



# FFX NOW

*Fairfax County local news*

## AROUND TOWN

### **Gum Springs' Juneteenth celebration is also a fight to preserve historically Black community**

**Matt Blitz** June 17, 2022 at 3:15pm



Gum Springs in Fairfax County (courtesy New Gum Springs Civic Association)

Gum Springs, the oldest Black community in Fairfax County, is holding its Juneteenth celebration this weekend as it faces an uncertain future.

The [New Gum Springs Civic Association](#) (NGSCA) will celebrate Juneteenth with a community day tomorrow (Saturday), featuring roller skating, food, music, and words from the great-great-great granddaughter of the community's founder, West Ford.

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There will also be a performance by the [Caribbean American International Steel Band](#), NGSCA President Queenie Cox tells FFXnow, along with a special

the Buffalo mass shooting last month.

The event is being held from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at [Martin Luther King Jr. Park](#) (8115 Fordson Road).

Gum Springs Community Day and Juneteenth Celebration 2022 (courtesy the New Gum Springs Civic Association)



under George Washington. There are also [claims](#) that Ford was the son of America's first president, though Mount Vernon officials have [denied](#) that.

In the nearly two centuries since its founding, Gum Springs in the Mount Vernon District has become a well-known historically Black community, but it's now at risk of disappearing.

"We are constantly being challenged," said Cox, who grew up in Gum Springs and lives in the house her grandfather built in the 1940s. "This community is [under threat] of being dismantled, eliminated and minimized for its contribution to this [nation's] history."

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Recently, longtime residents have protested changes they fear could erase the community's history.

Last year, plans for the Virginia Department of Transportation's long-gestating [widening of Richmond Highway](#) shifted, further encroaching on the borders of Gum Springs. The change left a number of residents feeling like their community is being [unfairly targeted](#).

Another community group, the [Holland Court Property Owners Association](#), has also set up within the borders of Gum Springs, a move that the NGSCA views as intentionally trying to minimize the community's historical impact.



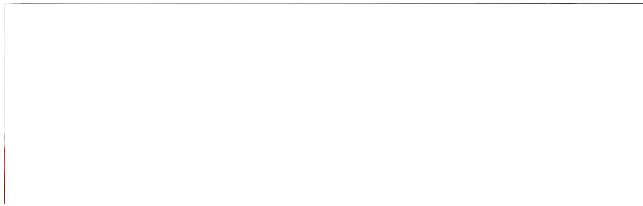
“The steps that certain individuals within the community are taking are contributing to the vanishing Black communities, and it diminishes the contribution that those Black communities have made...to American history,” Cox said.

A [Gum Springs Conservation Plan](#) was developed in 2015 as an effort to work with the county to preserve the community. However, Cox says that plan hasn’t fully been reviewed by county staff or adopted by the Board of Supervisors in the seven years since.

Celebrations like the one coming this Saturday are important, because they bring people and awareness to the challenges that Fairfax County’s oldest Black community are facing, Cox says.

“The only way that Gum Springs is going to get the protection it needs is that we have to be very vocal and public about it,” Cox said. “Gum Springs has to fight harder in order to get what other communities in the Mount Vernon District has and continues to achieve.”

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#events #Gum Springs #history #holiday