



**Charles E. Dupre, Ed.D.**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

August 10, 2018

Patricia Mercado-Allinger, DSHPO  
State Archeologist  
Texas Historical Commission  
PO BOX 12276  
Austin, TX 78711-2276

RE: James Reese Career and Technical Center site

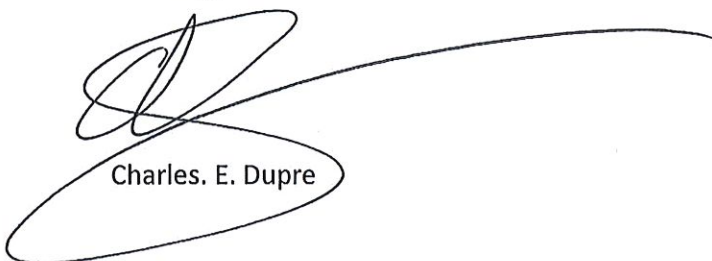
Dear Ms. Mercado-Allinger:

Thank you for the continued support provided to Fort Bend ISD as we work through the process of discovery, preservation and analysis, and reinterment of the 95 unmarked graves located earlier this year at the James Reese Career and Technical Center construction site. We are humbled to be involved in the project and we understand the great responsibility we have as an education system to learn as much as we can about the people buried here, the story of their lives and the history of our community. Our commitment has always been, and will continue to be, to identify, honor and preserve these human remains with the utmost dignity, not solely as unmarked graves but as human beings whose stories deserve to be known.

Recognizing the opportunity to better understand the stories yet to be told, Fort Bend ISD requests the Texas Historical Commission grant permission to Goshawk Environmental Consulting to retain and curate a molar and incisor from each individual for the use of invasive analysis such as isotope and DNA analysis. We believe strongly that DNA testing will provide essential data to help identify any descendants of the individuals buried at the site. As an institution of learning, we believe it is our moral obligation to learn as much as we can, to create learning opportunities for others and to create learners who thirst for knowledge. This project is a learning opportunity for not only Fort Bend ISD students and community, but for others around the state, nation and world.

We strongly encourage you to approve our request to perform invasive, destructive analyses. We want to tell as much of these people's stories as possible. They were forgotten for so long and now we have the honor of telling their story... we would like to tell as much of it as possible.

Sincerely,



Charles. E. Dupre

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

*real places telling real stories*

August 16, 2018

Dr. Charles E. Dupre  
Fort Bend Independent School District  
16431 Lexington Blvd.  
Sugar Land, TX 77479

RE: Historic Sugar Land Burials (James Reese Career and Technology Center, Fort Bend Independent School District)

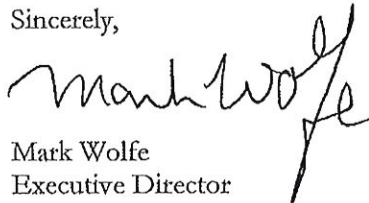
Dear Dr. Dupre:

Thank you for your letter of August 10, 2018 wherein you express your interest in seeing that DNA testing be conducted on the remains that were discovered at above-referenced construction site in Sugar Land, Texas. As you are aware, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) issued Antiquities Permit #8197 for the archeological investigations under the provisions of the Antiquities Code of Texas (Texas Natural Resources Code, Title 9, Chapter 191). The permit holder is an archeologist associated with Goshawk Environmental Consulting, Inc. (GECI), the firm retained by FBISD as project sponsor. In their revised Scope of Work, GECI proposed conducting a series of studies including genetic (DNA) testing as well as isotope, chemical and parasitological analyses. DNA, isotope and chemical analyses are destructive processes while parasitological data can be obtained through the sampling and analysis of sediment collected from the abdominal area of the buried individuals. Without a doubt, much can be learned about the deceased individuals beyond mere examination and documentation. DNA testing presents the opportunity to identify relationships among the deceased and comparative DNA samples provided by possible descendants may be able to establish relationships with living relatives.

THC staff is recommending that FBISD consult with stakeholders to discuss and provide input on the proposed invasive and destructive studies. These graves represent one of the difficult stories of Texas' past that absolutely warrants examination and sharing the newly acquired knowledge with the public. However, we believe that before decisions are made that would result in removing portions of these individual's skeletal remains for future destructive analyses, stakeholders should have the opportunity to discuss and advise FBISD and GECI. This is an important step that will help to inform THC in our oversight of the above-referenced permitted project.

We appreciate your interest and support of the exhumations and for your commitment to respectfully sharing the story of this "forgotten" cemetery with the public. We look forward to continuing the dialog and to the successful completion of this unique archeological project.

