

City of Edwardsville

Council Proceedings

July 07, 2020

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Edwardsville City Council was held at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, located at 118 Hillsboro Avenue in Edwardsville, Illinois, with Mayor Patton presiding. Aldermen Burns, Risavy, Morrison, Krause, Farrar, Louer and Stack answered present on roll call. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Fire Chief Rick Welle and recited by all present.

Mayor Patton welcomed everyone in attendance and those viewing on Cable Channel 993 and Facebook Live to the meeting. Mayor Patton stated that numerous public comments for tonight's meeting had been received and asked City Clerk Emily Bates to explain the public comment process.

City Clerk Bates stated that 11 emails and 1 voicemail were received for public comment for tonight's meeting that were in support of the removal of the Ninian Edwards statue and the renaming of the Ninian Edwards plaza. City Clerk Bates explained that during the present time when City Council meetings are being held both in-person and virtually, citizens wishing to address the Council during the public comment section of the meeting may sign up in person at City Hall 15 minutes prior to the meeting's start time to speak in person, send an email to the City's public comment email address, leave a voicemail at the City's public comment voicemail number, or if attending the Council meeting via Zoom, a citizen may click on the "Raise Hand" button at the bottom of the computer screen which alerts the host of the meeting that there is someone that would like to speak. With the multiple public comments received via email for this evening's meeting all holding a similar position of wanting the Ninian Edwards statue to be removed and the plaza renamed, four (4) of the emailed public comments from citizens Lynn Beaumont, Dr. Corey Stevens, PhD, Eryn Coppersmith and Emily Klingensmith were read by City Clerk Bates and the voicemail public comment received by Ezra Temko was played. All email and voicemail public comments, including the additional emailed public comments received from Eden Lantz, Kelly Rayman, Cheyenne Slack, Judith Smith, Christine Jenkins, Darla Andree, and Lenisha Moyegun were received into record and are attached herewith.

Citizen Rich Rezabek, Edwardsville, IL provided in-person public comment and spoke against the removal of the Ninian Edwards statue and renaming of the plaza. Citizen Keith Kane, Troy, IL provided in-person public comment and spoke against the removal of the Ninian Edwards statue. Brad Heuchert, Edwardsville, IL provided in-person public comment to recognize the

leadership and accomplishments of Fire Chief Rick Welle upon his retirement and to give his best wishes to incoming Fire Chief James Whiteford.

Consent Agenda

Motion by Stack, seconded by Krause, to approve the Consent Agenda.

Mayor Patton read Consent Agenda items as follows:

Approval of minutes of Council Meeting held on June 16, 2020

Group Health Insurance Fund Report - \$254,364.19

Closed Session items – Personnel (2)

Roll Call on Consent Agenda: Seven Ayes, with Aldermen Burns, Risavy, Morrison, Krause, Farrar, Louer and Stack voting aye. Motion carried.

Petitions and Communications

Mayor Patton shared that over the last three weeks, he has received approximately 40 emails and phone calls from citizens wanting to discuss the removal of the Ninian Edwards statue and renaming of the Ninian Edwards plaza and approximately 35 emails and phone calls from citizens who are in support of keeping the statue and plaza. Mayor Patton stated that the letters and correspondence are a part of City record and any council member or person wishing to review them may receive a copy.

Legislative & Executive

Motion by Louer, seconded by Risavy, to approve the retirement notice of Fire Chief Rick Welle effective Monday, July 13, 2020.

Roll Call: Seven Ayes, with Aldermen Burns, Risavy, Morrison, Krause, Farrar, Louer and Stack voting aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Krause, seconded by Morrison, to approve a Class H Liquor License for Plummer Family Park located at 3501 Sports Park Drive, Edwardsville, IL 62025.

Roll Call: Seven Ayes, with Aldermen Burns, Risavy, Morrison, Krause, Farrar, Louer and Stack voting aye. Motion carried.

Legal & Judicial

None

City Treasurer

None

City Clerk

None

Finance Committee

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on June 09, 2020 were received for information and file.

