

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MONTOPOLIS SCHOOL FOR NEGRO CHILDREN RECOMMENDATION**

WHEREAS, the Montopolis School for Negro Children was founded in 1891 and was one of over 40 rural African-American schools in Travis County and is the last remaining such school left standing; and

WHEREAS, the school served as a pillar of the segregated Montopolis community, hosting holiday celebrations, baseball games, Juneteenth celebrations and other civic events; and

WHEREAS, the St. Edward's Baptist Church donated land for a new school site in 1935 when Travis County would not build a replacement school;

WHEREAS, the City of Austin acquired the church land located next to the donated school at 408 Montopolis Drive in 1987 via condemnation and eminent domain, ostensibly to build a road, and then never built the road; and

WHEREAS, the school property sat vacant for nearly fifty years and the community was promised the right of first refusal before any sale, a promise that was violated in 2015; and

WHEREAS, the school property is now facing demolition or destruction of its historic integrity in order to facilitate real estate development by the present owner; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin is partnering with the present owner of the school property and is actively working to replat and rezone the property it acquired in 1987 in order to facilitate the private real estate desires of the current owner of the historic Negro school property; and

WHEREAS, gentrification has resulted in the destruction of irreplaceable African-American cultural heritage of Austin and Travis County which the Austin Human Rights Commission has found to be a human rights violation; **NOW THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Community Development Commission recommends that the Austin City Council:

- support the Montopolis Community's desire to preserve and protect the school property in its entirety, to include the historic school building as well as the surrounding cultural landscape of which the school building is an integral part, which includes the property the city obtained via eminent domain.
- initiate historic zoning for the school property and its surrounding cultural landscape, which includes the former church property located at 408 Montopolis Drive.
- allocate funding and resources for the preservation of the school as a park and museum.