Sincerely,



Mark Wolfe  
Executive Director

MW/pma





Department of Legal Services  
Robert Scamardo, General Counsel

October 2, 2018

Via email [REDACTED]  
and U.S. First Class Mail  
Patricia Mercado-Allinger, DSHPO  
State Archeologist  
Director, Archaeology Division  
Texas Historical Commission  
PO BOX 12276  
Austin, TX 78711-2276

Re: Site 41FB355 as an Addendum to TAC Permit #8197  
FBISD James Reese Career and Technology Center  
Sugar Land, TX

Dear Ms. Mercado-Allinger,

Fort Bend ISD is grateful for the guidance and support the Texas Historical Commission ("THC") has provided since the discovery of an abandoned cemetery earlier this year at the James Reese Career and Technical Center construction site in Sugar Land, Texas. As Superintendent Charles Dupre expressed in his letter of August 10, 2018, FBISD understands the great responsibility we have as an educational entity to learn as much as we can about the people buried here, the story of their lives and the history of our community. Our commitment has always been, and will continue to be, to identify, honor and preserve these human remains with the utmost dignity, not solely as unmarked graves but as human beings whose stories deserve to be known.

Recognizing the opportunity to understand the stories yet to be told, FBISD and other organizations have requested the THC grant permission to Goshawk Environmental Consulting ("Goshawk") to retain and curate a molar and incisor from each individual for the use of invasive analysis such as isotope and DNA analysis. We believe strongly that DNA testing will provide essential data to help identify any descendants of the individuals buried at the site. As an institution of learning, we believe it is our moral obligation to learn as much as we can, to create learning opportunities for others and to create learners who thirst for knowledge. This project is a learning opportunity for not only Fort Bend ISD students and community, but for others around the state, nation and world.

As you know, the City of Sugar Land convened the City Manager's Task Force on the Convict Lease Memorial to engage the community on issues related to the skeletal remains of the 95 bodies that have been exhumed. Attached is a letter from Assistant City Manager Douglas Brinkley, dated September 25, 2018, reporting on the "unanimous decision in support of DNA

Robert Scamardo  
October 3 2018  
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sampling by both the task force and members of the community in attendance." Attached to Mr. Brinkley's letter is a list of task force/community members who voted in favor of allowing for DNA analysis in the future. With this unanimous support from the community, it is our hope that the THC will authorize Goshawk to conduct invasive analysis in the collection of teeth and/or bone material. FBISD will then transfer custody of this genetic material to a licensed curation facility and will be responsible for costs associated with the collection of the genetic material and transfer to the curation facility.

Thanks again for your support and guidance in this project. As always, if you have any questions, please contact me at (281) 634-1286.

Sincerely,



Rob Scamardo  
General Counsel

Enclosure

C: Charles Dupre  
Veronica Sopher  
Reign Clark



## CITY OF SUGAR LAND

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

September 25, 2018

Dr. Charles Dupre  
16431 Lexington Blvd.  
Sugar Land, Texas 77479

Dear Dr. Dupre,

The City of Sugar Land held the first meeting for The City Manager's Task Force on the Convict Lease Memorial on September 5, 2018 at 6:00 P.M at Sugar Land City Hall. The task force is comprised of a wide variety of stakeholders from the community including: scholars, African-American community organizations, a diverse representation of Sugar Land residents, religious leaders, archeologists, sociologists and local historians. The meeting was also heavily attended by a diverse group of members of the community.

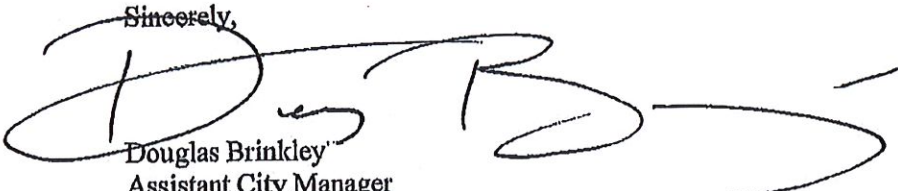
During the meeting, Reign Clark and Dr. Catrina Whitley with Goshawk Environmental Consulting presented the task force and community attendees with valuable historical information regarding the remains found at the FBISD construction site. Additionally, members learned about the intricate process of DNA sampling and were educated on the invasive and destructive nature of DNA sampling.

At the conclusion of this presentation, members were asked to vote on whether they felt DNA sampling should be performed on the remains. There was a unanimous decision in support of DNA sampling by both members of the task force and members of the community in attendance.

The City of Sugar Land would like to submit this letter to the school board, as requested by the task force in support of performing DNA testing on the historical human remains. We hope that the Texas Historical Commission will consider the vote of this large group of stakeholders as support for granting the request of the Fort Bend School District.