Motion by Louer, seconded by Burns, to approve Claims in the amount of \$1,092,198.48.
Roll Call: Seven Ayes, with Aldermen Burns, Risavy, Morrison, Krause, Farrar, Louer and Stack voting aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Louer, seconded by Krause, to approve a Resolution Approving the Agreement Between the City of Edwardsville and the Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau.
Roll Call: Seven Ayes, with Aldermen Burns, Risavy, Morrison, Krause, Farrar, Louer and Stack voting aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Louer, seconded by Stack, to approve a Resolution Authorizing the Transfer of Funds to Other Designated Funds of the City of Edwardsville.
Roll Call: Seven Ayes, with Aldermen Burns, Risavy, Morrison, Krause, Farrar, Louer and Stack voting aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Louer, seconded by Stack, to approve a Resolution Approving the Special Parks 2019-2020 Allocation to Edwardsville Children's Museum, Watershed Nature Center, and the Friends of Col. Benjamin Stephenson House in the Amount of \$74,729.56 Divided Equally.
Roll Call: Seven Ayes, with Aldermen Burns, Risavy, Morrison, Krause, Farrar, Louer and Stack voting aye. Motion carried.

Finance Committee will meet on Tuesday, July 14, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. in City Hall and via virtual Zoom meeting.

Public Safety Committee

Public Safety Committee will meet on Thursday, July 16, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. in City Hall and via virtual Zoom meeting.

Public Services Committee

Minutes of the Public Services Committee meeting held on June 09, 2020 were received for information and file.

Motion by Burns, seconded by Morrison, to Award the 2020 Resurfacing Contract to Killian Corporation in the amount of \$566,418.59.
Roll Call: Seven Ayes, with Aldermen Burns, Risavy, Morrison, Krause, Farrar, Louer and Stack voting aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Burns, seconded by Krause, to Award the Grant Drive Reconstruction to Keller Construction in the amount of \$612,734.93.

Roll Call: Seven Ayes, with Aldermen Burns, Risavy, Morrison, Krause, Farrar, Louer and Stack voting aye. Motion carried.

Change Order 1 and Final for the 2019 Pavement Marking Contract was received for information and file.

Change Order 1 and Final for the 2020 Fence Contract was received for information and file.

Public Services Committee will meet on Tuesday, July 14, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. in City Hall and via virtual Zoom meeting.

Administrative & Community Services Committee

Minutes of the Administrative & Community Services Committee meeting held on June 11, 2020 were received for information and file.

Motion by Risavy, seconded by Krause, to approve a Resolution Authorizing a Sign Variance for 3077 Gateway Commerce Center Drive South.

Roll Call: Seven Ayes, with Aldermen Burns, Risavy, Morrison, Krause, Farrar, Louer and Stack voting aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Risavy, seconded by Morrison, to approve a Resolution Defining Meeting and Adopting Procedures for Electronic Attendance at Meetings.

Roll Call: Seven Ayes, with Aldermen Burns, Risavy, Morrison, Krause, Farrar, Louer and Stack voting aye. Motion carried.

Minutes of the Historic Preservation Commission meeting held on May 13, 2020 were received for information and file.

Administrative & Community Services Committee will meet on Thursday, July 16, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in City Hall and via virtual Zoom meeting.

Old Business

None

New Business

Mayor Patton recognized the administrative team of the Parks Department for the work they have done during the COVID restrictions and being able to re-open for the community and especially for the kids to allow them to return to some of the activities in our Parks in a fun and safe way.

Mayor Patton stated that he met with a group of citizens who want the Ninian Edwards statue removed and the plaza renamed. He said that he explained at that meeting the governmental process which would need to include initial discussion at the Administrative and Community Services Committee level since that is the committee that manages the City's parks. Information was also provided to the group about the process to put items on an election ballot. Mayor Patton encourages the community to meet and discuss to react and act in a positive way towards making improvements. Mayor Patton opened the floor for any alderman that would like to discuss the issue.

Ald. Stack stated that she would hate to see the statue put in a museum and stop the conversation. She stated that she feels that the whole point is to point out the flaws – the good, the bad and the ugly – to continue to talk it through and improve. Ald. Morrison said that he is shocked about what he has learned about Ninian Edwards over the last three weeks and finds Gov. Edwards' actions indefensible; Ald. Morrison said that he feels the Council as a whole needs to respond and that moving the statue wouldn't be erasing history, but it would be acknowledging history. Ald. Krause stated that he is not for removing the statue because the statue was not erected in hate by the City Council at the time it was approved; Ald. Krause wants to encourage people to visit the Madison County Historical Museum or the Stephenson House to learn all aspects of the history of Ninian Edwards; Ald. Krause said that he is in favor of adding context to the statue and further explaining the history of Ninian Edwards. Ald. Burns stated that he is unsure where he stands on the statue at this time but feels a plaque prepared by a historian to explain Edwards position on slaves and Native Americans would add to the history and people could see the statue and read more about Gov. Edwards. Ald. Risavy said that he reached out to many people of different races and the responses were impactful and split; Ald. Risavy said he received more responses from people who felt that moving the statue would not bring real change; Ald. Risavy stated he also spoke to three Aldermen and the former City Administrator who served at the time the statue was approved and those individuals overwhelming felt the statue should stay; Ald. Risavy said that he feels that something needs to be done which may be renaming the plaza and putting another plaque up that explains both sides of history and what truly took place at that time.

