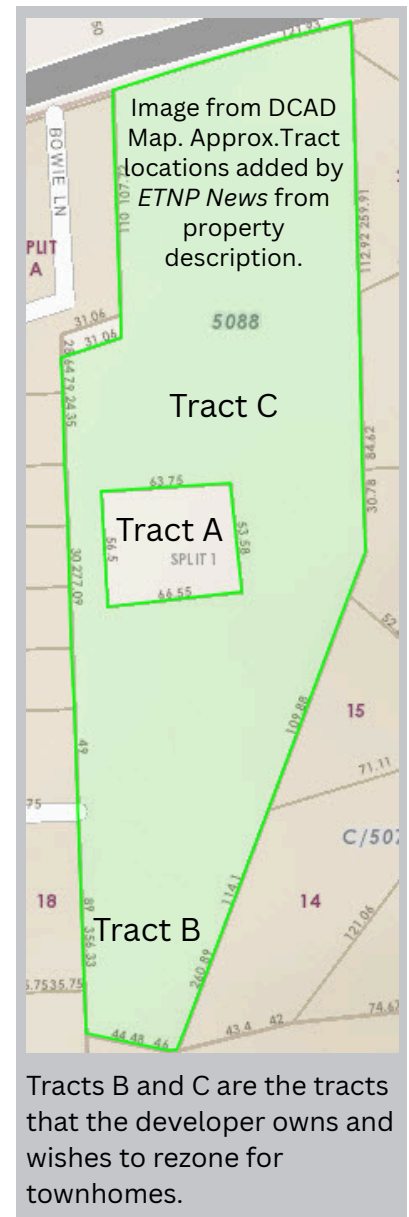
Garvin Cemetery Ownership and Tracts B & C in Question

ETNP News called Mr. Strange to ask what he intended to build on the property and what he knew about the damaged headstones.

“No comment,” Mr. Strange said. “The owner is a non-profit and I don’t know much” concerning the development of the property. When asked for the name of the non-profit that owns the site, Mr. Strange hung up.

ETNP News then looked closer at the zoning application request available through the City of Dallas’s web portal.

Garvin Cemetery Ownership Continued on Page 10



This 1870s-era headstone of William H. Mathis in Tract A shows what appears to be recent damage from the brush clearing work on March 21.

Garvin Cemetery Ownership and Tracts B & C (from Page 9)

The applicant for the zoning request is Mr. Strange while Friends of the Military is listed as the owner. Friends of the Military is a non-profit organization. In other documentation submitted, Mr. Strange stated his LLC was the owner. This is the contradicting information discovered.

Part of the discrepancy is that there are three parcels of land at the site. According to the Dallas Central Appraisal District (DCAD) the small parcel is the actual Confederate cemetery, which has been referred to as Tract A. The larger parcel is the area that surrounds it, Tracts B and C. Keep in mind, Tract C also has headstones and the remains of Confederate soldiers and Tract B is where many freedmen are interred.

According to DCAD, the cemetery parcel (Tract A) still shows the Friends of the Military as the owner. DCAD shows "ST Association" as the owner of the larger parcels (Tracts B and C).

In a letter submitted with the zoning application, Mr. Strange identifies himself as the authorized agent for a limited-liability corporation known as 4000 NW HWY, LLC. He also lists himself as the sole officer of the LLC in the paperwork filed.

However, the zoning request shows 4000 NW HWY, LLC as the applicant but Friends of the Military as the owner. The address for Friends of the Military listed on the Record Details (see photo on right) as 5944 Luther Lane, Suite 850, Dallas, Texas. However, on the 501(c)(3) paperwork filed with the IRS, the address for Friends of the Military is that of a private residence.

From a review of the DCAD records, it is clear that the zoning request is for the larger parcel that does not belong to Friends of the Military. For reference, Garvin Memorial Cemetery is located in the

4000 NW HWY, LLC
P.O. Box 19091
Dallas, Texas 75219

December 15, 2025

Dr. Andreea Udrea
Deputy Director
Planning and Development
City of Dallas
City Hall
1500 Marilla Street, Room 5BN
Dallas, TX 75201-6390

Re: Letter of Authorization

Dear Dr. Udrea:

I am the authorized agent of 4000 NW HWY, LLC, the property owner of 4000 W. Northwest Highway. As the owner of this property, please accept this letter as my authorization for Baldwin Associates to represent 4000 NW HWY, LLC in requesting a zoning change for this property.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Best regards,

