

11 February 2026

Mr. Bryan T Healy, Village Manager
CC: Mayor B. Pugh
Nora Nicholson
Stanley H. Kellerhouse Municipal Building
1 Van Wyck Street
Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520

Re: Street Co-naming in honor of Lorraine Hansberry

Dear Mr. Healy:

The Lorraine Hansberry Coalition of Croton would like to propose that a portion of Cleveland Drive between Old Post Road South and Gerstein Street be co-named Lorraine Hansberry Place. Lorraine Hansberry was a playwright, public intellectual, prolific writer, activist, and member of the Croton-on-Hudson community.

As you know, Ms. Hansberry was an internationally known African American playwright whose most well-known work is *A Raisin in the Sun*, which opened on Broadway in 1959, featuring Sidney Poitier and Ruby Dee. At the age of 29, Lorraine Hansberry became the first African American dramatist to have a play produced on Broadway. She also received the Drama Critics' Circle Award, the first African American playwright, and the youngest person to do so. In 1961, *A Raisin in the Sun* became a major motion picture, also starring Sidney Poitier and Ruby Dee. The play has been performed hundreds of times worldwide. In 1962, Lorraine and her then-husband, Robert Nemiroff, purchased a home in Croton on Hudson, where she lived until her death in 1965. While she lived here, Ms. Hansberry completed work on her second Broadway production, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, and two unfinished works entitled *Marrow* and *Les Blancs*.

Also, while a resident of the Village, she participated in a well-publicized meeting with US Attorney General Robert F Kennedy in May of 1963, the substance of which led to the *Report to the American People on Civil Rights* delivered by US President John F Kennedy in June of the same year. This address, in concert with the current events of the time, provided the impetus for the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In June of 1963, Lorraine organized *The Rally in Support of the Southern Freedom Movement*, which was held in Croton on Hudson at Temple Israel of Northern Westchester. This event raised thousands of dollars for civil rights organizers. Some of the money raised was used to purchase the station wagon in which three activists, James Cheney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, were driving in 1964 when they were ambushed and murdered. Finally, in a speech that she gave in May of 1964 to the young winners of the Readers Digest/United Negro College Fund

creative writing contest, she famously said that “though it be a thrilling and marvelous thing to be merely young and gifted in such times, it is doubly so, doubly dynamic—to be young, gifted, and black.”

Lorraine Hansberry died at the age of 34. Following her untimely death from cancer in 1965, her funeral was held at the Church of the Master in Harlem, following which her remains were interred in Croton’s historic Bethel Cemetery. She will be one of this year’s recipients of the Westchester County Black History Month Trailblazer Awards. Both of her prior residences in Manhattan (112 Waverly Place and 337 Bleeker Street) have received historic designations, and her family home in Chicago has a monument to her outside Navy Pier.

We believe the stretch of Cleveland Drive that we have designated is significant, as it encompasses her gravesite, which faces Cleveland Drive, the library, and the entry road to the elementary school. Hansberry was a writer who was also devoted to nurturing young minds. We could think of no better location for this honor.

Please let us know the steps required to move this request forward and whether any additional information is needed.

Thank you.

Jack McClung, LHC member

Signe Bergstrom, LHC Co-chair

Lynda Jones, LHC Co-chair.