

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 27, 2017  
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS  
HDP-2017-0027  
2008 E. 8<sup>TH</sup> STREET**

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**PROPOSAL**

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Demolish a ca. 1932 house.

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**ARCHITECTURE**

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One-story, rectangular-plan, front-gabled frame cottage with a partial-width, front-gabled, partially-inset porch on ornamental metal supports; single 1:1 fenestration.

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**RESEARCH**

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The house was built around 1932 by Hattie Dale, who worked as a maid at the Driskill Hotel. She lived here until around 1938, when she moved to a house on E. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, then later to Dallas, where she worked as a hotel maid, according to the 1940 U.S. Census report. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the house was rented by Aaron and Lelia Gilbert or Aaron and Tennie Gilbert. There is some confusion about Aaron Gilbert, since he is listed continuously in the city directories, but with a wife named Lelia in the late 1930s, and a wife named Tennie in the early 1940s. Tennie Gilbert is listed as the occupant of this house in the 1940 U.S. Census, but Aaron and Lelia Gilbert are also listed at a different address in the same census report.

From the late 1940s until her death in 1964, the house was owned and occupied by Maude Estell Taylor, the widow of Monroe Taylor, who worked at a local lumber yard. Maud Estell Taylor worked as a maid but also owned Estelle's Beauty Shop on Mill Street.

Estell Taylor's daughter, Ora L., and Ora's husband, Spencer Nobles, Jr., became the owners and occupants of this house after Estell passed away in 1964. Spencer Nobles, Jr. operated the Rosewood Barbecue Center, a renowned restaurant on Rosewood Avenue, while Ora L. Nobles operated Estelle's Beauty Shop until around 1996. Ora Lee Nobles was extremely active in civic activities in East Austin, especially in the Blackshear neighborhood. She served as president of the redevelopment corporation and as a board member of the Legal Aid Society of Central Texas. Both Spencer and Ora Lee Nobles passed away in 2004. Nobles Pavilion in Lott Park was dedicated to their memory in 2007 by the Austin City Council.

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**STAFF COMMENTS**

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The house is listed in the East Austin Historic Resources Survey (2016) with a recommendation that it is not eligible for local or National Register listing.

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Initiate historic zoning. The house is an intact example of a 1930s vernacular cottage, and has a long and significant history with Spencer and Ora Lee Nobles, who inherited the house from her mother, Maud Estell Taylor. The Nobles ran a renowned barbecue restaurant on Rosewood Avenue (now the Spencer and Ora Lee Nobles Hope Center of the Rosewood Baptist Church), and were very active in the preservation of the Blackshear neighborhood. This house stands as a testament to their entrepreneurship, their community activism, and to African-American history in Austin.

# LOCATION MAP



-  SUBJECT TRACT
-  PENDING CASE
-  ZONING BOUNDARY

1" = 208'

## NOTIFICATIONS

CASE#: HDP-2017-0027  
2008 E. 8TH STREET

This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.

This product has been produced by CTM for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.



2008 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
ca. 1932



Photo taken February, 2017



Photographs provided by the applicant (February, 2017):











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*Let's leave for our children -  
An earth clean and green*

February 23, 2017

Adriana Salazar  
Property Owner

Re: Structural Observation  
2008 East 8th St  
Austin, Texas

Dear Ms. Salazar,

On February 23, 2017, I performed on-site structural observation of the above referenced property. The purpose of our observation was to assess the general condition of the structural system. The followings are our findings and recommendations:

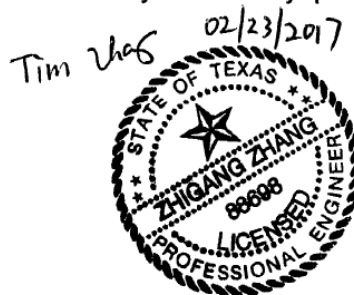
1. The foundation is pier-beam system. The beams are very old and small compared to the 2012 IRC code. Some of them have signs of severe decay and it's unreliable to attempt to strengthen them. Replacing the beams would require the temporary lifting of the entire structure and this would likely crack the exterior and interior finish material.
2. The piers are built of bricks which doesn't meet today's code. This foundation system moves significantly with seasonal moisture content change in the soil.

Overall, this structure is in extremely poor condition. It's in danger of structural failure and it's NOT practical to try to keep this house or any portion of it. In order to keep this house, the entire foundation would have to be rebuilt and this has risk involved. The exterior wall structure would likely be twisted or drifted during the temporary shoring process while the new foundation is being built. Obviously, the movement of the exterior wall will likely crack the exterior and interior wall finish. And the integrity of the roof structure will likely be compromised as well.

Please feel free to call me at (512) 289-8086 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Tim (Zhigang) Zhang, PE



Hi Steve,

Thanks for the information, though with all due respect, we are not interested in historic zoning--let's please set a time to talk since I do have several questions and concerns. I am assuming you will get back to me promptly so we can talk right away and I can be prepared for Monday night.

First, if I do not want historic zoning but you recommend it, what happens?

Next, you mentioned the Nobles were important historical figures, and I get that have that center at the church, but are they registered or recognized anywhere as historic figures?