Andrew Strange

Andrew Strange President,
4000 NW HWY, LLC

CORRECTION AFFIDAVIT (INSTRUMENT) AS TO A RECORDED ORIGINAL INSTRUMENT
[Non-material correction pursuant to §5.028, Texas Property Code, where the parties to the recorded original instrument have signed the correction affidavit (instrument)]

Date: 10/15/2024
GF No: 514240022
Title Company: Aurum Title
Affiant: Erica Goble

Description of Original Instrument (include name of instrument, date, parties and recording information):

Deed of Trust dated September 30th, 2024, executed by 4000 NW HWY LLC, a Texas limited liability company to Trinity Capital Bank of Texas a branch of Ennis State Bank, Recorded October 8th, 2024, Recording No. 202400203276, Real Property Records, Dallas County, Texas.

Record Details

| | |
|---|--|
| Applicant: Andrew Strange 4000 NW HWY, LLC Mobile Phone: 949-547-1276 strange@strangeandsonsdev.com Mailing PO Box 19091 Dallas, TX, 75219 United States | Owner: FRIENDS OF THE MILITARY * 5944 LUTHER LN STE 850 DALLAS |
|---|--|

Public records with the City of Dallas zoning case show that Andrew Strange, President of 4000 NW HWY, LLC., states the LLC is the owner of the property and the amended Deed of Trust confirms 4000 NW HWY, LLC. as the entity that purchased the property in 2024. However, in the record details, it shows Mr. Strange as the applicant and incorrectly shows Friends of the Military as the owner. (Images are screenshots of documents filed with the zoning application.)

Friends of the Military Horrified by Plans (from Page 10)

middle of the larger parcel. This should be a huge red flag concerning the zoning request application because Friends of the Military does not own the larger parcel (Tracts B and C).

Who is Friends of the Military?

Friends of the Military is a 501(c)(3) non-profit group meant to support military veterans and their families. They were created in the late '80s or early '90s. Their ownership of Tracts A, B, and C began in 2009. They believe they sold all three tracts in 2014. But according to DCAD records, Friends of the Military sold Tracts B and C in 2014 but maintains ownership of Tract A where a number of Confederate gravesites are located and contained within a concrete border.

Requesting anonymity to speak freely, Friends of the Military said they did not know about the damage to Garvin Memorial Cemetery and were horrified to hear that the sacred ground is being considered for redevelopment into townhomes.

“We don’t know anything about that,” Friends of the Military said about the proposed development. When the property (Tracts B & C) were sold, “we negotiated for it to be kept as a cemetery.”

Families of the Military said they would not support redevelopment of the property into townhomes. “That’s insane. It’s a Civil War cemetery,” they said.

What Happens Next?

Garvin Memorial Cemetery is located in Dallas City Council District 13 which is represented by Mayor Pro Tem Gay Donnell Willis.

Save Elm Thicket reached out to Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Willis’s office to express our concern over the damage to the cemetery and the proposed rezoning case.



This image (possibly circa 2007) from the Dallas Landmark Structures and Sites website, provides a clear view of Tract A and some of Tract C of the Garvin Memorial Cemetery looking out to Northwest Highway. Per DCAD, Tract A is owned by Friends of the Military.

Farrah Ali, the council liaison/policy/analyst for Mayor Pro Tem Willis, said the zoning case has not been scheduled to go before the City Plan Commission and that there should be no work done at the cemetery. Since the site is designated as a historic site by both the State of Texas and the City of Dallas, the Dallas Landmark Commission is involved.

