

December 28, 2020

Dear Alderman Michelle Harris,

As Black Cornerstones, we represent residents from Black communities on the South and West Side of Chicago who are deeply impacted by racial inequities that continue to divide our city. We would like to invite you to discuss building, strengthening and supporting Black communities at a digital People's Town Hall on Wednesday, January 6, 2021 at 7:00pm. Through a moderated conversation with elected officials like yourself and everyday residents of the South and West Side of Chicago, we will work to identify equitable solutions in partnership with those most affected by the issues. During this conversation, we also want to uplift your commitment in doing your very best to build a more equitable and just community for us all.

Your presence at this meeting is your moment to stand with the people to collectively address racial oppression and bridge the divide amplified by the pandemic. As you know, Black communities on Chicago's South and West Side experience disproportionate rates of intra-community violence, community divestment, and systemic poverty. This trauma has been amplified as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic causing a complete disconnection from neighbors excluding them from access to the relationship building blocks necessary to build power. We seek to close this connection gap by building power together.

While we recognize your continuous efforts to build up the community you serve and your future plans to host a town hall meeting for the 8th Ward, your presence at the People's Town Hall hosted by Black Cornerstones will build momentum among the broader public for collective work and responsibility. The upcoming People's Town Hall meeting will be hosted virtually by Black Cornerstones and moderated by three residents of the 8th Ward. We are happy to provide the public's questions in advance of the meeting. Additionally, We can ensure our moderators will be present to meet with you prior to the People's Town Hall to flush out any questions or concerns you may have. On the day of the event, only the moderators and other invited guests will be on the Zoom call, which will be available for live streaming on Black Cornerstones' Facebook page.

We hope that you join us in our efforts to cultivate the lived experiences of community members and identify community based solutions. Please let us know what other information we can provide to ensure your participation. You may confirm your attendance by writing to support@blackcornerstones.com.

Together in Power,

Shani S. P. Smith

Shani S. P. Smith
Project Director for Black Cornerstones