Closed Session

At 8:08 p.m., Motion by Louer, seconded by Stack, to enter into Closed Session to discuss two Personnel items. Council reconvened into Open Session at 8:28 p.m.


Motion by Stack, seconded by Risavy, to approve the Appointment of James Whiteford to the position of Fire Chief.

Roll Call: Seven Ayes, with Aldermen Burns, Risavy, Morrison, Krause, Farrar, Louer and Stack voting aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Stack, seconded by Burns, to approve the Appointment of James Whiteford to the position of Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Coordinator.

Roll Call: Seven Ayes, with Aldermen Burns, Risavy, Morrison, Krause, Farrar, Louer and Stack voting aye. Motion carried.

There being no further action required, Council adjourned at 8:35 p.m.



Hal Patton, Mayor

Attest:



Emily E. Bates, City Clerk

Bates, Emily

From: Lynn Beaumont <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, July 5, 2020 2:18 PM
To: publiccomment
Subject: Tuesday, July 7th Meeting: Ninian Edwards Statue

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

City Council Members,

I would like to register my strong support of relocating the statue of Ninian Edwards and renaming the plaza where it stands.

To quote from a recent article, "Edwards owned slaves and defended slavery, despite living in Illinois, where slavery was illegal. He had brought the slaves from his home in Kentucky, and refused to free them in Illinois, even though Illinois was a free state. While in office as governor, Edwards also suggested the eradication of Native Americans from Illinois, according to the National Governors Association."

Reporter Gabriel Brady in The Alestle (https://www.alestlelive.com/news/metro_east/article_0c74c052-b5de-11ea-a99e-7f54dc68e191.html)

This was new information to me. It is embarrassing and disappointing to learn the character of the man after whom our town is named. We cannot erase that history, nor should we try to deny it, but neither should we celebrate it. I believe the statue should be relocated to the Madison County History museum where it can be presented with proper context.

If we really want to show that we are supporting and hearing our communities of color, taking down this statue and renaming the plaza are far from the solution, but it seems to be an easy and obvious starting point.

Respectfully,
Lynn Beaumont

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Bates, Emily

From: Corey Stevens [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 10:14 PM
To: publiccomment
Subject: Ninian Edwards Statue

Dear Edwardsville City Council,

I am writing today to ask that the statue of Ninian Edwards be removed and the plaza where it stands be renamed. As an educator at SIUE, I believe that we should be having conversations about Ninian Edwards and his problematic legacy as an advocate for slavery and the genocidal removal of Native Americans. However, because of his role in perpetuating slavery and killing native people, I do not believe he deserves a place of honor in the center of our town. It's important that Edwardsville takes ownership of our problematic history and agrees to move forward towards a more just and equitable future for all our citizens. I request that the city considers collaborating with local students (college, high school, and younger) to create art that better represents our values as a city for the plaza.

Sincerely,
Dr. Corey Stevens, PhD
Assistant Professor of Sociology
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

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Bates, Emily

From: Eryn Coppersmith [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 11:24 AM
To: publiccomment
Subject: Re: Ninian Edwards statue relocation

To be read at the July 7, 2020 meeting.

On Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:15 AM Eryn Coppersmith <ercopper03@gmail.com> wrote:

The Ninian Edwards statue and plaza honor a racist slave owner and are unfit for Edwardsville. The statue must be immediately taken down, relocated, and the plaza immediately renamed.

Ninian Edwards owned enslaved people for his entire adult life, including while serving as territorial governor and state governor of Illinois. When he moved to Illinois, he did not free the enslaved people he previously owned, in defiance of federal law. Instead, he helped institutionalize slavery in Illinois under the name of "indentured servitude."

As territorial governor, Edwards vetoed a bill that would have abolished slavery in Illinois. Because of his intercession, slavery continued in the new territory and state until the passage of the 13th Amendment in 1865. Without Edwards' proslavery interference, slavery might have been abolished in Illinois forty years earlier, preventing untold amounts of suffering for thousands of Black Americans.

