



GREEKTOWN AWARDED NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS PROGRAM GRANT FOR SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH OF DETROIT

Greektown Neighborhood Partnership awarded \$425,959 grant from the National Park Service African American Civil Rights Program for Second Baptist Church of Detroit for historic preservation rehabilitation and documentation.

DETROIT, Mich., July 27, 2021 – Greektown Neighborhood Partnership is pleased to announce that they have been awarded the National Park Service (NPS) African American Civil Rights Program Grant for Second Baptist Church of Detroit. The grant of \$425,959 will support capital improvements to Second Baptist Church of Detroit and an update to the National Register of Historic Places Nomination. Second Baptist Church is the oldest African American congregation in the State of Michigan and played a pivotal role in the African American Civil Rights Movement in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Established in 1836 as the Society of Second Baptist, it played an important role in the Underground Railroad and the abolitionist movement in the 1800s, with the most fervent abolitionist activists associated with and meeting at Second Baptist Church. In the 1900s Second Baptist continued to lead the African American community in the struggle for Civil Rights, addressing social welfare, employment, segregation, and racism.

Capital improvements to Second Baptist Church of Detroit will include roof restoration, repair, and replacement; repair of interior water damage caused by leaks in the roof; replacement of the hot water system; and stabilization and repair of the leaded and stained glass throughout the church complex. The National Register of Historic Places Nomination for Second Baptist Church of Detroit dated March 19, 1975, will also be updated to include a comprehensive history and documentation highlighting its role in the Civil Rights Movement and the inclusion of the 1968 modern addition by notable Black architect Nathan Johnson in the Brutalist style.

Melanie Markowicz, Executive Director of Greektown Neighborhood Partnership, spearheaded the grant application and will also administer the grant and scope of work for the project. "It is my hope that those who visit this site will make a personal connection to the past and the continued struggle for equality. Greektown Neighborhood Partnership is pleased to honor the legacy of Second Baptist Church in the spirit of partnership, bringing a broader understanding of one of the most important African American Civil Rights Movement sites in the State of Michigan."

"We at Second Baptist Church of Detroit are very happy to be awarded the African American Civil Rights Program grant. This award ensures that we can continue in our rich legacy of service, justice, and love. It is with a deep sense of gratitude that we thank the National Park Service for this grant and the Greektown Neighborhood Partnership for their assistance in this process," said Rev. Lawrence Rodgers of Second Baptist Church.

One of 53 projects funded nationwide, and one of five in Michigan, the African American Civil Rights Program is funded by the Historic Preservation Fund administered through the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. More information about the grant awards is available here: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/07-27-21-nps-awards-15-million-to-help-preserve-african-american-civil-rights-history.htm>.

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About Greektown Detroit

Greektown is a celebrated entertainment and cultural district, serving both Detroiters and visitors from around the world all year round. The traditional center of Detroit's Greek community, the Greektown neighborhood is one of the last surviving Victorian-era commercial streetscapes in downtown Detroit. Lively Monroe Street is the heartbeat of historic Greektown, and our district is bounded by Gratiot, Randolph, Lafayette, and I-375. For more information, visit www.GreektownDetroit.org.

About the Greektown Neighborhood Partnership

Greektown Neighborhood Partnership is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the long-term economic and cultural vibrancy of Greektown. Through partnerships, we advance the equitable development of the district through community and economic development programs, all while celebrating our cultural roots. Our organization is charged with implementing the [Greektown Neighborhood Framework Vision](#), a strategic community planning initiative, with design strategies focused on connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and the downtown core, increasing built density, the introduction of new public open spaces, the creation of a mixed-use neighborhood, and amplifying cultural heritage. For more information, visit www.GreektownDetroit.org.

About Second Baptist Church of Detroit

Second Baptist Church of Detroit is the oldest African American congregation in the State of Michigan and played a pivotal role in the African American Civil Rights Movement in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. With a rich legacy spanning all the way from the Underground Railroad to the fight for Equal Rights and opportunities, Second Baptist Church of Detroit is one of the most important Civil Rights sites in all of Michigan. For more information, visit www.secondbaptistdetroit.org

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