



City of Philadelphia

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

Legislation Text

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Also naming the 1500 block of Lombard Avenue as Wesley Way, to commemorate the historic Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church and/or one of the most influential Pastors in the church's history- Rev. Alfred G. Dunston.

WHEREAS, Some researchers have identified Wesley as one of the first five independent African American Churches to be established in the city of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Wesley A.M.E Zion Church, also known as "Big Wesley", was created on June 6, 1820; and

WHEREAS, The original meetings were first held in a Carpenter's shop on Lombard Street between Fifth and Sixth Streets and grew to have the second largest membership of all black churches in the city at that time. It was the original location that many abolitionist rallies, anti-slavery protests, race improvement conventions, lectures, worship, and other significant activities occurred; and

WHEREAS, Wesley A.M.E Zion Church continues to occupy and maintain our historic house of worship at 1500 Lombard Street amidst rapid development and gentrification in the community; and

WHEREAS, In 1885 the Church relocated to the 1500 block of Lombard Street and the members diligently worked toward the founding of the first hospital in the city for black Philadelphians, formed literary societies, supported civil rights, pushed voter registration, promoted equal employment opportunities and more; and

WHEREAS, The new church was designed by architect George Savage, the church was built in 1926 in the Gothic Revival style with a corner bell tower, spire, and pointed arch windows with tracery; and

WHEREAS, Wesley A.M.E Zion Church continues to do ministry at this location representing over 200 years of continuous ministry and service in the City; and

WHEREAS, During the 20th Century, one of the Pastors of Wesley, the Right Rev. Alfred G. Dunston served the church from 1952 until 1963. Rev. Dunston not only served his congregation, but also the city in the struggle for liberation, civil rights and equity until his death in 1995.

WHEREAS, Rev. Dunston was a member of the Commission on Human Relations, Mayors Committee on Civil Rights, WWII Veteran, Author, Member of the 400 Pastors Selective Patronage, Co-Founder and Charter Member of the O.I.C, renowned preacher and influential Bishop in the A.M.E. Zion Church; and

WHEREAS, The Church has been a historical leader in the development of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church denomination and influential in civil rights and social reforms in the 1950s and 1960s. Archival material at Temple University, the Philadelphia Historical Society, and the American Philosophical Society include details of the storied history and contributions of the church.

WHEREAS, The Church was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. It also appears in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places and the Pennsylvania State Historic Resource survey; and

WHEREAS, Wesley A.M.E Zion Church continues to hold weekly worship service, bible study, and outreach ministry activities. The current pastor is Rev. Michael A. King, and Former pastors include the Right Reverend Louis Hunter, Sr., 93rd Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church; and

WHEREAS, It is important to celebraet the selfless dedication of the Reverends who served Wesley A.M.E Zion Church, and the importance of Big Wesley to the community that surrounds it; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Also names the 1500 block of Lombard Avenue as Wesley Way, to commemorate the historic Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church and/or one of the most influential Pastors in the church's history- Rev. Alfred G. Dunston.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to leadership of Wesley A.M.E Zion Church as evidence of the admiration and respect of this body.