**Attached to this letter is a list of task force/community members who voted in favor of DNA sampling:**

Sincerely,

  
Douglas Brinkley  
Assistant City Manager

Reginald Moore- Founder of the Convict Lease and Labor Project  
Ben Williams- Resident of Sugar Land  
Randy S. Mc Clendon – Resident of Sugar Land  
Barbara Jones- Resident of Sugar Land  
Michael Evans- Resident of Sugar Land  
Andrea Collins- Resident of Sugar Land  
Paul Matthews- Resident of Sugar Land  
Claire Rogers- Resident of Sugar Land & Fort Bend History Association  
Betty Anhaiser- City of Sugar Land Heritage Foundation  
Sam Collins- Convict Lease and Labor Project  
Richard Vogel- Convict Lease and Labor Project  
Dr. Vogel- Convict Lease and Labor Project  
Jay Jenkin- Convict Lease and Labor Project  
Dr. Caleb McDaniel- Professor at Rice University  
Dr. Theresa Jach- Professor Houston Community College  
Lynette Reddix- President of NAACP  
Jason Clark- Chief of Staff at Texas Department of Criminal Justice  
Reverend Deborah Pihoda- Pastor at First Assembly Church  
Paul Spana- President of Fort Bend Archeology Society  
Chuck Kelly- Fort Bend Historical Commission  
Dr. Helen Graham- Archeologist  
Dr. Catrina Whitley- Bio Archeologist  
Reign Clark- Cultural Resources Director at Goshawk  
Veronica Sopher- FBISD Chief Communication Officer  
Rob Scamardo- FBISD General Counsel  
Swatara Olushola- National Black United  
Robin Spencer- Meeting Attendee  
Terri Collins- Meeting Attendee  
Akilah Nehanda- Meeting Attendee  
Phillip Worthy- Meeting Attendee  
Dr. Ken Brown- Meeting Attendee

**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

*real places telling real stories*

October 8, 2018

**RECEIVED**

**OCT 29 2018**

**DEPT. OF  
LEGAL SERVICES**

Rob Scamardo  
General Counsel  
Fort Bend Independent  
10405 Corporate Drive  
Sugar Land, TX 77479

Re: Site 41FB355 at James Reese Career and Technology Center  
Destructive analysis of human remains (Antiquities Permit 8197/FBISD)

Dear Mr. Scamardo:

Thank you for your continued cooperation in the study of the remains of 95 individuals recovered from the prison cemetery during the construction of the James Reese Career and Technology Center. We appreciate the opportunity to provide guidance regarding the disinterment, analysis and reinterment of these individuals in a respectful manner consistent with the requirements of the Antiquities Code of Texas. This letter serves as comment from the Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission.

We had recommended that the School District work with the City of Sugar Land, which had offered the Imperial Prison Farm Cemetery to serve as a location for reinterment, to consult with community members and professionals to consider all points of view from the stakeholders. We are pleased that a Task Force consisting of over 30 members of the public was formed and has been working on plans for reinterment and memorialization. Thank you for including Texas Historical Commission representatives on the Task Force.

Your letter dated October 2, 2018, notes that the Fort Bend ISD supports isotope analysis and DNA extraction and analysis to provide data essential for identifying descendants of the individuals whose remains were disinterred. This work will require retaining and curating a molar and incisor from each individual. The September 25 letter from Douglas Brinkley, Assistant City Manager, to Dr. Dupre which accompanied your letter, summarized the results of the September 5 Task Force Meeting. At that meeting, a unanimous vote was cast by Task Force members to pursue these types of invasive analyses.

The THC has no authority over the ultimate decision as to whether or not destructive analysis is performed and takes no position on destructive testing of these remains. We had recommended that you gather as much input as possible from stakeholders and use the information to help inform your decision. It appears that the decision to conduct DNA analysis was unanimous among the stakeholders. We look forward to continuing our working relationship and providing further guidance as needed. **If you have any questions or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Bill Martin at [REDACTED]**

Sincerely,



for  
Mark Wolfe, State Historic Preservation Officer

MW/wam





Department of Legal Services  
Robert Scamardo, General Counsel

November 1, 2018

*Via email* [REDACTED]

Mr. Reign Clark  
Goshawk Environmental Consulting, Inc.  
14101 Hwy 290 West  
Building 100, Ste. 100  
Austin, Texas 78735

Re: Abandoned cemetery on the Reese CTE Center site

Dear Mr. Clark,

This letter is in response to your request for authorization from Fort Bend ISD (FBISD or the District) to collect teeth from the human remains that have been exhumed from the abandoned cemetery on the Reese CTE Center site ("cemetery"), which is owned by FBISD. Your intention is to begin collecting 1-3 teeth per individual beginning today, November 1, 2018, and to complete the collection by November 6 or 7, 2018.

This collection of teeth is a preparatory step to facilitate destructive analysis in the future, and pertains only to 87 individuals identified as having teeth. This letter acknowledges that the collected samples will be packaged separately from the bodies, but stored with the bodies, in the conex storage container on the District's property.

You have requested authorization to collect bone material from the remaining eight individuals; however, the District is not directing you to collect any bone material at this time. This will acknowledge your recommendation to extract bone material from these eight individuals is necessary to ensure the opportunity for DNA analysis in the future.

This will confirm that the District has not authorized you to conduct destructive analysis and it will not happen until the District, or other appropriate authority, requests your services to conduct the destructive analysis. When the collection of teeth and bone material, if any, is complete, the District will transfer custody of the collected genetic material to a licensed, reputable curation facility that will preserve it for DNA testing. The facility and transfer date have not yet been determined.

Thank you for your steadfast commitment and professionalism you and your team have demonstrated in this project as you have provided your unique expertise to FBISD.

Sincerely,

Rob Scamardo  
General Counsel