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Mayor Stan Mills and Esteemed Commissioners,

CAMP Rehoboth, Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice (SDARJ), and West Side New Beginnings write to you today to express our support for the planned historical marker for Poodle Beach as well as an historical marker for West Rehoboth.

Poodle Beach, at the far Southern end of the Rehoboth Beach Boardwalk, has been an important gathering place for the LGBT Community. Dating as far back as the 30's and 40's, LGBT friends gathered south of the boardwalk on the beach near the home of Louisa Dupont Carpenter. Legend says it was in the eighties, however, that two gay cousins decided they did not want to hike quite that far out and set up their chairs closer to the boardwalk, thus establishing Poodle Beach. Thousands come to Poodle Beach every Memorial Day Weekend, and for more than 30 years Poodle Beach has been the home of the annual Drag Volleyball event. During years where there were few safe spaces for the LGBTQ community, Poodle Beach was a welcoming oasis for our community, and it continues to be a valued gathering place.

West Rehoboth, a historically black community, came into being in response to the segregation, discrimination, and violence African Americans experienced in Sussex County. Charles Mills, a farmer and devout Quaker, divided up parcels of his land and sold them to his workers for \$100 each. African Americans living in West Rehoboth worked in restaurants and hotels in Rehoboth Beach, but they were not allowed to eat or drink in Rehoboth Beach restaurants, and they were not allowed access to visit the whites-only beach. Since West Rehoboth remained unincorporated, they had no vote when it came to city matters. West Rehoboth was a vibrant part of our community for many years, home to many restaurants and an exciting jazz scene. While little of what was originally West Rehoboth remains today, we believe this is an important story worthy of a historical marker.

These markers have extra important significance when one considers that there are currently no other markers in the state of Delaware to commemorate the LGBTQ community. In a similar vein, there are only 2 other markers state-wide that recognize Black History. Placing these markers in Rehoboth Beach would once again prove the astute leadership and positively reinforce that the Rehoboth Commissioners and our beautiful City are at the forefront of bridging gaps and helping to bring more equality to our mighty but small State. This positive recognition of how two groups have contributed to the unique, inclusive and diverse make-up of our incredible city helps prove Rehoboth Beach leads by example.

Our organizations stand ready to work with you to establish and support both of these historical markers and believe they would make a valuable contribution to our community.

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