



MUSIC COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 20200902-2b

Date: September 2, 2020

Subject: The African-American Cultural Heritage District and the Kenny Dorham Center Proposal

Motioned By: Commissioner Mahone

Seconded By: Commissioner Patterson

Recommendation

The Music Commission voted to support the African-American Cultural Heritage District and the Kenny Dorham Center Proposal dedicating both Block 16 and 18. A copy of the proposal is attached as Exhibit A.

Description of Recommendation to Council

The African American Cultural Heritage District Investment Initiative seeks:

- City of Austin to invest in the Cultural Heritage District in ways that address preserving Black Culture, taking actions to re-establish a contemporary African American physical and cultural presence in Black East Austin, and acknowledging that these efforts are beneficial to the entire Austin Community; And in addressing the City's concern for ROI, all of the tenants of the Proposal are meant to enhance East Austin/Downtown/Greater Austin economic development and create a viable arts and culture destination to drive Cultural Tourism to the District.
- City of Austin to commitment—now—to keep those last two parcels (~~both if possible, but for certain, Block 18~~) of Urban Renewal property safe from being developed as mixed-use big boxes and/or expensive luxury condos/apartments; and to agree instead to establish and support arts, culture, entertainment, and creative industries uses of the properties.
- City of Austin to dedicate Block 18, immediately for Phase One— infrastructure and amenities upgrades to the existing Kenny Dorham's Backyard; and ultimately as the site for the Kenny Dorham Center; Music Hub and Mixed-Arts Facility.
- City of Austin to commit—now— and codify by Resolution and Ordinance, adoption of a plan to map out a strategy that ultimately results in establishment and building the facility itself.

Vote

For: 9 (Chair – Rick Carney, Vice-chair – Jonathan “Chaka” Mahone, Secretary – Anne-Charlotte Patterson, Parliamentarian – Oren Rosenthal, Gavin Garcia, Doug Leveton, Paul Pinon, Graham Reynolds, Stuart Sullivan)

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Absent: 2 (Al Duarte, Patricia Pike)

Attest: Kim McCarson, Liaison

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, City Council RESOLUTION NO. _____
designated the Central East Austin Community — West Boundary: 1-35
East Frontage Road; East Boundary: Airport Boulevard; North Boundary:
Manor Road; South Boundary: Beginning on East 11th Street, then south on
Chalmers Avenue, then east on East 7th Street, then north on Chicon Street,
then east on Rosewood Avenue, then merge into Oak Springs Drive until
connection with the East Boundary (Airport Boulevard) — as the African
American Cultural Heritage District, and directed the City Manager to
acknowledge and coordinate with the existing State of Texas designated
African American Cultural District as well; and

WHEREAS, located adjacent to DOWNTOWN, the State Capitol
and numerous City and State cultural and heritage sites, and the Red River
Cultural District, within the boundaries of African American Cultural
Heritage District are significant economic, historical, cultural and heritage
tourism assets such as the oldest institution of higher learning in the City,
Huston-Tillotson University and the National Register historically
designated buildings on campus; the State Cemetery; Oakwood Cemetery;
The French Legation; the Victory Grill; the historic East 11th and 12th
Street African American Music and Commercial Corridors (The East End);

the original Austin Public Library Building and George Washington Carver Museum; three of the City's oldest religious congregations, African American or otherwise — the Ebenezer Baptist Church, the Metropolitan AME, and the Wesley United Methodist Church; historic site locations of the City's first and only African American-owned pharmacy; the home of famed jazz musician Kenny Dorham; the temporary home of Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall; the first federal Public Housing Projects in the nation; scores of designated historically significant homes and buildings; prime examples of period architecture; and the core of the Historic African American Community of Austin; and

WHEREAS, on October 27, 2005 the City Council approved the African American Quality of Life Initiative; and

WHEREAS, under the Arts, Culture, and Entertainment Recommendation from the African American Quality of Life Initiative, a need for an African American Cultural Heritage District was recognized to enhance the quality of life for African Americans; and

WHEREAS, City staff has worked closely with numerous Cultural Arts organizations within the City to determine this area meets the District's criteria; and

WHEREAS, the Imagine Austin plan states that creativity is a cornerstone of Austin's identity and economic prosperity, and arts, culture,

and creativity are essential keys to the City's unique and distinctive identity and are further valued as vital contributors to our community's character, quality of life and economy, and collectively, the Austin music and creative ecosystem generates rich, social, cultural and economic benefits; and

WHEREAS, on March 3, 2016, Council approved Resolution No. 20160303-019, the Music and Creative Ecosystem Omnibus Resolution, which affirmed support for the music and creative ecosystem through short- and long-term goals specific to cultural tourism, revenue development, and venue retention; **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE**

CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Council reaffirms its designation of the African American Cultural Heritage District that will formally recognize areas where there is a concentration of existing African American landmarks, historical and cultural assets, and the legacy of what once was the diverse and thriving African American residential, commercial, and cultural core of Black Life in Austin; and

