

South Central Coalition (ANC sector 7) Resolution Concerning:

Proposed Planned Unit development (PUD) amendment for 305 South Congress (Austin American Statesman site) by the Endeavor Real Estate Group and the Atlanta based Cox family.

Whereas: The construction of the Austin Hyatt Hotel in the early 1980's on the south shore of then Town Lake resulted in city wide concerns about the scale and location of new buildings that could negatively encroach on the scenic vistas and open space along the Colorado River corridor, and

Whereas: The Austin City Council established The Town Lake Task Force that recommended the 1985 Town Lake Corridor Study adopted by the City Council on October 24, 1985, calling for zoning changes that " Improved zoning in the Town Lake Corridor ..." and

Whereas: This recommendation adopted by the City Council on July 17, 1986, resulted in the City of Austin's "Waterfront Overlay Combining District" (WO) that clearly defined the site development standards for all properties along the river corridor and

Whereas: The purpose of the WO zoning change was to "provide a more harmonious interaction and transition between urban development and the parkland and shoreline of Town Lake and the Colorado River." The site development standards for new construction called for stepping back from the water's edge and for building to step down so as to respect the scenic vistas around the lake front.

Whereas: The WO called out the base zoning (maximum heights and primary and secondary setbacks) to achieve the protection of the scenic vistas and open space that was recognized as the most important community asset. However the WO also included the recognition of other community goals that could possibly be achieved with density bonus provisions to allow for more development if these additional community benefits (more open space, affordable housing, community access to parkland, etc) are provided but also included absolute maximum heights and minimum allowable setbacks for the shore line, and

Whereas: The City Council authorized the creation of the "Town Lake Park" Comprehensive plan in 1987 that stated that " Building massing should demur to open spaces, avoiding clashes of scale."

Whereas: The 1999 "plain English and non-substantive" rewrite of Austin Land Development Code resulted in the removal of the density bonus provisions and the absolute height limits. Due to this error the City Council subsequently appointed the "Waterfront Overlay Task Force" which recommended that the maximum height limits and primary and secondary setbacks from the shoreline be re-established. These provisions were then re-instated into the zoning code by City Council Action.

Whereas: The South Central District is a part of the Waterfront Overlay Ordinance and a community task force was created to review the planning for this sub district and made recommendations to allow additional building heights and massing in excess of the WO density

bonus provision if the entire district was governed by a “regulating and financial plan” as part of a comprehensive plan for the sub district, and

Whereas the project developers are requesting even more height and massing without the associated regulating and financial plan in place.

Therefore, be it resolved that the South Central Coalition of Neighborhoods recommends to the South Central Waterfront Advisory Group that they withhold any recommendations on the 305 S. Congress PUD amendments until such time as the regulating plan and financial plan have been completed and adopted by the city Council.

Be it further resolved that the South Central Coalition of Neighborhoods recommends to the Austin Planning Commission that they defer action on any PUD amendment request for the 305 S. Congress project until the regulation and financial plans are completed and adopted by the City Council.

Resolution approved this day, Saturday, July 13, 2019.