Further, why is this home NOT recommended as historic in the East Austin Historic Survey if you say it is historic? That is what we based are due diligence on.

Also, you mentioned that the home has historic 'significance' architecturally--how so? And again, why does the survey disagree?

And last, what are time lines associated with:

- Initiating historic zoning at the HLC? That would happen Monday if the HLC votes to support your recommendation?
- Enact historic zoning at the HLC?
- Going to Planning Commission for the PC to vote to approve or not approve the HLC's recommendation if things go that far?
- Going to Council for the final vote on if the property gets zoned historic, if things go that far?

I look forward to your response and setting up a time to talk right away, please. We do not want this property zoned historic, we do not see how that could be made to work financially for our family business, and there is already an end buyer in place that wants to build an energy efficient home here, so we certainly have a difficult situation on our hands! I would like to learn the benefits of historic zoning in case that does come to pass, but we are opposed to this, please understand.

Thanks,  
Adriana

PS - Can I see a copy of your actual Staff Report, please? I have to get prepared for Monday fast!

**Adriana Salazar**

A New Hope Real Estate Investments LLC



Thank you to Nathan and Nell and Donna for bringing this to our attention and giving us the background of this home.

I am in complete agreement and would like to know if we can send in a form with these arguments to be considered even if we're not in the direct vicinity (close enough to have been mailed one). I can't make the public hearing but would like to do my part to voice my agreement with the others on this. Please advise as to the best route to do so.

Thanks also to Steve for the important work he does.

Agnes

Hi Steve, I wasn't sure you saw my comments. Sorry if this is redundant.

The Noble house at 2008 E 8th Street should be preserved and renovated where it stands.

This house represents the history and holds stories of the people of Blackshear-Prospect Hill. It sits nestled under the lot's large pecan trees with an outlook on the modernization across the way on E 7th Street while offering passersby a stabilizing connection to the past.

It reminds long time neighbors who remain of the Nobles' barbeque joint on Rosewood and of the later vagaries of urban "renewal" in the 60's which drove the painful displacement and destruction of numerous homes in the area including the homes that stood on former Comal Street where my Blackshear-Prospect Hill Neighborhood Development Corporation home mimics the past with its Texas vernacular stylings.

Let's keep this sample of the real thing in place and preserve the memories it holds of Austin's federally designated African American Cultural Heritage District.

Thanks, Nell Peterson for more information about the history of this lovely house.

Steve, please let our neighborhood association know the steps to historic preservation.

Thank you.

All the best! Donna

\* \* \* \* \*

Donna Hoffman

I too agree completely with Nathan.

Thank you,

Justin Stewart, AICP

Hi Steve

My name is mollie Nelson and I live across the street from 2008 e 8th st. I knew Helen who lived in the home until she passed away a few years ago. I'd be happy to look at your document and ask a few of our other long-time neighbors for details.

For some reason however I can't find your draft report in the series of emails. Sorry I'm trying to do this on my phone. If you could send the document to me directly I'd appreciate it.

Thanks for all your work on this. We 8th streeters really appreciate it.

Best  
Mollie

Hi Steve:

The home at 2008 is a beautiful home that should remain in our neighborhood. It is a good structure and definitely represents the character that our neighborhood pioneers cherished and were very proud to live in. Please Do Not demolished it.

Thanks!

Nell Peterson

I agree completely with Nathan about this property.

David Thomas

Thanks for the report Steve.

I of course support relocation over demolition for a type and quality of a structure that I have seen many people turn into wonderful homes and have many centuries left in them. But the more I think of it the stronger I feel that this house should remain in place and continue to contribute to the legacy of the neighborhood. It is quite common these days for a property with a modest old structure to take one of two paths:

1) Purchased for \$300k + and renovated and either lived in by those people or sold again for \$400-\$500k.

2) The second route is the demolition or removal of the structure and the construction of a structure that maxes out the square footage allowable usually with a luxury focus. At lowest these houses sell for \$700k and up to \$900k+. When we talk about rapidly eroding affordability, escalating tax evaluations, it is these types of property flipping that is much at the center of it.

So I feel like the entity that purchased this property that is not entitled by right to be able to remove the house from the property given the neighborhoods historic district designation. And rather than being allowed to operate in a mode of maximum extraction and profit this entity should be compelled to work with the existing structure through means of renovation and addition for an outcome that better respects the history of the neighborhood and the continuum of people who have and still live here.

How do others feel about this?

