

Bobbie Walthall

To: Diane Stoddard
Subject: RE: Network to Freedom Overview and Suggested Letter Copy

From: Jim Ogle [<mailto:jogle@freedomfrontier.org>]
Sent: Thursday, October 05, 2017 4:23 PM
To: Diane Stoddard <dstoddard@lawrenceks.org>
Cc: Steve Nowak <snowak@watkinsmuseum.org>
Subject: RE: Network to Freedom Overview and Suggested Letter Copy

The Douglas County Historical Society and the Watkins Museum is requesting the city of Lawrence's endorsement of a grant application to the National Park Service and its Network to Freedom program made for interpretive signage to establish the city-owned Grover Barn as one of two Lawrence sites on the developing Kansas African American History Trail.

The Grover Barn property was originally a barn on abolitionists Joel and Emily Grover's farm during the territorial Kansas period. It was an important "station" on the Underground Railroad where fugitive slaves from Missouri and elsewhere were sheltered on their trip north.

Here the notable abolitionist, John Brown and his men came in January of 1859 on his last trip through Kansas bringing 11 slaves they rescued from Vernon County, Missouri, and a free-born baby.

The Grover barn was later used as an artist's studio and then modified in the early 1980s to serve as Fire Station #4. Today it is no longer a Fire station but continues to be owned by the City of Lawrence.

The building is currently not open to the public but it is worth driving by for those interested in early-day Kansas history or architecture. This is one of only two former Underground Railroad stations still standing within the city limits of Lawrence.

The Kansas African American History Trail is a project of The Kansas African American Museum in Wichita. It initially has a number of important sites including:

- *Ft. Riley-Buffalo Soldier/ Calvary Museum*
- *Osawatomie-John Brown*
- *Nicodemus Township*

- *Baxter Springs Heritage Center-Buffalo Soldier*
- *Ft. Scott -Buffalo Soldier/Gordon Park*
- *Wichita-Calvary Baptist Church, African American Museum*
- *Ft. Leavenworth-Buffalo Soldier/Richard Allen Museum*
- *Topeka-Brown vs Board of Education/John Ritchie House-Abolitionist*
- *Lawrence-Grover Barn/Langston Hughes Walking Trail*
- *Minneapolis-George Washington Carver*
- *Kansas City- Quindaro Ruins*

These sites will be part of a major heritage tourism effort to tell the stories of African Americans in the Jayhawk state.

The Network for Freedom grant would provide for Trail recognition and interpretive signage at the Grover Barn site and an interpretive sign at the John Does. While the Does site is privately held (and a letter of support is in the works by its owner), the city of Lawrence is requested as owner of the Grover Barn property to provide a letter of support for the grant application. Through this Network for Freedom grant, we will be better able to share the important story of these two sites.

One note: the Carnegie Building is not an Underground Railroad site. It cannot qualify for this grant for its banner and interpretive signage for The Kansas African American History Trail.

The suggested letter would be as follows:

I am writing on behalf of the city of Lawrence to endorse the application by the Watkins Museum and the Douglas County Historical Society to receive a Network to Freedom grant to place enhanced signage acknowledging the important story behind the Grover Barn site.

The city is the owner of the Grover Barn site.

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Here the notable abolitionist, John Brown and his men came in January of 1859 on his last trip through Kansas bringing 11 slaves they rescued from Vernon County, Missouri, and a free-born baby.

We believe recognition of this site will allow all citizens to appreciate and understand the important role this site played on the Underground Railroad. The city of Lawrence heartily endorses this application and gives its permission to install these signs.

Sincerely,

Diane:

I hope this provides you with what you need. If I have erred or can improve this, please let me know immediately.

Jim

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Executive Director*

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