

Mayor Erin Mendenhall

April 15, 2022

451 South State Street, Room 306
P.O. Box 145474
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

RE: Police Brutality Healing Space

Dear Mayor,

We are the surviving relatives representing some of the citizens depicted on the Fleet Block murals in the Police Brutality Healing Space. We appreciate the engagement of your Community Outreach Department on behalf of the Salt Lake City Mayor's Office, The Arts Council, and other Departments that we know have been engaged in the preservation, healing support, and awareness of the important community memorial site. Over the years we have seen this site inspired from mourning to a statement in voicing concerns for the safety of Black residents and all residents, to an organic grassroots mural project, a community building space, and most importantly, a family memorial site. It has been a clear statement on the power of arts to heal communities and raise important awareness of social justice failures. We realize that art can take many forms. Sometimes temporary, permanent, and evolutionary.

As the City moves forward with its plans for development for the Fleet Block with the Community and Neighborhoods Department, we would like to take the opportunity to voice our wishes for this future memorial site, and/or the safe keeping in honoring our family members.

Our group would be interested in some form of a replica of these local community members being memorialized. Should the Fleet Block become that space, we wish for the depiction of our family members to be at a site that is in service to the community, and we are concerned about their faces being replicated at a site that perpetuates gentrification and harm in our city. We see it as important that this site not profit or generate income for the City as a destination that uses our lost family members as a means for profit.

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We understand this exact site may not be the ultimate place for a replication, but we would prefer it to be and see the importance in the literal faces of these community members being recognized and their experience acknowledged. These are our recommendations for the City to consider:

- Creating an intersectional resource center with the murals
- “Say their Name” Days of remembrance
- Placing faces on street light banners
- A community garden named in their honor
- Memorial art/ statues
- A memorial plaza
- Lighting installation
- Memorial plaques
- Renaming Fleet Block

Most importantly we are looking for a space or means for our family members to grieve and for their memories to live on and to further social justice issues in our community.

While we know the replication of these murals is still in uncertain terms, we would also encourage the City to further ideas about additional monuments and actions to justice and equality in consultation with communities most affected that can manifest in creative ways through public art and engagement in our City.

We hope that we can continue to work together on a transparent vision that honors the lives lost and their family members. We recognize the complex and nuanced nature of healing trust as we move forward.

Thank you for your consideration,

-Surviving Relatives

List of those in participation:

Gina Thayne- Family of Dillon Taylor
Roshawna Carter- Mother of Elijah James Smith
Rae Duckworth- Family of Bobby Duckworth
Melinda Tucker Castellanos – Sister of Joey Tucker
Susan Neese- Mother of Chad Breinholt
Ruby Mercado- Family of Jovany Mercado
Tiffany & RavenLyn James- Mother and sister of Zan James*

Ashley Cleveland- Community Outreach, SLC Mayor’s Office
Felicia Baca- Salt Lake City Arts Council
Renato Olmedo-Gonzalez- Salt Lake City Arts Council
Melanie Davis- The Black Clinicians
Franque Bains- Utahn Convos

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Additional Surviving Family Comments

IN THE FUTURE I THINK.....

I think everything said in this letter is on point and sounds good.

Roshawna Carter- Mother of Elijah James Smith

IN THE FUTURE I THINK.....

I think it is imperative that we create and keep a memorial, not only do they bring healing to the families that have tragically lost someone to such a horrific act of violence, excessive force, or police brutality. It also brings communities together, it opens up dialog for very uncomfortable conversations that lead to positive change, it is a constant reminder that our law enforcement has to do better. It keeps us transparent and accountable. It causes people to say their names and remember them. It makes people want to leave a better place for those to come, and set higher standards for law enforcement, as well as our individual selves.

We need to see their faces and names, we need to be able to identify their individuality not just assume they were criminals, or suspects. They were loved, they had families. We need to be able to understand why they are there? There needs to be a permanent reminder to law enforcement and those with power, that deadly force should never be the first go too. We all want Justice; we all want to go home at night.

Gina Thayne- Family of Dillon Taylor

IN THE FUTURE I THINK.....

I agree with the families on continuing to memorialize our loved ones who were taken at the hands of the state. I also agree that in order to solidify actual healing, change needs to be brought. The Murals need to stay, but we need to add change. The change we, the community, need are RESOURCES. The city is expanding the bike lane and making it accessible from the west side as it is from the east. It would only make sense to improve the meeting point at 900 s 300 w with resources to those who need them. Society lacks accessible resources. If the 9 line is expanding to make Salt Lake City accessible, it should also have accessible resources for residents.

The city currently leases out bits and pieces of this block, and profits off those leasing contracts. The land IS valuable, and the value has increased at the expense of our losses. It's impertinent to ignore the community and their unmet needs they continue to ask for.

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We need a resource center. The center needs to be intersectional and diverse. The center needs to be within the walls of our loved ones, and that only seems fair.

Rae Duckworth- Cousin of Bobby Duckworth

IN THE FUTURE I THINK.....

They (the murals) have become such an important part of our community. We have a peaceful place to visit those we've lost and share their stories. We have formed new friendships through the darkest time in our lives. The murals have become a place of respect, reverence, and hope. Our loved ones and so many more who are victims of police brutality are not forgotten. The location of the murals has become a gathering place for many, a platform for change in our communities to make our voices heard. They serve as a reminder to hold law enforcement and city leaders accountable.

We wish every single day that we could bring our loved ones back. The murals are a tribute to those we've lost and a reminder of what needs to change for a better tomorrow. Losing the murals, our place of serenity, would be like losing our loved ones all over again.

Melinda Tucker Castellanos – Sister of Joey Tucker

IN THE FUTURE I THINK.....

The remembrance murals have not only been a place of healing for families but also an important visualization and reminder that law enforcement must do better in protecting the community without resorting to deadly violence. A future memorial helps the community to stay engaged, and putting a face and a name to each individual victim helps to tell their story rather than what might be controlled or perceived in a negative way by law enforcement or media.

Each victim has an important story to tell that can help bring change, they are no longer here so it's up to the families and the community to continue their story to help bring a positive impact to law enforcement change for the good of all.

Susan Neese- Mother of Chad Breinholt

All comments were received via google doc and minorly edited with verbal consent and further check via Art Healing Meetings. Edits were welcomed through April 15th, 2022.



May 5, 2022

Dear Relatives, Loved Ones, and Advocates for those depicted in the Fleet Block murals,

Thank you very much for the thoughtful recommendation letter, and more so for being willing to engage in the Art Healing process with City staff and The Black Clinicians over these past months. I have no doubt that this process required an immense amount of emotional work and I'm very grateful that you were willing to share the product of that work with me and the City. I have also shared your letter with my staff, the staff of the Community and Neighborhoods Department, the Civic Engagement team, and the City Council. I hope that you will also feel welcome and comfortable participating in the upcoming public engagement process regarding the future of Fleet Block.

Thank you, again, and I wish you all well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erin Mendenhall".

Erin Mendenhall
Mayor, Salt Lake City