For these reasons, it is entirely unfit for the City of Edwardsville to publicly display a statue of Ninian Edwards, and to have a plaza named after him. Edwards' legacy is one of causing misery and pain. Publicly honoring Edwards, as the city currently does, honors his harmful, racist beliefs and actions. I demand you take immediate action to rename Ninian Edwards Plaza, and remove the Ninian Edwards statue.

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Bates, Emily

From: Emily Klingensmith [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, July 5, 2020 3:44 PM
To: publiccomment
Subject: Comments to be read at July 7th City Council Meeting

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Honorable Mayor Patton, Council members, and all those present,

First, thank you, each of you, for your service to local government. I truly appreciate the time you spend to help make Edwardsville the wonderful community it is.

I am writing to you today to request that you consider the removal and relocation of the Ninian Edwards statue; as well as the renaming of the Ninian Edwards Plaza.

By now, I'm certain you have heard many arguments, both for and against. I may not be able to change your mind, so instead, I will tell you what troubles me.

American history, as I have learned it as a white, 45 year old woman who grew up in Southern Illinois, troubles me.

Paying homage, via a statue, to a person that owned other human beings like one would own property or livestock, troubles me.

Paying homage, via a statue, to a person that would advocate for the continuation of slavery in the State of Illinois, troubles me.

Paying homage, via a statue, to a person that would act violently and aggressively toward the indigenous peoples of this land, troubles me.

Arguing that removing such a statue is a slippery slope, or indicative of erasing history, troubles me.

No matter if historical context is added, or a counter monument is erected nearby, or the plaza is renamed; the statue would still remain, and what is a statue or monument, if not something that we, as a community, are being asked to honor?

I truly asked you, the City representatives, to look beyond politics, and to think about humanity.

Consider this scenario:

A foreign invader takes over the town of Edwardsville tomorrow, and places your family in bondage. You are separated from your loved ones, and forced to do labor with little or no pay. You are beaten, as are your children. After a revolution, your descendants are finally granted back the freedom that every human being should be born to expect - the American dream.

An early leader from the time of enslavement, one who owned you and your family in chattel slavery and advocated to keep you and your family enslaved, is memorialized via a statue.

Should their history be told in books or museums? - yes.

Should your descendants have to pass by a statue in their town, knowing what that person did to their ancestors?

You decide, but I for one would not want to. It would trouble me, as does the statue of Ninian Edwards.

Thank you for your time and attention,
Emily Klingensmith

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Bates, Emily

From: Ezra Temko [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 10:54 PM
To: publiccomment
Subject: public comment for city council

Hello-

I called and left a voicemail earlier today but am sending this in case the voicemail did not go through.

Thanks,

Ezra

My name is Ezra Temko. I live at [REDACTED] This public comment is for the Edwardsville City Council's July 7 meeting.

I am asking you to relocate the Ninian Edwards statue from its current location downtown to an appropriate educational setting and to rename the plaza.

Ninian Edwards was instrumental in furthering slavery and in killing and destroying indigenous people and lands in Illinois. He should not be glorified and put on a pedestal in our downtown. Statues in public squares are placed there for honor and celebration. This statue does not belong there. It is a symbol that is misaligned with the values I hope our city holds dear.

Ninian Edwards was on the wrong side of history as he was making it. Edwards vetoed the bill the state legislature passed that would have banned de facto slavery in the state. Edwards went against the U.S. president's wishes when he burnt indigenous villages and led their murder. The statue has value in a setting such as the Madison County Historical Museum.

Let's learn our history in its appropriate context, without literally putting Ninian Edwards up on a pedestal in the heart of our city. If we want to remember our history, let's design something that remembers it in a way that celebrates abolitionists and indigenous leaders, or commemorates the victims of slavery and oppression of Native Americans, and examines the ongoing legacy of this history and our struggle towards justice.

Please demonstrate the necessary leadership to act on our commitments to racial justice. Inaction is also a form of action. Keeping the statue where it is or relocating the statue both clearly communicate who and what the leadership of Edwardsville values and reveres.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Bates, Emily

From: Eden Lantz [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 9:17 AM
To: publiccomment
Subject: Support the Statue Removal

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good Morning,

My name is Eden Lantz and I grew up in Edwardsville, attended Edwardsville High School, and my mother and her two brothers are still residing in Edwardsville. I'm currently living in Costa Rica but hope to return to Edwardsville for graduate school soon.

