



# Cemetery Initiative

Presenting Options for Addressing  
the Conley Road Cemeteries

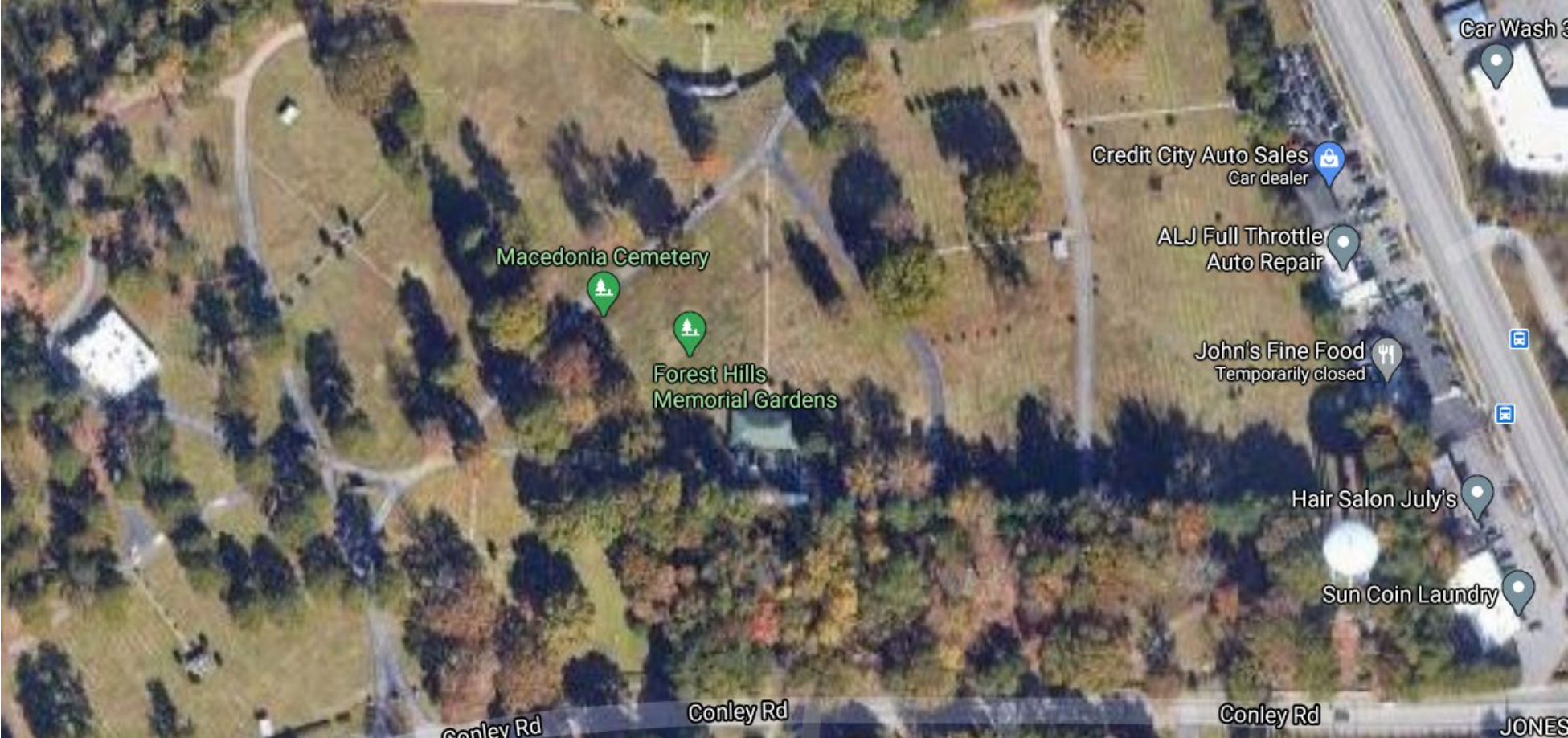
Presented on  
December 19, 2020

Presented by Michael Williams

# What is the Problem?

- The cemeteries have been neglected.
- No one is maintaining on a regular basis.
- Owners/operators cannot be found.
- There is community interest in finding a solution.

# Site Overview



# Entry to Forest Hills



# Entry to Abandoned Cemeteries



# Forest Hills



# Conley Road Cemeteries



# What are the City's Options?

1. Do nothing and continue to cycle of occasional volunteer clean-up and maintenance.
2. Take over the cemeteries and maintain/operate.
3. Take control of the cemetery, but contract/partner with an entity to manage on behalf of the City.