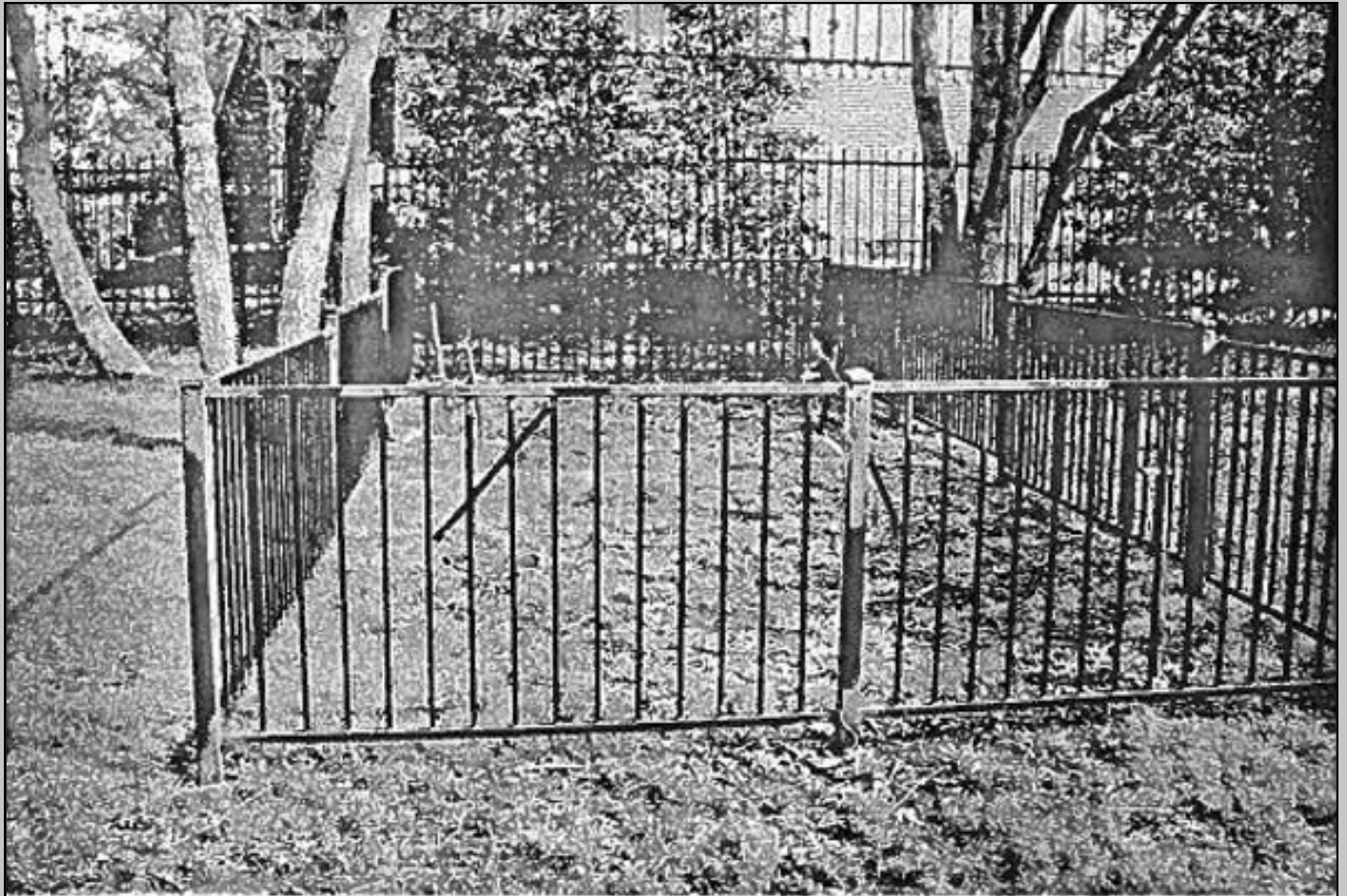
Mr. Wilonsky ended his column by saying that we will all be cursed if townhomes are allowed to be built on this historic cemetery. Mr. Wilonsky is wrong. We will not be cursed. City officials and any developers/builders who do anything aside from turning this historic cemetery into a city park with all its protections will be damned and rightfully so. Garvin Memorial Cemetery is Dallas history and American history. Confederate officers and formerly enslaved men, freedmen who built communities

Saving Garvin Cemetary is Imperative (from Page 11)

for other freed enslaved individuals, share the same eternal resting place. In this day and age, we could learn much from the dead.

It is beyond time that we demand our city officials purchase the property and turn it into a park so the souls of those that are buried throughout that property will finally be able to rest in peace. It's time to turn Garvin Memorial Cemetery into a location where descendants of those buried there and people who live in the communities that were created by freedmen can go and visit these ancestors. Let us *all* go and learn from the dead.

But first, we must come together in the name of decency, and crush this proposed zoning request. Then we can move to truly honor the dead at Garvin Memorial Cemetery. May they rest in peace once and for all.



Photograph of small plot located on Tract B.

This image (2005) from the Dallas Landmark Commission Landmark Nomination Form, shows a plot in Tract B where at least 10 freedmen were buried with the iron rods making their graves. Due to the lack of burial records, it is very possible other freedmen were buried nearby within Tract B.

Editor's Note: Save Elm Thicket is looking to speak with descendants of those freedmen buried at Garvin Memorial Cemetery who lived in Elm Thicket/Northpark. From the oral history, these include the Greens, Turners, and Shepards. Please allow us the privilege of recording your history and the history of your family. To save Elm Thicket means recording our neighborhood history. It's never been more important. You can reach us at saveetnp@gmail.com or etnpnews@gmail.com.