

Save Freedom Corner: What YOU Can Do

1. Take personal responsibility today, for the long-term viability of Freedom Corner
2. Join the new *Freedom Corner Maintenance and Management Committee* to stay informed and connected. Send an email to Sala Udin, 412-600-6090; sala@salaudin.com; or info@freedom-corner.org.
3. Join the *Freedom Corner Watch Committee* to stop the vandalism of Freedom Corner
4. Ask your pastor to include your church among the *Freedom Corner Faith Supporters*
5. Contact Mayor Luke Ravenstahl and all members of Pittsburgh City Council and tell them, "Hands Off Freedom Corner." Call 412-255-2626.
6. Circulate the *Save Freedom Corner Petition* and get as many names as possible. Feel free to duplicate blank copies. Get completed petitions back to Sala Udin, 412-600-6090.
7. Be prepared to attend meetings of the URA, City Council or other actions that may become necessary to Save Freedom Corner.

Freedom Corner Background

"Freedom has never been free."

Freedom Corner was born of the Hill District's black community successfully drawing a "line in the sand" in the late 1950's and early 1960's to stop the City of Pittsburgh from demolishing the remainder of the Hill District, beyond Crawford St. That intersection has become known as Freedom Corner and has been the site of launching demonstrations against police brutality, fair housing, jobs, anti-war and other civil rights and human rights issues.

When the Crawford Square housing development was being planned to begin at Crawford St. in 1990, City Councilman Jake Milliones got the city and the developers to agree that a particular plot of land would be reserved by the Urban Redevelopment Authority for the construction of a monument to Freedom Corner. The land was acquired by the URA as a part of the Crawford Square development. Dr. Milliones initiated an artist's competition for the monument, but died suddenly, January 2, 1992, before the project could be launched.

The idea sat idle until it was rekindled by Councilman Sala Udin, once he was elected in 1995. Another competition for the design of Freedom Corner was launched again in 1997 and a fund raising effort began then as well. Between 1997 and 2002 over \$700,000.00 was raised from individuals, organizations, corporations and foundations for the construction of the winning design for Freedom Corner, won by architect Howard Graves and artist Carlos Peterson. All funds were housed in the Freedom Corner account of the Pittsburgh Urban League, which audits the Freedom Corner fund, along with its annual agency audit.

With the exception of the touch-screen computer, Freedom Corner was finished and ready for community use in 2002. The funds to install the computer

(\$45,000) were then raised and contracted to be installed in 2006. McCormack Baron, the owners and property managers of Crawford Square agreed to keep the landscape, sweep debris and shovel snow.

Freedom corner gets a great deal of use, including school children, demonstrations, rallies, families of inscribed Freedom Fighters, historians and passers by. The Freedom Corner website gets a great deal of activity as well. By and large, Freedom Corner has stood up quite well and is maintained in reasonably good shape.

However, a couple of the light posts need to be re-secured or replaced and the vandalized window covering on the computer monitor must be replaced. Sometimes, after a rain, the drain puddles and needs to be cleaned out, but otherwise Freedom Corner is in daily use.

In 2004 Councilman Udin set aside \$53,000.00 for anticipated maintenance and repair needs. However, that \$53,000.00 has since been reallocated by City Council. On May 8, the Urban Redevelopment Authority voted to remove itself from ownership of the land upon which Freedom Corner sits and transfer it to the City of Pittsburgh. The License Agreement between the URA and the Hill District CDC was not renewed in 2004, as the agreement required. The License Agreement, signed in 1999 authorized the building of Freedom Corner, but the Freedom Corner Committee, which raised the funds, selected the architect, artist and contractors, never incorporated.

Glenn Mahone of Reed Smith law firm has been asked to help establish the legal status of the un-renewed License Agreement and the legal ownership of the Freedom Corner monument itself. Both the Urban League and the Poise Foundation have been asked to act as a repository of community funds raised for the maintenance of Freedom Corner and may be available to take ownership of

the monument and supervise its maintenance, in collaboration of a local Freedom Corner maintenance committee.

A group of four Hill District churches have agreed to come together to sponsor Freedom Corner Juneteenth Sunday, which would ask churches citywide to take up a collection for maintenance of Freedom Corner and will schedule a Freedom Corner Juneteenth Celebration, scheduled for Sunday, June 29 2008 at 2:00 PM, at Freedom Corner. A reconstituted Freedom Corner Committee has been established to coordinate these and other fundraising efforts.

Freedom Corner Committee, Chairman, Sala Udin, 412-600-6090

