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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMUNITY INVITED TO CELEBRATE RECOGNITION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN OBERLIN CEMETERY AS RALEIGH HISTORIC LANDMARK

On **Sunday, April 21, 2012 at 9:00AM**, the community is invited to celebrate Oberlin Cemetery as an official Historic Landmark. The honor was bestowed February, 2013 on Oberlin Cemetery, the oldest African American cemetery in Raleigh where freedmen and artisans once resided post-Reconstruction. The ceremony will take place at the cemetery located at 1012 Oberlin Road, behind the Interact Building. The short event will include a reading of the Historic Proclamation by a city representative and comments by Dr. Ruth Little, who prepared the landmark status application and Dr. Irma McClaurin, a cultural anthropologist who provided technical assistance for the “straightening up” process of the cemetery and is encouraging an archaeological assessment. Other participants are from local area churches: Rev. Regina Henderson of Wilson Temple United Methodist Church will give the blessing and Rev. Sherri Arnold-Graham of Oberlin Baptist Church will lead the prayer. Both churches have members who are descendants of the original African American citizens of Oberlin Village. The cemetery, along with a few houses on the National Registry of Historic Places, is all that remains of this once thriving African American community at the beginning of the 20th Century. The Friends of Oberlin, a group of community residents, concerned citizens, descendants of those who once lived in Oberlin Village, and current residents of the area, have led the preservation efforts. They have begun an official fundraising effort that will support further development and preservation of the site, including an Eagle Scout project that has built an information kiosk and is planning to put in benches and a walkway. The Friends of Oberlin are also anxious to raise funds for an archaeological assessment that can help determine what lies beneath the surface and can map out the exact number of graves. For more information, to get involved, or to make a contribution, contact: Sabrina Goode, (336) 416-1895 or sabrinabgoode@gmail.com.