

RESOLUTION #5-R-19 - AMENDMENT Offered at 10/2/2019 Council Meeting

Rededication and revitalization of Soldier's Square

WHEREAS; Monuments have long been used by civilizations as a way to commemorate a common history and to visualize a shared future, and have historically been incorporated into the fabric of civic life through the formation of public spaces which embrace them, [just as they were on Market street in Appleton from 1851 through 1937](#), and;

WHEREAS; For the bereaved, military comrades, and the public at large, public memorials function as virtual graves for those who often died far from home on foreign soil and serve as permanent reminders of the steep price our nation, and our City, has paid for the preservation of its security and freedoms and the events that have helped shape our common history, and;

WHEREAS; a one-block long plaza 80 feet in width between South Morrison and South Oneida streets, was deeded to Appleton in the 1850's by Boston philanthropist Amos Adams Lawrence, the namesake of Lawrence University, with the deed restriction that it continue to function as a ["Public Highway"](#), in perpetuity, lest it be returned to the Lawrence family, and;

WHEREAS; Market Street, as it was known from the early days of Appleton, was renamed in 1911 as 'Soldiers Square,' precipitated by the dedication of a monument erected to honor soldiers who fought in the Civil War, a monument created by Italian sculptor Chevalier Gaetano Trentanove and presented by Appleton industrialist A.W. Priest in memory of his brother, James Priest, who died in the Civil War, and;

WHEREAS; In 1915, in response to a national call to honor those who served in the Spanish-American War, the City of Appleton petitioned for and received one of the one thousand "Remember the USS Maine" memorial plaques cast from the salvaged metals of the infamous warship before it was permanently sunk off the shores of Havana Harbor, dedicating it, along with two Napoleon cannon from the same conflict, on the East end of Soldier's Square, and;

WHEREAS; In 1922, The City Planning Survey recognized the importance of Soldier's Square, its newly established memorial reflection space, as a primary element in its first attempt to create a bold new vision for downtown, [featuring calling for an expanded monument boulevard to encompass what is now the Soldier's Square parking ramp footprint](#) as an anchor to its proposed civic centre on the bluff site, and;

WHEREAS; In the late 30's, to make way for parking, the Spanish American War Memorial was relocated to Pierce Park where [it was subjected](#) to vandalism and the [metal](#) scrap drive of 1943 which resulted in the loss of the cannon [and memorial plaque](#), [and](#) has since deteriorated beyond recognition while the Civil War memorial, which remained in Soldier's Square, ~~has been entirely neglected for over a century with sculptural elements missing from as far back as 1920, has ,over time, forfeited~~ its prominence in the square plaza and in the public trust, and;

WHEREAS; More recently, the veterans of the Middle East conflicts, but also including those who served in Viet Nam, Korea and others conflicts over the last half century, have [NEVER](#) been formerly recognized in the common public space of Soldier's Square [or elsewhere in Appleton](#) and are well-deserving of the same recognition and honor afforded all veterans of foreign wars, and;

~~WHEREAS; over the course of time, the very nature of Soldier's Square has changed so significantly, functioning more as a service corridor for parking and access to businesses, that it has lost, in its entirety, its original foundation and function as a civic plaza for which it was named and designed, and;~~

WHEREAS; Soldier's Square, was meant to provide a place of solace and contemplation, where our memorials could be appreciated for their aesthetic and symbolic value beyond their intrinsic commemorative purpose, and complement the mission of the civic spaces in which they reside by connecting us and causing us to reflect on something larger than ourselves;

WHEREAS; the City of Appleton's updated Comprehension Plan of 2016 included a concept for an expanded civic space, essentially envisioning the same expansion of Soldier's Square suggested in 1922, and presented a grand concept of same which included a multi-use development, and

WHEREAS; the City of Appleton, presently vested in and in the midst of a grand redesign of its downtown core and bluff sites, including multi-use development proposals adjacent to Soldier's Square, is being afforded a ~~once-in-a-lifetime~~ rare opportunity to re-embrace its lost history and reverence for our veterans and all who have served since the foundation of the City by righting this long-standing violation of the spirit of the Amos Lawrence deed restriction and the public trust;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED; That the City of Appleton will commit to an effort to revitalize Soldier's Square and make every attempt to recapture the former function of the space as an open and inviting pedestrian mall, ~~without any restrictions on potential utilitarian or accessibility needs as determined necessary by any adjacent development, save the following; by rededicating the civic space and putting out an RFP for said revitalization effort at such time as appropriate~~

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; ~~that the City accommodate the relocation and restoration of complete both the full restorations of the Civil War Memorial and the Spanish-American War Memorial in the newly revitalized plaza using funds allocated to such restorations in the projected budget for restoration, any foreseeable future redevelopment plans of Soldier's Square and delay its proposed restoration in its current location until a determination can be made~~ –as well as accommodate the placement of more recent conflicts' memorials within Soldier's Square to be funded by the citizens of Appleton and a number of local non-profits and veteran and veteran services organizations.