

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR TANIA FERNANDES ANDERSON



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS RENAMING THE ROXBURY BRANCH OF THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY TO THE NUBIAN LIBRARY.

- WHEREAS,** The library located at 149 Dudley Street in Roxbury has been serving the community since 1978 when it replaced and consolidated the Mount Pleasant Branch library and Fellowes Athenaeum; *and*
- WHEREAS,** The Roxbury Library is located in Nubian Square, which is a commercial and transportation hub of Roxbury and serves as a center for the Black community; *and*
- WHEREAS,** The area around the Roxbury Library has a rich and diverse history going back to the foundation of Boston when it served as the only entrance to the City on the mainland side of the Shawmut Peninsula; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Starting in the mid twentieth century, ‘white flight’ paired with urban renewal and planned highways decimated and defunded most of Roxbury and significantly impacted the area surrounding Roxbury Library; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Over half of Roxbury is comprised of Black residents and the area in which the Roxbury Library is located is the most racially and culturally diverse commercial center in Boston; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Nubian Square was known as Dudley Square until residents in and around the area overwhelmingly voted to change the name of the area to Nubian Square in 2019, in honor of the Nubian kingdoms in Africa, which were some of the earliest and most prosperous civilizations known to man, as well as to recognize the important establishment A Nubian Notion, a vital business operated in the district for nearly fifty years by the Abdal-Khalaq family; *and*
- WHEREAS,** The name Dudley Square was not only changed due to former Governor Thomas Dudley’s connection to the slave-trade and decimation of the Native Americans who inhabited Massachusetts, but also to connect to Black history and social significance in this primarily Black community through the usage of the Nubian

name, and to give a sense of cultural identity to Nubian Square after decades of disinvestment; *and*

WHEREAS, The Roxbury Library was formerly known as the Dudley Library, and the name was changed in 2020 after the Dudley name was stripped from the area; *and*

WHEREAS, Roxbury and Nubian Square serve as Black Boston's center for economic and cultural activity, and furthermore, Roxbury is over 50 percent Black, which is 30 percentage-points higher than Boston's Black population as a whole; *and*

WHEREAS, The most recent renovation of the library, which involved great input from the community, reflects design elements and art from African culture, including a section dedicated to African American literature; *and*

WHEREAS, The Boston City Municipal Code, chapter III, section 8-11 exclusively designates the authority to name municipal buildings to the Public Facilities Commission; *and*

WHEREAS, In order to best reflect the communities wishes, the Black history of Nubian Square and Roxbury, the community commitment to the Roxbury library, and the benefits the Roxbury Library provides Nubian Square, the name of the Roxbury Library should be renamed to the Nubian Library: ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing with the Boston Public Facilities Commission, any relevant offices, and community members and organizations in the Nubian Square area, to discuss and expedite the process of renaming the library to the Nubian Library.

Filed on: January 25th, 2023