

RESOLUTION NO. 20170126-046

WHEREAS, the City Council established the historic preservation program in 1974 to “preserve, enhance, and perpetuate those aspects of the city having historical, cultural, architectural and archaeological merit”; and

WHEREAS, the goals of the Historic Landmark Program are to preserve and enhance historically, culturally, architecturally, and archaeologically significant sites and structures which serve as visible reminders of the city's culture and heritage; and

WHEREAS, preserving historic districts, landmarks, and places contributes to Austin's economic health and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, Imagine Austin affirms historic preservation as a priority and cites as an imperative that the City Council "protect historic buildings, structures, sites, places, and districts in neighborhoods throughout the City"; and

WHEREAS, Austin is experiencing an increasing number of demolitions in neighborhoods throughout Austin due to intense development pressure; and

WHEREAS, more than 1,200 homes 50 years or older have been demolished since 2013; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Office currently receives an average of 50 demolition permit requests each month; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Landmark Commission has been tasked with reviewing requests to demolish structures older than 50 years; and

WHEREAS, at its December 2016 meeting alone, the Historic Landmark Commission approved 11 demolitions in the Ebony Acres neighborhood in East Austin; and

WHEREAS, City Code Section 25-2-355(C) requires the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the Commission to recommend zoning or rezoning property as a historic if a record owner of the property files a written statement protesting the zoning or rezoning; and

WHEREAS, no other advisory body to the City Council is required to affirm a recommendation on a vote of two-thirds of the body's membership; and

WHEREAS, this requirement has resulted in numerous failures to initiate historic designation despite the fact that a majority of Historic Landmark Commission members supported the initiation; and

WHEREAS, the Montopolis Negro School was one such structure that received majority support from the Landmark Commission but failed to receive a two-thirds majority; and

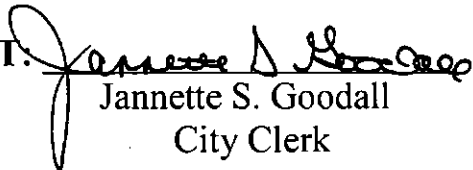
WHEREAS, once the Historic Landmark Commission fails to recommend landmark status with a two-thirds majority most structures end up demolished;
NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

That the City Manager is directed to initiate an amendment to City Code, repealing Section 25-2-355(C) requiring the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the Commission to recommend zoning or rezoning property as a historic landmark if a record owner of the property files a written statement protesting the zoning or rezoning.

ADOPTED: January 26, 2017

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk