



**Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney**  
*Vice Mayor*

July 18, 2022

## MOTION

WE MOVE for the Department of Transportation & Engineering, in coordination with the Parks Department, work with "The Lafayette Trail, Inc." to install a marker on the Riverfront to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the visit to Cincinnati of Marquis de Lafayette, May 19, 1825.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the City of Cincinnati send an official letter to "The Lafayette Trail, Inc." (20 Midland Drive, Easton, PA 18045), to accept the gift of the marker to be installed in the vicinity of the American Queen Paddlewheel sculpture in the axis of Broadway Street.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney".

Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney

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## STATEMENT

Gerald Checco, President of Clifton Town Meeting, made the above request and sent our office the following information regarding this proposal:

At the age of 19, Marquis de Lafayette became the youngest Major General serving under General Washington during the American Revolution. He personally financed, not only his participations in the war, but also financially supported his entire military unit.

He served with valor, being injured at the battle of Brandywine in September 1777, coming back only two months later to win the battle of Gloucester, despite the overwhelming superiority of British forces.

Lafayette was an outspoken abolitionist, pressing the leaders of the new nation to be true to their stated vision to build a country based on liberty and freedom. In 1783, he invited George Washington to partner with him in the purchase of a plantation in French Guiana with the goal of demonstrating that the abolition of slavery was feasible.

Lafayette played a critical role in convincing the King of France to support General Washington financially and with a large number of troops. The decisive siege of Yorktown, Virginia is credited to mark the (unofficial) end of the war and had 9,000 French soldiers fighting alongside 9,000 American troops, against 9,000 British troops.

Back in France, Lafayette became a major player of the French Revolution, advocating moderation and opposing extremism. His moderation cost him to be imprisoned in solitary confinement for five years in several locations, including jailed in what is now the Czech Republic, for supporting the Revolution, but he avoided the guillotine in France. He opposed Emperor Napoleon because of his totalitarian regime.

Lafayette was invited by Congress to visit the United States in 1824 to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the American Revolution. Lafayette was the only surviving Major General of the Continental Army. 1824 was a time when the United States was the most divided it had ever been, with four opposing presidential candidates, none of them reaching the number of electors needed to be elected. The President was then chosen by Congress on February 9, 1825, with Lafayette in attendance.

During his 13-month trip, Lafayette visited all 24 States of the Union, plus Washington, D.C., and included a visit to Cincinnati, Ohio, on May 19-20, 1825. During his visit to Cincinnati, he was welcomed by a very large crowd, a testament to his popularity across the nation and in the Queen City. Lafayette was particularly impressed by the beauty of our Cincinnati riverfront, and he marveled at the fact that “slavery and involuntary servitude are abolished here. A slave becomes free when they touch the happy soil of Ohio.”

Lafayette’s trip to the United States is credited to have been a major element of the healing of the country during a very difficult civic time in our history, during which a Presidential Election was decided by Congress. He continuously stressed the common values that united the country.