



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Human Rights Commission

Recommendation Number: 20170327-5a: LBGTO Cultural Center

WHEREAS, the city of Austin (“City”) welcomes all people and recognizes the rights of individuals to live their lives with dignity and equal respect for others, free from physical harm, discrimination, insults, intimidation and ridicule based on race, color, disability, religion, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and HIV-status; and

WHEREAS, the City’s Austin Human Rights Commission (“Commission”) advocates on behalf of human rights for all people in the City; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 5.3% of persons residing in the Austin Metro identify as Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender or Queer (“LBGTQ¹”), which is a higher per-capita percentage than is found within Texas generally² and among other Texas metro areas, including the metros of Houston and Dallas³; and

WHEREAS, LBGTO persons have historically and continue to experience discrimination and harassment in employment, housing, in the provision of public goods and services, and from members of the public, peers at school and family members; and

WHEREAS, various LBGTO centers across the country advance the safety, equality and well-being of LBGTO persons; and

WHEREAS, Austin needs an LBGTO center that will advance the safety, equality and well-being of Austin’s LBGTO population; and

¹ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/182051/san-francisco-metro-area-ranks-highest-lgbt-percentage.aspx>.

² <http://www.gallup.com/poll/160517/lgbt-percentage-highest-lowest-north-dakota.aspx>

³ See fn 1 and summary demographics at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_demographics_of_the_United_States. Note that the Austin Metro includes Round Rock, the Houston Metro includes Woodlands, Sugarland and Baytown, and Dallas Metro includes Ft. Worth and Arlington.

WHEREAS, Houston⁴ and Dallas⁵ each have LBGQT centers with dedicated physical space providing health, arts, social, and cultural events and programming for the LBGQT community in those cities; and

WHEREAS, Austin Gay and Lesbian Pride Foundation (“Austin PRIDE”) has advocated its plan for the Austin LBGQT Center with the Commission, which plan calls for Center Staff and Strategic Partners to offer a wide range of programming and services to Austin’s LBGQT community including, but not limited to, youth and senior programs, services for homeless LBGQT youth, a transgender program, an LBGQT diversity forum, HIV testing, life classes, social space, an education and history library, and drop-in and dedicated office space for nonprofits serving the LBGQT community; and

WHEREAS, the Austin PRIDE has received funding from private donations and multiple public and private grant sources which are dependent upon its securing physical facilities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and City Council evaluate and establish an LBGQT Cultural Center in the City of Austin, Texas.

Date of Approval: March 27, 2017

Record of the vote: Motion by Chair Davis, second by Commissioner Miguez. Those voting aye were Chair Davis, Vice Chair Caballero, Commissioner Avashia, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Buls, Commissioner Miguez, Commissioner Normand, and Commissioner Yang. Commissioner Casas and Commissioner Royall were absent.

Attest: _____

Jonathan Babiak

Staff Liaison, Human Rights Commission

⁴ See <http://www.montrosecenter.org/hub/>

⁵ See <http://www.rcdallas.org/>