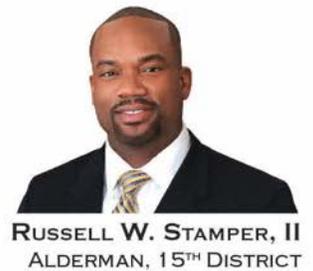


## COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

### MEMBER

- Community & Economic Development Committee
- Public Works Committee



**RUSSELL W. STAMPER, II**  
ALDERMAN, 15<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

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ALDERMAN, 15<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

# Let us not lose sight of our goals

## **Statement from Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II** **June 23, 2020**

On May 25th of this year we watched in horror as officer Derek Chauvin of the Minneapolis Police Department murdered George Floyd by kneeling on his neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. Since the release of that video we have seen a seismic chain reaction that has swept this nation and the world. We have seen an acceptance and an awakening to the undeniable fact that BLACK LIVES indeed do MATTER. The public lynching of George Floyd was not, however, the beginning of this movement.

This movement was birthed seven years before the murder of George Floyd by three women of color - Alicia Garza, Patrisse Kahn-Cullors, and Opal Tometi - as a byproduct of the unity and solidarity that arose from the senseless murder of Trayvon Martin over a bag of skittles, and further solidified as a result of the protests in Ferguson attributed to the murder of Mike Brown at the hands of the police. Ultimately, the Black Lives Matter movement was born. The three mothers of this movement expressed a unified goal to "...eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes."

With that being said let us not lose sight of the goals they set forth. Let us not be fooled by kneeling gatekeepers in kente cloth. Let us not be distracted by beautiful murals of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Let us not be content with getting powerful words painted boldly on streets. Let us not have our efforts co-opted by those who have maneuvered their way into power but haven't actually displayed an agenda that one could remotely consider Black centric. Let us not be lulled to sleep by the Black aesthetic emplacement (a phrase coined by professor and author Brandi T. Summers) of naming subdivision housing models after our heroes, which is insulting and demeaning at best.

It should be noted those two subdivisions, Josey Heights and Walnut Circle, have been sitting dormant since being set in motion years ago by my predecessor and me because it was not given the support of this administration until recently.

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We do not want any more hollow offerings and words of how this administration has always been in support of the Black community. The truth is when we asked for a disparity study to investigate the plight of Blacks in this city, it was unsuccessfully resisted. When we asked last budget cycle for reallocation of police funds to support other means of lowering crime in our community, it was rejected. When we asked to have the police budget capped so the department would have to come to the Council to get approval for more funds, it was shot down. When we asked that the settlements for police misconduct come out of the police department budget and not be passed on to the citizens of this city, it was not supported. When we asked for COP houses to help with community relations between the police and the Black community, we were told it wasn't feasible. When we asked for sincere change, all we got was another commission.

So please, if you are going to let the words Black Lives Matter flow from your lips, understand what you are saying. Understand that, again, issuing a press release about how you are naming subdivision housing models after our heroes is not the answer to the question we have asked. The question, being taken verbatim from those whose names you so proudly agree with, "What are you going to do to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes?"

We WILL NOT wait for your response.

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