# Option 1 – Pros and Cons

## Pros:

- No up-front cost to the City
- No long-term financial liability or cost

## Cons:

- Problem continues to fester
- Periodic one-time cleanup costs
- Community concerns unaddressed



# Option 2 – Pros and Cons

## Pros:

- Restoration of an African-American cemetery with history
- Resolution of community concerns
- Beautification of the City

## Cons:

- Long-term (forever) financial commitment
- Up front costs (clean-up, condemnation cost, infrastructure)
- Management issues (only if you allow additional interments)

## Chapter 72 - Abandoned Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

### § 36-72-3. Authority of counties and municipalities to preserve abandoned cemeteries

Counties, anywhere within the county boundaries, and municipalities, anywhere within the municipal boundaries, are authorized, **jointly and severally**, to preserve and protect any abandoned cemetery or any burial ground which the county or municipality determines has been abandoned or is not being maintained by the person who is legally responsible for its upkeep, whether or not that person is financially capable of doing so, **to expend public money in connection therewith**, to provide for reimbursement of such funds by billing any legally responsible person or levying upon any of his property as authorized by local ordinance, and **to exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire any interest in land necessary for that purpose.**

Parcel 1

This is to certify that we have examined the record of title to the real estate described in Exhibit A attached to this certificate and incorporated herein by this reference and made a part hereof (the "Property") subsequent to June 2, 1977, and we find the fee simple title to the Property to be vested in **John L. Harper, Sr.**, by virtue of that certain Decree of Court styled John L. Harper, Sr. vs. Trustees of Forest Park Lodge No. 7447 of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows of Georgia, their heirs, successors or assigns, being Civil Action File No. 15710, dated November 12, 1976, filed for record June 2, 1977, recorded in Deed Book 881, page 718, Clayton County, Georgia records; subject to those objections and exceptions as follow:

Parcel 2

This is to certify that we have examined the record of title to the real estate described in Exhibit A attached to this certificate and incorporated herein by this reference and made a part hereof (the "Property") subsequent to August 31, 1951, and we find the fee simple title to the Property to be vested in **Deacons and their Successors of the Primitive Baptist Church**, by virtue of that certain Warranty Deed from John Stanley, dated May 9, 1874, filed for record August 31, 1951, recorded in Deed Book 87, page 219, Clayton County, Georgia records; subject to those objections and exceptions as follow:

Parcel 3

This is to certify that we have examined the record of title to the real estate described in Exhibit A attached to this certificate and incorporated herein by this reference and made a part hereof (the "Property") subsequent to October 21, 1893, and we find the fee simple title to the Property to be vested in **Henry Wilson and Stephens Jackson, as Trustee for the Macedonia Burying Society of Fulton County, later known as the Macedonia Charitable Association**, by virtue of that certain Warranty Deed from R. Arnold, dated May 1, 1893, filed for record October 21, 1893, recorded in Deed Book F, page 575, Clayton County, Georgia records; subject to those objections and exceptions as follow:

**POTENTIAL CONLEY RD CEMENTERY EXPENSES**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>QTY</b>	<b>UNIT COST</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
SIGN (3)	3	2,500.00	7,500.00
MAINTENANCE (1 PER MONTH)	9	1,026.00	9,234.00
(2 PER MONTH)	18	1,026.00	18,468.00
GROUND RADAR - 3 ACRES	LUMP	3,333.33	9,999.99

**SIGNS**

AVERAGE DEPENDING ON TYPE / QUALITY

I RECOMMEND 1 NICE SIGN FOR 3 SITES

**GROUNDS WORK AS MAIN ST.**

9 MONTHS A YEAR - 1 PER MONTH

9 MONTHS A YEAR - 2 PER MONTH

**GROUND RADAR SCOPE INCLUDES**

RECORD CREATION, MARKED SITES

IDENTIFY & MAP UNMARKED SITES

IDENTIFY & MAP VACANT LAND

# Option 3 – Pros and Cons

## Pros:

- Restoration of an African-American cemetery with history
- Resolution of community concerns
- Beautification of the City

## Cons:

- Much lower long-term (forever) financial commitment
- Up front costs (clean-up, condemnation cost, infrastructure)
- No management issues

# Partnering with Forest Hills?

- Would need to have GPR performed to locate all grave sites (including any unmarked graves)
- Consider transfer of ownership?
- Consider transfer of just management?

# Locating Burial Sites



AMERICAN  
NEWS 9

EXPERTS USE GROUND-PENETRATING RADAR  
TO MAP HISTORICAL CEMETERY

# Recommendation

- Partnership with Forest Hills seems to be the best option if they are open to it.
- City would have to take title to parcels through eminent domain
- City could negotiate with Forest Hills regarding cleanup costs, signage and preservation of historic nature of the Conley Road cemeteries



Questions?