



The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce to Commemorate Peoples Park with Historical Marker

Bloomington, IN – July 10, 2020 – The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce is excited to announce the installation of a historical marker at Peoples Park in Bloomington to mark the location of the Black Market, a Black-owned business that was firebombed in 1968. The installation will take place on Friday, July 31st at 10:00am at Peoples Park located at 501 E Kirkwood Ave (the corner of Kirkwood Ave and Dunn St).

This ends a process that officially began in the summer of 2019 with an application to the Indiana Historical Bureau. The Chamber had originally planned to have this event and marker installation in May, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, plans were rescheduled for this month. The Chamber will be livestreaming the installation of the marker on their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/chamberbloom>.

“We are looking forward to finally being able to honor Peoples Park and the Black Market that was once located there,” said Erin Predmore, President & CEO of the Chamber. “Many people in Bloomington are unaware of the history of this park and the injustice that led to the end of the Black Market, and the Chamber and our Black-Owned Business Affinity Group are on a mission to change that.”

“The Black Market is an important but lesser known part of Bloomington’s history and it is fitting that the Black-Owned Business Affinity Group will play a role in commemorating the legacy of the Black Market with the placement of a Historical Marker,” said William Hosea, member of the Black-Owned Business Affinity Group.

Peoples Park was originally the location of the Black Market in Bloomington opened by Rollo Turner in 1968 on land owned by Larry Canada, a businessman and antiwar activist. This was a peaceful gathering place for citizens of Bloomington as well as Indiana University students where LP's, books, artwork, and African imports were sold.

On December 26th, 1968, the Black Market was firebombed by the local members of the KKK. Ultimately, the Market was forced to close after all inventory was lost. Not long after, the building that housed the Black Market was razed leaving an empty plot of land. In the early 1970's, Indiana University students started plantings flowers and vegetation in the area, eventually naming it Peoples Park in honor of a park at UC-Berkeley.

In 1976, Kathy Noyes Canada moved away from Bloomington and donated Peoples Park to the city with the stipulation that it always remain a public park for the citizens of Bloomington. The agreement stated that if these terms were not honored, ownership of the park would default back to the Canada family.

About the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce:

The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce is a nonprofit membership organization serving as our community's leading advocate for business. We offer unique leadership opportunities, meaningful volunteer activities, and exclusive business-building programs focused on critical economic, civic, and social priorities. Chamber members support each other and community initiatives, sharing information and resources to help create economic opportunity and community well-being. At the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce, we believe that better business leads to a better community.

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