My email today is to express my support for the removal of the Ninian Edwards statue and renaming of the plaza. In school, we learned that Edwards was the founder of Edwardsville but nothing much more about him. As an adult, I have educated myself about Illinois's third governor. Not only did he enslave human beings but he was a proponent of the enslavement of humans throughout the state of Illinois.

I urge the city council to remove the statue and rename the plaza. My suggestion would be to find a historical figure who reminds us of our history but can help us progress into the future.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Eden Lantz

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Eden A. Lantz
TESOL Certified English Teacher



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Bates, Emily

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 3:47 PM
To: publiccomment; ward3alderman; Mayor Hal Patton
Subject: Relocating the Statue of Ninian Edwards

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

I request this to be read during the July 7th City Council meeting

My name is Kelly Rayman. I have been a resident of Edwardsville for almost 30 years. I have occasionally wondered who this town was named after, but never took time to look into it.

Both of my now grown children went thru Glen/Ed schooling. Neither of them were taught about our towns founding father.

I remember when the plaza was being built. Again, I wondered. Again, I didn't look into it.

Now I know. Now I'm mortified. Now I'm embarrassed I never inquired. We can look back, place blame, make excuses and justify keeping things as they are.
Or we can grow, change and adapt.

I have ALWAYS loved Edwardsville because I've felt like we are a community who grows, changes and adapts which is exactly what a college town should be.

Relocating, not destroying, this specific statue is growth. It must be changed. We must adapt to the cries and pleas of our fellow citizens.

As a white female, I obviously have never experienced racism but I fully believe my fellow citizens of color who say they have. Racism is everywhere. How can I not believe them?!

Relocating this statue will express to our town that We, as a community, Do Not condone racism. We regard our citizens equally. A refusal to relocate will send an incredibly strong message to the contrary.

"Once you know better, do better"

We must take a stand and do better.

Kelly Rayman

Never miss a chance to shut up & listen

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Bates, Emily

From: Cheyenne Slack <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, July 3, 2020 11:25 PM
To: publiccomment
Subject: Ninian Edwards Statue

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This comment, to be read at the City Council meeting on July 7th, is about the current debate over the removal of the Ninian Edwards Statue. I am a black/white/native 22 year old college student. Through discussions over this statue it has been revealed to me that many believe the removal of this statue is an erasure of history and is a dangerous slippery slope. This idea originates from fear and its primary argument is a slippery slope fallacy. The reality of what your constituents ask of you is the simple removal of a statue that glorifies a racist leader who not only owned slaves, but advocated for the right to slavery in Illinois. It is understandable why many might believe this is erasure of history, but the reality is statues are created to glorify leaders, not to tell history. That is what history books and museums are for, which I have come to understand is an option for where the Ninian statue can go. Using the argument that the removal of this statue is a "slippery slope" is simply ridiculous, as their aren't other racist statues like this one in this city. Secondly, if their were more intimidating, rude, and offensive statues placed only to glorify racism in Edwardsville, it would be perfectly understandable that your constituents demand their removal. Lastly, Edwardsville is no longer the small, white dominated town is used to be. Choosing to listen to your rich, old, white constituents and their closed minded feelings about the removal of this statue over the words of the pained people of color in this city is an indecent decision and an egregious lack of care and judgment. SIUE has turned the small town of Edwardsville into a booming, busy, and growing city. SIUE students and their families come from all walks of life and they deserve to be heard. These individuals: black, white, latinx, native, Asian, gay, straight, trans, Christian, atheist, many young and some old, and so on, deserve your attention. These people, that help make your city the well oiled machine it currently is, are asking something small of you. These people of color that help edwardsville small businesses thrive, ask only one thing of you. They ask you to consider the insensitivity of keeping such a statue on full display in the current climate of America. Let me ask you this: where was this same outrage being had over this statue when it came to the unjust ending of black lives? While many people of color die for no reason other than their skin, you continue to allow the display of a man who was proud of these deaths. Are you?

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Bates, Emily

From: Judith Smith [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, July 5, 2020 9:59 PM
To: publiccomment
Subject: Removal of statue

Having moved to this beautiful city 15 years ago I have been thankful and proud to be here each and every day. After learning the history of our founding father I have been less proud. Now that this information has been brought to light I feel it would be appropriate to remove his statue.

Please read this during the July 7 city council meeting

J Smith

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Bates, Emily

From: Christine Jenkins [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 2:28 PM
To: publiccomment
Subject: Citizen Comment for City Council Meeting on 7/7

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Regarding the Ninian Edwards statue -

This statue and plaza honor a racist slave owner and both are unfit for Edwardsville. The statue must be immediately taken down, relocated, and the plaza immediately renamed.

