

Talking Points for DES Hearing

Nov. 18, 2025, 6 P.M. | Location: Charleston Museum Wilcox Auditorium

106 Coming Street is a sacred burial ground representative of Charleston's collective history. Documented connections to the trans-Atlantic slave trade make this site a place of international importance that deserves to be treated as a place of remembrance, not simply a construction project.

- 106 Coming Street sits on one of Charleston's first **public burial grounds**, established in **1794** for "strangers and negroes" — including **enslaved Africans, free people of color, paupers, orphans, and travelers**.
- This ground holds the remains of **thousands of individuals**, including many who were **brought to Charleston during the height of the trans-Atlantic slave trade**, some of whom died shortly after arrival.
- The cemetery operated only **13 years (1794-1807)** yet is believed to contain **as many as 4,600 burials**, possibly more, making it one of the city's most significant and densely used resting places.

QUESTION: *What similar sites exist in S.C. to learn about this period of history through burial practices?*

The College of Charleston (the College) must meaningfully engage with descendants and community members before any ground disturbance occurs. **This permit request should not be granted without direct input from descendants.**

- Burial grounds are sacred spaces in **Gullah Geechee culture**, serving as spiritual links between the living and ancestors. They are **not merely archaeological sites**, but places of ongoing reverence, reflection, and cultural continuity.
- Meaningful **descendant and community consultation** is essential to ensure that any decisions honor these deep cultural and spiritual traditions. **To move forward without this engagement would perpetuate the same disregard that allowed these sacred sites to be erased in the first place.**

QUESTION: *What criteria will state and local officials use to determine whether a relocation plan is 'necessary and expedient' under state law?*

The **Community Engagement Council** (CEC) convened by the College should be directly involved in reviewing the proposed archaeological plan.

- The College and DES should provide **full public access** to archaeological findings and plans for handling remains.
- The community deserves clear communication and documentation at every stage, in addition to having an opportunity to weigh in.
- The process must prioritize **public accountability and ethical stewardship**, not institutional convenience.

QUESTION: *What precedent relocations are the College and its consultant team using to establish due care standards for a project of this scale?*

Call to Action *I urge DES **not to issue this permit** until the College demonstrates genuine collaboration with descendants and the public. We have a moral responsibility to protect this site and those buried there.*