WHEREAS, Council directed the City Manager to recommend potential short- and long-term design solutions for the physical landscape of the African American Cultural Heritage District to increase pedestrian mobility and safety, and to support place-making efforts; and

WHEREAS, Council reaffirms its direction to complete the

streetscape and place-making work in the African American Cultural Heritage District; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Department committed more than \$1.3 million of Great Streets funding for streetscape improvements for Fiscal Year 2020, with Economic Development managing that project; and

WHEREAS, in May 2019 Council approved Resolution No. 20190523-029 to create the Palm District Master Plan, which is adjacent to the African American Cultural Heritage District as a prominent component; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20180215-082 directed the City Manager to, among other things, analyze and provide next steps for collaboration and support of an “Austin Cultural Trust” that could create spaces that support artists and arts organizations, preserve historic and iconic cultural buildings and spaces for creative and cultural uses, and function in a way that provides for cultural assets to exist in all parts of the City; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20190808-072 reiterated prior Council direction to create an economic development entity that could manage a portfolio of projects including affordable housing developments, public-private partnerships with private-led development, and a Cultural Trust to support acquisition and preservation of creative space; and

WHEREAS, the Economic Development Department contracted with

a

consultant to provide recommendations to Council on the options for structuring such an entity, and the timely creation of such an entity could leverage opportunities during this time to stabilize and retain creative space in addition to accessing funds available to such entities from the Economic Development Administration; and

WHEREAS,

;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to work with the various Departments to determine necessary strategies to implement the following actions, and if feasible, to implement immediately:

- Update all official city Zoning Maps that show designated Cultural and Historic Districts and Landmarks to include the African American Cultural Heritage District (AACHD);
- Develop an official detailed map specifically for the District
- Use the East Austin Historical Survey findings to designate cultural, historic, and heritage sites and landmarks within the District; add those locations to official maps;

- Develop way-finding signage for public right-of-ways that provide directional guidance for locating the AACHD in general, and specific landmarks and significant places of interests within the District;
- Fund and implement a highly visible Place-making program within the District (signage, public art, streetscape features, AACHD-Branded street signs/markers, historic neighborhood identifiers, etc);
- Instruct Historic Preservation Department to use cultural/historic/heritage assets inventory list found in East Austin Historical Survey to initiate designation activities to establish placement on the National Registry of Historic Places;
- Instruct Historic Preservation Department to use cultural/historic/heritage assets inventory list found in East Austin Historical Survey to initiate designation of historic sub-districts throughout the AACHD to get placement on local, state, and national registers;
- Work with Economic Development Department, African American Resource Advisory Commission, and Urban Renewal Board to craft an incentives program specifically to attract and nurture growth of professional entertainment and creative

industry businesses, and culture-based organizations to

locate/do business within the District;

- Empower Urban Renewal Board to actively perform their development over-sight function and strengthen incentives and restrictions that support historic and cultural preservation efforts within the District;
- Coordinate with the Cultural Arts Division, Parks and Recreation Department, Music Commission, Arts Commission, and African American Resource Advisory Commission to establish a funding mechanism specifically to support public arts and culture programming within the District;
- Instruct Economic Development to devise a mechanism to engage an East Austin Cultural Policy and Planning consultant to conduct a planning process that results in production of a strategic plan to steer sustainable development and growth of the District.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to consult with the Music Commission and the Live Music Fund Working Group to explore ways of using the Live Music Fund to support the long-term sustainability of African American culture-based music industry projects located or producing within

the District, and other investments that would help enhance the live music and cultural tourism economy; and

Work with Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Small and Minority Business Departments, Equity Office, and the Innovation Office to strategize a route to establish a Black Music Fund to address historic underrepresentation in City funding programs and plot a course to direct City focus on issues of affordability, professional development, business mentorship, educational programs, venue establishment and support, and related programs to assure development, growth, and sustainability of the Black Music Community within the District

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to review the City of Austin's capital project delivery planning and make recommendations that may accelerate investment in cultural venues and deployment of approved bond funding for creative space. This review should rely on joint Arts Commission and Music Commission Recommendations set forth and submitted to Council in April, 2020:

- Project(s) should specifically address historic inequity and alleviate the crisis-level issues facing the creative community, including: affordability, and rapid loss of creative spaces, including theatres, galleries and music venues.

- Project(s) should provide long-term, affordable and accessible creative space(s) invulnerable to the City's rapidly escalating property values and increasing cost of living/working.
- Creative Space Bond funds be used to acquire, build, improve or re-purpose a multi-use multi-purpose facility or facilities that meet the expressed needs of the arts and music communities while serving a public purpose and enriching the cultural life of the city.
- Ideal project/facility facilities will be city-owned property that is/are built and operated/managed by a partner or team of partners that meet certain minimum and other requirements established by the City and set forth in a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the selection of said partner or partners.

