



City of Houston Media Release

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Dowling Street Renamed to Emancipation Avenue

HOUSTON, TX – Houston Council has voted to rename the entirety of Houston’s Dowling Street to Emancipation Avenue to align the street name, which serves as the front door to Emancipation Park, with the name of the park itself. The action brings Emancipation Park in line with Houston’s other signature parks, Hermann and Memorial, which already share their names with adjacent streets.

“The renaming of Dowling Street to Emancipation Avenue is a great way to pay tribute to the rich history of Emancipation Park and the Third Ward community,” said Mayor Sylvester Turner, who proposed the name change. “The renaming, along with recent financial assistance from the Kinder Foundation, Houston Endowment and HEB, will allow this historic park to thrive for years to come.”

Emancipation Park is located in Houston’s historic Third Ward and is the oldest City-owned park. The park has been a local community gathering place and a symbol of cultural pride for nearly 150 years. The park was originally purchased in 1872 by a group of freed slaves and served as the epicenter for Juneteenth celebrations, which commemorate the day news of emancipation reached Texas, and was later donated to the City in 1916. The park is currently undergoing a \$33.5 million renovation project and will be rededicated to the community on Juneteenth 2017.

There was considerable public engagement regarding the name change for Dowling Street, with a majority being supportive. The effective date for the name change is also being timed to coincide with Juneteenth 2017.

Dowling Street was originally named East Broadway. The name Dowling was changed in 1892 by the Houston City Council to honor Richard “Dick” Dowling, a commander in the Confederate State Army. Dowling played a key role in the Second Battle of Sabine Pass in September 1863 that resulted in a failed attempt by the Union Army to invade the then Confederate state of Texas. He was born in Ireland and eventually moved to Houston in 1857.

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