Ninian Edwards owned slaves for his entire adult life, including while serving as territorial governor and state governor of Illinois. When he moved to Illinois, he did not free slaves he previously owned, in defiance of federal law. Instead, he helped institutionalize slavery in Illinois under the name of "indentured servitude."

As territorial governor, Edwards vetoed a bill that would have abolished slavery in Illinois. Because of his intercession, slavery continued in the new territory and state until the passage of the 13th Amendment in 1865. Without Edwards' proslavery interference, slavery might have been abolished in Illinois forty years earlier, preventing untold amounts of suffering for thousands of Black Americans.

His career ended because he, under a penname, demeaned then Treasurer William H. Crawford over the Bank of Illinois. Edwards did little to solve the bank's issues himself, instead choosing to accuse bank officials of fraud. He demanded that Native Americans be removed from the state, claiming their presence violated "the rights of a sovereign and independent state". His legacy and values are not ones that should be honored.

For these reasons, it is entirely unfit for the City of Edwardsville to publicly display a statue of Ninian Edwards, and to have a plaza named after him. Edwards' legacy is one of causing misery and pain. Publicly honoring Edwards, as the city currently does, honors his harmful, racist beliefs and actions. I demand you take immediate action to rename Ninian Edwards Plaza, and remove the Ninian Edwards statue.

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Bates, Emily

From: Darla Andree <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 7:57 PM
To: publiccomment
Subject: Ninian Edwards statue

City Council Members,

I'm writing to you today about an issue I believe is essential to the Edwardsville community: the Ninian Edwards statue in Ninian Edwards Plaza. This statue and plaza honor a racist slave owner and are unfit for Edwardsville. The statue must be immediately taken down, relocated, and the plaza immediately renamed. Ninian Edwards owned slaves for his entire adult life, including while serving as territorial governor and state governor of Illinois. When he moved to Illinois, he did not free slaves he previously owned, in defiance of federal law. Instead, he helped institutionalize slavery in Illinois under the name of "indentured servitude." As territorial governor, Edwards vetoed a bill that would have abolished slavery in Illinois. Because of his intercession, slavery continued in the new territory and state until the passage of the 13th Amendment in 1865. Without Edwards' proslavery interference, slavery might have been abolished in Illinois forty years earlier, preventing untold amounts of suffering for thousands of Black Americans. For these reasons, it is entirely unfit for the City of Edwardsville to publicly display a statue of Ninian Edwards, and to have a plaza named after him. Edwards' legacy is one of causing misery and pain. Publicly honoring Edwards, as the city currently does, honors his harmful, racist beliefs and actions. I demand you take immediate action to rename Ninian Edwards Plaza, and remove the Ninian Edwards statue.

Sincerely,

Darla Andree
Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

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Helpdesk@cityofedwardsville.com with any questions.

Bates, Emily

From: Lenesha Moyegun | [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 2:24 PM
To: publiccomment
Subject: Relocating the Ninian Edwards Statue

July 7, 2020

To be read at the July 7, 2020 city council meeting.

To the City of Edwardsville Council,

My name is Lenesha Moyegun. I am a resident of Edwardsville. I am writing to voice my concern for a public reminder of Edwardsville's racist past being on public display. I think it is time for the majority to reflect on decisions that are made without minority representation.

I am in support of the relocation of the Ninian Edwards statue to another location. Let's make statues and monuments of people who have done only good for the betterment of Edwardsville and especially of those who believe human beings are equal. The different forms of racism that exists in our community must be addressed, including the silent forms of racism such as a statue of a person who, according to the Illinois Times, did not value all lives, blatantly ignored laws to free slaves he owned, and with his background in Law committed other dishonorable acts to find loopholes in anti-slavery legislation to "contract" a black person to a white person for voluntary servitude. If we recognize the contributions of a slave master then it's fair to recognize the contributions of slaves. Unfortunately, the history of the latter was and still is not important enough to recognize and uplift by having a plaza dedicated slaves. And Yes, slaves contributed or was robbed of the opportunity to contribute. This is why today, Black lives must matter for all lives to matter. Ninian Edwards life matters to Edwardsville with his political contributions to the state, but so does many others who fought for freedom and equality. Let's lift the legacy of those people and dedicate a plaza of equality.

Thank you for your time and consideration to remove the symbol of a past we as a community are trying to move past.

Lenesha

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