



# City of Philadelphia

City Council  
Chief Clerk's Office  
402 City Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

## Legislation Text

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Urging the National Constitution Center and the National Park Service to properly commemorate the life and home of James Oronoke Dexter.

WHEREAS, a bus depot is planned for construction over what was once the home of James Oronoke Dexter; and

WHEREAS, James Oronoke Dexter has been described by the Philadelphia Inquirer as, "a central figure in the building of free black society in post revolutionary America"; and

WHEREAS, James Oronoke Dexter served as a distinguished member of the Free African Society, an organization that was the first of its kind in Philadelphia and perhaps the first in the country, whose primary purpose was to act as a mutual aid society for those who were sick, widowed, fatherless or in need; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James Oronoke Dexter was a founding member of Saint Thomas' African Episcopal Church, the first African Episcopal church in Philadelphia and one of the first in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The home of James Oronoke Dexter was used for meetings by prominent leaders such as Richard Allen and Absalom Jones as they worked to realize their collective vision of uplifting African Americans to new heights; and

WHEREAS, While there may not be a legal requirement to commemorate the life and home of Mr. Dexter, there are a large number of citizens in the City of Philadelphia, the birthplace of America, who would be gravely disappointed if he was not properly honored; and

WHEREAS, To build a bus depot over the site of the home of Mr. Dexter without doing a proper commemoration would be a tragic mistake in the eyes of those who care and take pride in African American history; and

WHEREAS, To not properly commemorate the site would be an error of extreme significance to all of those who care about celebrating the rich cultural history of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, To properly honor the life and home of James Oronoke Dexter it will be necessary for the National Constitution Center and the National Park Service to consult with those who are active in the pursuit, promotion, and preservation of African American history and culture; now therefore

**RESOLVED** ,BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby urge the National Constitution Center and the National Park Service to properly commemorate the life and home of James Oronoke Dexter.