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Historic Augusta Receives 1772 Foundation Grant to Increase Revolving Fund Capacity

Historic Augusta, Inc., is pleased to announce the organization has received a grant from the 1772 Foundation to increase the capacity of its revolving fund. A portion of the funds will be used for the ongoing stabilization, rehabilitation, and preservation of the historic Rev. C. T. Walker House located at 1011 Laney-Walker Boulevard, Augusta, Georgia. The purpose of a revolving fund is to acquire and save historic properties from a perilous situation and put them in the hands of someone who will restore or rehab the property in a satisfactory manner in keeping with preservation standards. The Rev. C. T. Walker House is currently for sale by Historic Augusta.

Charles T. Walker (1858-1921) was one of Augusta's most famous and influential ministers in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries and was founder of Tabernacle Baptist Church serving Augusta's African American community. Born a slave near Hephzibah, Dr. Walker lived at this residence from about 1904 until his death in 1921. In the 1970s, Gwinnett Street was renamed Laney-Walker Boulevard out of respect for educator Lucy Craft Laney and Dr. Walker. Known as the "Black Spurgeon," comparing him to a well-known charismatic British preacher, Walker was not just influential in Augusta, but was known world-wide. His fame brought many of Augusta's winter tourists to his pews, including John D. Rockefeller and President William Howard Taft. Built c.1895, the family remained in the house for about seven years after his death and is one of the larger homes found within this modest, historically African-American neighborhood. It is also one of the few surviving residential structures on the now predominantly commercial Laney-Walker Boulevard corridor. It was included in Historic Augusta's Endangered Properties List in 2006 and also the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation's Places in Peril List in 2017.

Acquisition by Historic Augusta took nearly three years due to legal issues involved with "heir" property. Those issues were finally resolved and the house was purchased in November 2016. Our goal is to find a new owner for either office or residential use. The organization has invested \$30,000 with Phase 1 of this preservation project by completing stabilization of the front porch and a new roof on the main house and rear addition. Phase 2 will include shoring up the foundation, window repair, and repair of the exterior siding. Once completed the exterior envelope will be considered weather tight and further interior damage will be avoided. The organization has also received funding for the C. T. Walker House project from the Johanna Favrot Fund of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Knox Foundation, and the Watson-Brown Foundation Junior Board.