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MEDIA ADVISORY

**August 19, 2024**

***Street Dedication of South Main Street to Tockwotton Cape Verdean Way***

PROVIDENCE, RI — Cape Verdeans are integral to the economic success, joy and beauty of Providence and beyond. They are finally beginning to be recognized for their many contributions.

With the continued resilience of the Tockwotton Fox Point Cape Verdean Heritage Place (TFPCVHP) committee and the wisdom of Providence City Councilman John Goncalves and the rest of the council, **South Main Street will be re-named Tockwotton Cape Verdean Way on August 24 with a dedication ceremony at 3PM at the intersection of South Main at Transit Street.**

“As a proud Cape Verdean, I am so honored to have led the legislative effort on the Providence City Council to dedicate ‘Tockwotton Cape Verdean Way,’ a tribute to the enduring legacy and cultural richness of the Cape Verdean community in Fox Point,” Goncalves said.

He continued, “This dedication reaffirms our commitment to honoring the diverse stories that contribute to the vibrant identity of our city and ultimately ensures that our history and people will never be forgotten.”

Cape Verdeans were the first voluntary immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa. The Tockwotton neighborhood, including South Main Street, was their first settlement in Rhode Island. The community grew from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century before being displaced by 195 and urban renewal.

As the Council resolution reads, they continue to be “pivotal” in the “development and prosperity of the city” - from the music and cuisine to the families and their businesses. They are, among others, longshoremen in the Port of Providence, entrepreneurs, factory workers, cooks, historians, lawyers, teachers, and elected officials.

“My fondest memories of South Main Street revolve around walking to and from the Boys Club with my friends and cousins,” said Sen. Robert Britto, D-East Providence, Pawtucket. “We would walk home from the club in the evening hours in numbers. Although the streets were dark and many of the nearby properties were abandoned or dilapidated, there was a comforting sense of warmth and security in those moments.”

TFPCVHP has been steadfast with telling the Tockwotton families’ journeys and cultural traditions; preserving their lived history and often-forgotten voices of their ancestors; and leading events to advocate and demonstrate their continued importance to any society, especially Rhode Island.

Earlier this year, the committee successfully received unanimous support to begin negotiations with the City to lease just 1/4th of an acre of India Point Park’s 18 acres to honor, celebrate, and preserve Tockwotton Cape Verdean’s history and contributions with a memorial. They also revived a cherished tradition in June with a procession for the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the St. Antonio Cape Verdean Association, which was established in 1934 and was Rhode Island’s first Cape Verdean beneficent society that provided health and death benefits to its members, and contributed to the social, cultural, and spiritual needs of their community.

“I am thrilled about the recognition of Cape Verdean immigrants as the largest group to settle in this particular Fox Point neighborhood, on this particular street now officially named Tockwotton Cape Verdean Way, in honor of the vibrant community that lived here,” said Glynis Ramos-Mitchell, TFPCVHP President. “As part of the history of Rhode Island, the recognition of Tockwotton Cape Verdean Way also is our proud American story. I hope this acknowledgment inspires us all to reflect on this and encourages us to learn more about the lives of those who lived here, the ones who came before us.”

The dedication will include some of those stories. **And on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, the day before, there will be a free screening of SPIA Media’s “Hi, Neighbor.” In this award winning documemoire, historian, filmmaker and Tockwotton-raised Claire Andrade-Watkins PhD shares one girl’s urban renewal memory. The screening will occur at 7PM at 195 District Park, 200 Dyer Street.** For more info, go to: <https://events.humanitix.com/bonfire-showcase-a-new-england-filmmaker-showcase>

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#### **More about Tockwotton Fox Point Cape Verdean Heritage Place:**

The TFPCVHP team is an independent community-based research initiative composed primarily of former residents and/or descendants of the founding Cape Verdean families who settled in the Fox Point section of Providence, RI at the beginning of the 20th century. Launched in 2007 and incorporated as a 501c3 non-profit in 2014, the goal is to document and preserve the legacy of the Cape Verdean community in Fox Point.