

October 15, 2007

Members of the Ad-hoc Cannon Committee:

In addition to the emails below, I also have had six constituent contacts on this issue. Of those, five did not want them to be placed at Monument Square and one wished that they were placed there.

All five that did not support the Monument Square location offered alternative sites (two at Gateway, two at a cemetery, and one on Highway 32 facing Kenosha.)

The individual who supported placing them at Monument Square mentioned that they would enhance the existing monument, incorporating the cannon into the name of the square, (which is of course, Monument Square,) and pay tribute to Racine veterans.

Personally, I believe that they should stay in Racine as they fit very well into the Joshua Glover story. I recently finished reading the book, The Rescue of Joshua Glover, Runaway Slave, by Ruby West Jackson and Walter McDonald which does an excellent job of chronicling Mr. Glover's life, his quest for freedom from oppression, and the support the Racine people gave him.

The book also touches on the larger abolitionist movement in Racine and Wisconsin in the Mid-1800s, which includes a succession movement by Wisconsin over Federal slavery laws. The succession movement essentially ended when Abraham Lincoln was elected President as a third party candidate.

Local Racine people and organizations, with financial support of the City of Racine, have begun the process of showcasing the story of Joshua Glover, the local Underground Railroad, and the abolitionist movement in Racine. All indications that this, when completed, will not only honor our proud past, but also will attract a large number of history-minded tourists to the City – a demographic group that spends more dollars and stays a longer time than the average visitor, yielding an economic benefit to the City.

I believe that the cannon would best be placed at a temporary location, Gateway, next to the President and Mrs. Lincoln seems most historically fitting to me. As the aforementioned historical project continues, I feel we should be flexible in the future placing of the cannon for display – giving the option of either staying at the Gateway location or moving them to a place that is a better fit as time passes and incorporating them into the Joshua Glover project as it proceeds.

Thank you to the Committee for their work on this issue and for considering my comments.

Ald. Pete Karas

Here are the emails I have received on the issue:

I support keeping Monument Square AS IT IS.

I strongly request to the study committee that it considers lending the historic Civil War cannons to the soon-to-open Kenosha museum. Why has there been such resistance to joining what appears to be an exceptional historical project? This resistance needs to be investigated and talked through by the committee, the city leaders and others who are interested in this project.

The museum appears to promise to fully tell the story of the Civil War in the context of the Midwest involvement in the war, the people and issues, etc., and I presume will allow professional and amateur historians to contribute in a number of ways. I hope such a venture will REALLY educate people about this part of our nation's history, rather than simply placing the cannons in the square or other location with no real explanation or context.

Having traveled in the cities and villages of Italy, there is something quite special about the openness of the city and village squares there. The wide open expanse – sometimes marked by a statue or fountain and sometimes not – offers the chance to gather and mingle and be part of a COMMUNITY – an important experience in this day and age, one that benefits people and cities as well as businesses that surround the area. We have enjoyed recent concerts on the square, as well as the opportunity to stroll the streets, visit a nearby book store and enjoy the ice cream shop nearby.

And please remember that the request is a LOAN only, so that if we believe that the cannons are not properly being cared for in the Kenosha museum, Racine city can ask for their return.

Karen

Hi Pete,

I think Karen has the right idea. My residence is not in the City, but my business is. Hope that counts for something.

Hope you're doing really well.

TB

Subject: Cannons

Pete, You are not my alderman, but I agree 100% with Karen about the cannons. I've been very puzzled as to what the problem is with loaning them to the museum in

Kenosha, which I think is the perfect place for them. They will get the care and respect there that they should, as historical objects--much more so there than in the square.
Luanne

Pete,

I don't think that this is an especially popular opinion, but one that I think you may appreciate. I think it is high time that we stop glorifying the symbols (and actual instruments) of killing people!! There is no other appropriate use for such a gun (cannon). So..."the cannons freed the slaves," then it took **100** years for them or their ancestors to actually begin to become equal citizens!

The spot behind the DPW barn was a great spot for them, in my opinion, but the museum may be a good option.

A museum that can preserve the history of such instruments would be most appropriate, especially if accompanied by descriptions and photos of the carnage so that we can learn (some day!) that we should not do this again.

Jeff

I gather the issue is one of public display of the cannons downtown or such.

I like the idea of loaning, even giving, them to a museum dedicated to that war.

Thank you.

Mark
