



May 27, 2016

Mayor Jim Gray
Lexington Fayette Urban County Government
200 East Main Street
Lexington, KY 40507

Dear Mayor Gray,

It's no secret that Lexington takes great pride in its history and its horse racing. The recently constructed Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden combines both of those elements by telling the story of often overlooked African American jockeys in the sport of Thoroughbred racing. With its colorful story boards, large circular amphitheater and handsome stone walls, the garden is an outdoor classroom that celebrate the post-Civil War struggles and accomplishments of black horseman, some of whom, like Isaac Murphy, reached the pinnacle of their sport. The garden is more than a green oasis on the side of the road. It is a soothing welcome sign at the gateway of a neighborhood in the midst of a rebirth. While honoring our equine history, the garden is also helping to transform the too-often negative perception of the East End neighborhood, a mostly African American enclave located just a stone's throw from the heart of downtown Lexington.

The Isaac Murphy garden is a success story born out of a public/private partnership and the vision of a group of dedicated people who had a dream and chased it. The members of the Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden advisory board believe the Town Branch Commons Corridor will be an even greater catalyst for downtown Lexington. Therefore, the board wholeheartedly endorses this project.

We believe the Town Branch Commons, with its linear park-like design, will make downtown more pedestrian friendly, and that in turn will bring more people downtown and to those neighborhoods bordering downtown, like the East End. It is worth noting that the Town Branch Commons Corridor will originate at a point very close to the Isaac Murphy garden, thus further enhancing the gateway to our neighborhood.

For these reasons and more, the Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden advisory board offers its full support of this innovative project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas Tolliver D.C.".

Thomas Tolliver

President, Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden board

Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden c/o Blue Grass Community Foundation

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www.isaacmurphy.org