

Press Release

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Multi-Million Dollar Bethel Missionary Baptist Church Restoration Project Will Pay Tribute to History of Building & Fourth Ward Area

Project Funded by Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone No. 14/Fourth Ward Redevelopment Authority

The Houston Parks & Recreation Department in partnership with the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone No. 14/Fourth Ward Redevelopment Authority & Mayor Annise Parker will announce plans for a multi-million dollar project to preserve & develop Bethel Park. A press conference will be held on Friday, August 24th at 9:30 a.m. on the site of historic Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, 801 Andrews Street.

- WHO:** Mayor Annise Parker, City of Houston
Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks & Recreation Department
Council Member Ellen Cohen, District C
Jackie Bostic, Chair Fourth Ward Redevelopment Authority/TIRZ #14
Pastor Robert O. Robertson, Jr., Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
- WHAT:** Bethel Park Press Conference
- WHEN:** Friday, August 24, 2012
9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
- WHERE:** Bethel Park
801 Andrews Street at Crosby Street
Houston, TX 77019
(Parking available at African American Library at Gregory School
1200 Block Cleveland at Cushing Street)
- WHY:** To announce plans for a multi-million dollar preservation & redevelopment of historic Bethel Missionary Baptist Church property

About Bethel Missionary Baptist Church

Founded in the late 1800's by Reverend John (Jack) H. Yates, Bethel Missionary Baptist Church is located in Freedmen's Town, a post Civil War Houston neighborhood founded by freed slaves. The Church has had three sanctuaries on the same site with the earliest constructed in the 1890's. The first was a wood framed structure that blew down as a result of the 1900 "Great Storm" in Galveston. The second wood framed structure was erected in the early 1900's & had a 40 foot tower. Enlarged & constructed of brick in 1949-50, the third sanctuary was designed by James M. Thomas, a prominent architect of African American churches. In January 2005, a fire gutted the interior of the historic structure. In 2009, the City of Houston provided emergency wall stabilization & minor structural repairs due to the unsafe conditions of the building. The city also purchased the property in order to preserve the church's façade & provide park space for the community. The goal of the project was to pay tribute to Bethel's significant history & architecture as well as the history of the Fourth Ward. The current Bethel Park project is expected to be completed in the spring of 2013.

About the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone No. 14/Fourth Ward Redevelopment Authority

The Fourth Ward Redevelopment Authority (the "Authority") is a non-profit local government corporation created by & operating on behalf of the City of Houston & administers Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone Number Fourteen, City of Houston, Texas ("TIRZ #14"). The Authority was created by Houston's City Council on June 9, 1999, to aid assist & act on behalf of the City in the performance of its governmental function for the common good & general welfare of the area included in Reinvestment Zone Number Fourteen, City of Houston, Texas to promote, develop, encourage & maintain housing, educational facilities, employment, commerce & economic development in the City. The Authority is governed by a Board of nine Directors with six appointed by Houston's Mayor & City Council, one appointed by the HISD Board of Trustees, One by Senator Rodney Ellis & one by Representative Garnet Coleman.

About The Houston Parks & Recreation Department

The Houston Parks & Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards & manages over 38,992 acres of parkland & greenspace for the City of Houston & develops & implements recreational programming for citizens of all abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks & Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit www.houstonparks.org.