



**301 W. 6<sup>th</sup> St. – Austin, Texas 78701**

April 26, 2022

Dear Members of the Historic Landmark Commission:

I am writing to you as one of the owners of the Iron Bear asking you to oppose historic zoning for 301 W. 6th St. and to support the owner's request for a demolition permit. It is my belief that the building is not historic.

Unfortunately, this individual demolition permit has become caught up in a larger discussion of Austin and where and how the city can maintain its growth without destroying current gay safe spaces and what the city's plans are when it comes to providing an area for those safe places. I would like to, instead, take a moment to focus on this specific site and provide some important context to these discussions.

The Iron Bear was originally located two blocks north and we moved to the current location in January 2020. The communication with our landlord has always been very honest and open. We knew when signing the lease that it was for seven years with a buyout clause in the lease. It was made clear by the building owners' representative that they planned to go vertical at some point. They were very open and honest about the fact that at some point they may activate the buyout clause.

Importantly, the owner was also a critical partner to have during the depths of the pandemic. We opened at the 301 W. 6th St. location in February 2020, just before full lock-down – and that first year was rough. To their credit, the owner worked with us and deferred rent throughout late 2020 and early 2021 until we could get back onto our feet – which was critical to our ability to stay in business at a time when local businesses everywhere were struggling and closing.

This property owner has been a good partner over the last two years – and we do not want to see the city penalize them for choosing us as their tenant in this space. The Iron Bear is more than four walls. We existed prior to moving to this location and we will exist after it, as well. The building owners have offered to help in the search for a new location when the time comes.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Benny Beshear', is written over the typed name.

Benny Beshear  
Owner, Iron Bear