

Brianne K. Nadeau
Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau

A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

1 To declare the existence of an emergency with respect to the need to grant the Deputy Mayor for
2 Planning and Economic Development the authority to issue sole-source grants to the
3 African American Civil War Museum and Ben’s Chili Bowl to support renovation
4 efforts.
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6 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
7 resolution may be cited as the “African American Civil War Museum and Ben’s Chili Bowl
8 Limited Grant-Making Authority Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2023”.
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10 Sec. 2. (a) The African American Civil War Museum (“AACWM”) opened to the public
11 more than 20 years ago, and helps visitors understand the largely unknown role of black and
12 brown soldiers who fought for freedom from slavery during the Civil War. The AACWM
13 displays photographs, documents, and artifacts, and holds regular seminars and historic
14 presentations by community members. The museum serves as a unique resource for teachers,
15 scholars, students, and professionals of museum studies, descendants of Civil War soldiers, and
16 the general public. More than 200,000 visitors come to the Memorial and Museum each year.

17 (b) Ben's Chili Bowl has been a pillar the U Street community and DC culture since it
18 opened its doors in 1958. Although U Street has seen many changes over the decades, Ben's has
19 remained, satisfying tens of thousands of customers with their famous homemade chili and half
20 smokes. As a DC landmark, Ben's has served as a destination for visitors from around the world,
21 and has served everyone from jazz legends Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald to President
22 Barack Obama.

23 (c) Emergency legislation is necessary to cover renovations and improvements to both
24 locations, and close the funding gap experienced by the AACWM to build out the museum into
25 the remainder of its facility.

26 (d) Expanding the AACWM will also complete a key recommendation from Office of
27 Planning's DUKE small area plan on the historic Cardozo/Shaw neighborhood, utilizing the
28 former Grimke school's for the AACWM and its foundation.

29 Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the circumstances in
30 section 2 constitute emergency circumstances, making it necessary that the African American
31 Civil War Museum and Ben's Chili Bowl Limited Grant-Making Authority Emergency
32 Emergency Act of 2023 be adopted after a single reading.

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34 Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

Commented [M(1)]: ...is this true? I thought Ellington far predates Ben's

Commented [J(2R1)]: Yep! He died in the mid 70's but was performing in DC in the 50's and 60's. There's a bunch of sources on it but here's a Washingtonian blurb I found <https://www.washingtonian.com/2008/03/25/neighborhood-eats-bens-chili-bowl/>

Commented [MD(3R1)]: Neat!