AMENITIES

The selected facility/facilities must be fully built out and ready for use upon completion/opening and would address the current gap in amenities including, but not limited to:

- Flexible rehearsal spaces to include small rooms for bands/theater companies/performance artists to rehearse
- Performance venue with a capacity of at least 50 seats

(may include outdoors)

- Visual arts studio and gallery space(s)
- Educational space(s)

LOCATION

The preferred project/facility/facilities should be located in or near the targeted zones identified by the public as follows:

- East of I-35, W of US-183
- South of Lady Bird Lake, North of Ben White (HWY-71)
- Downtown (Lady Bird Lake to MLK and I-35 to MoPac)
- North of 30th Street, South of US-183;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

Given these recommendations as guidance, the City Manager is directed to work with the Urban Renewal Board to identify City-owned properties and facilities within the District that are appropriate for developing a major music-centric, multi-arts ‘cultural hub’ facility to serve as the permanent core institution for arts and culture professionals providing cultural content programming for the District. City Manager should work with appropriate City Departments, private-nonprofit organizations, private-sector creative industry professionals and consultants to:

Develop and implement a two-phase plan to:

1. Identify an existing public cultural use of City-owned property (and work in conjunction with the adjacent National Register Historic Property); proceed with investment into cosmetic enhancements, infrastructure build-out, and facility amenities upgrades to be completed and operational within 12 months. This establishes the permanent location of the music-centric, multi-arts hub of the District (1100 Block of E. 11th Street, Block 18/Victory Grill and Kenny Dorham's Backyard)
2. Work with a consortium of appropriate City Departments, community-based private-nonprofits, private-sector creative industry professionals, consultants and educational institutions to actualize the Kenny Dorham Center/AACHD Cultural Hub concept.
3. Consistent with prior directives and recommendations to Council from the Arts Commission and Music Commission, development of the Kenny Dorham Center facility should be a sustainable long-term capital investment in a permanent cultural institution owned by the City, but operated in partnership with a consortium of specifically-qualified, strategically selected parties.

As envisioned, planning for the Kenny Dorham Center should be a multi-story mixed-use development and accommodate:

- Outdoor performance space/amphitheater and publicly accessible green space
- Indoor performance space, café/pub
- Audio/video Recording studio (learning laboratory and professional)
- Rehearsal space
- Classroom/meeting/conference room
- Small studio rooms for practice, lessons, art-making
- Shared work/office space co-op for African American nonprofit arts organizations
- Co-working space for AACHD professional creatives and students
- Art gallery
- The Kenny Dorham Museum (a mini-archival collection dedicated to the life and music of Kenny Dorham, but also home to an active research project/educational site for the study and collection of materials documenting Black Music History of Austin and the cultural history of Central East Austin/AACHD)

Coffee shop, book store, music store, art supply store or other related street-level retail

- Top-level residential: 12-18 one and two bedroom truly affordable apartments reserved for working creatives residencies of 2-3 years maximum. Cements the notion of creating a synergistic cultural hub community and provides opportunities for Austin creatives to actually afford to live in the midst of over-heated rapid gentrification, while being adjacent to real-life professional opportunities in the arts; and

While steering the development of this major cultural institution, City

Manager must take into consideration:

- Options for capital investment and long-term sustainability of cultural facilities operated by third parties on city-owned properties; and
- Options for public-private partnerships that may have difficulty achieving or need additional time to meet their private fundraising commitments to the City; and
- Early preparation and development of proposals for the next creative bond package.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

By Austin City Council adoption, this resolution serves to correct deficiencies found in the original Resolution establishing the African American Cultural Heritage District and plots a path forward to fully recognize, support, and invest in the District's growth and sustainability into the future.

ADOPTED: _____, 2020 **ATTEST:**

Exhibit B

RESOLUTION NO. 20071213-058

WHEREAS, on October 27, 2005 the City Council approved the African American Quality of Life Initiative; and

WHEREAS, under the Arts, Culture, and Entertainment, Recommendation from the African American Quality of Life Initiative, a need for an African American Cultural Arts District was recognized to enhance the quality of life for African Americans; and

WHEREAS, City staff has worked closely with numerous Cultural Arts organizations within the City to determine this area meets the District's criteria;
NOW, THEREFORE,

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

The City Council creates an African American Cultural Arts District that will formally recognize areas where there is a concentration of existing African American landmarks including businesses, churches, George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center and Huston-Tillotson University in accordance with the following boundaries:

- West Boundary: I-35 East frontage road
- East Boundary: Airport Blvd
- North Boundary: Manor Rd

South Boundary: Beginning on East 11th St. then South on Chalmers Ave then East on East 7th St. then North on Chicon St. then East on Rosewood Ave then merge into Oak Springs Drive until connection with the East Boundary(Airport Blvd).

ADOPTED: December 13, 2007

ATTEST:


Shirley A. Gentry
City Clerk