Thanks,  
Nathan Wilkes

Steve,  
I got notice about a demolition permit for 2008 East 9th Street on behalf of "New Hope Investments".  
This house is of sound construction (framed old wood construction not board and batton) and should be preserved. It should be relocated at minimum



## OCCUPANCY HISTORY

### 2008 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Street

City Directory Research, Austin History Center  
By City Historic Preservation Office  
February, 2017

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 1992    | Spencer, Jr. and Ora L. Nobles, owners<br>Proprietors, Rosewood Barbecue Center, restaurant, 1807 Rosewood Avenue.<br>NOTE: 1807 Rosewood Avenue is now the Spencer and Ora Lee Nobles Hope Center of the Rosewood Avenue Baptist Church.   |
| 1985-86 | Spencer, Jr. and Ora L. Nobles, owners<br>Proprietor, Rosewood Barbecue Center, restaurant, 1807 Rosewood Avenue.   |
| 1981    | Spencer, Jr. and Ora L. Nobles, owners<br>Proprietor, Rosewood Barbecue Center, restaurant, 1807 Rosewood Avenue.   |
| 1977    | Spencer, Jr. and Ora L. Nobles, owners<br>Proprietor, Rosewood Barbecue Center, restaurant, 1419 Rosewood Avenue.   |
| 1973    | Spencer, Jr. and Ora L. Nobles, owners<br>Spencer: Proprietor, Rosewood Barbecue Center, restaurant, 1419 Rosewood Avenue.<br>Ora: Proprietor, Estelle's Beauty Shop (not listed in the alphabetical section of the directory).   |
| 1968    | Spencer, Jr. and Ora L. Nobles, owners<br>Spencer: Proprietor, Rosewood Barbecue Center, restaurant, 1419 Rosewood Avenue.<br>Ora: Proprietor, Estelle's Beauty Shop, 902 Mill Street.  |
| 1965    | Helen M. Taylor, owner<br>Babysitter<br>Also listed are Spencer, Jr. and Ora L. Nobles. He was the proprietor of the Rosewood Barbecue Center, restaurant, 1419 Rosewood Avenue; she was the proprietor of Estelle's Beauty Shop, 902 Mill Street.  |
| 1961    | Estelle M. Taylor, owner<br>Maid, Austin Hydro Gas, 4140 S. Congress Avenue.<br>NOTE: Spencer, Jr. and Ora L. Nobles are listed at 1404-D Cotton Street. He was the proprietor of the Rosewood Barbecue Center, 1419 Rosewood Avenue; she was the proprietor of Estelle's Beauty Shop, 902 Mill Street. |
| 1957    | Estelle M. Taylor, owner  |

	Maid
1954	Estelle M. Taylor, owner No occupation listed
1952	Estelle M. Taylor, owner Maid
1949	Stella M. Taylor, owner Domestic worker
1947	Elisha and Mattie J. Perkins, renters Porter, Gus Gribble (not listed in the alphabetical section of the directory). NOTE: Estelle Taylor is listed at 2014 E. 9 <sup>th</sup> Street. She was the proprietor of Estelle's Beauty Shop, 902 Mill Street.
1944-45	James H. and Eloise Hawkins, renters U.S. Army
1941	Aaron and Tinnie Gilbert, renters No occupation listed
1940	Aaron and Tinnie Gilbert, renters No occupation listed
1939	Aaron and Lela Gilbert, renters No occupation listed NOTE: Hattie Dale is listed at 2006 E. 8 <sup>th</sup> Street, which would be right next door to this house; she had no occupation shown.
1937	Hattie Dale, owner No occupation listed NOTE: Aaron and Lela Gilbert are listed at 2103 E. 9 <sup>th</sup> Street. Neither had an occupation shown.
1935	Hattie Dale, owner Maid, Driskill Hotel, 6 <sup>th</sup> and Brazos Streets.
1932-33	Hattie Dale, owner Employed by the Driskill Hotel NOTE: The address is listed as 2002 E. 8 <sup>th</sup> Street.
1930-31	The address is not listed in the directory. NOTE: Hattie Dale is listed at 1917 E. 11 <sup>th</sup> Street. She had no occupation shown. The directory contains the notation that Hattie Dale was African-American.

#### **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:**

##### **Hattie Dale (ca. 1932 – ca. 1938)**

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Hattie Dale living with a man named Claude McCorley in a rented house in Dallas, Texas. Hattie Dale was 33, had been born in Texas, and was a maid in a

hotel. Her room-mate, Claude McCorley, was 57, had been born in Texas, and was a porter in a printing office. Hattie Dale died in Dallas in 1976.

#### **Aaron and Lelia Gilbert (ca. 1939 – ca. 1943)**

The 1940 U.S. Census shows Aaron and Lelia Gilbert as the owners of the house at 2103 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Austin; that house was worth \$800. Aaron Gilbert was 55, had been born in Texas, and was a flower garden worker for a floral company. Lelia Gilbert was 52, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had a daughter, Lenora Gilbert, 29, who had been born in Texas, and worked as a maid in a private home. In addition, in the household lived an adopted daughter, Rutha May Houston, 12, who had been born in Texas and had lived in rural Travis County in 1935; an adopted daughter, Olivia Everett, 9, who had been born in Texas; a widowed son-in-law, Henry Underwood, 33, who had been born in Texas and worked as a janitor in a bakery; and a roomer, Willie Walker, 34, who had been born in Texas and was a dish washer in a café..

The 1940 U.S. Census also shows Mrs. Tinney Gilbert as the renter of **this house**. She was 49, had been born in Texas, and was a seamstress in a sewing room. With her lived her daughter, Velma Lee King, 24, who had been born in Texas and was a maid in a private home. Velma Lee had a daughter, Bobby Joe King, 7, who had been born in Texas. The women also had a lodger, Mace Patterson, 18, who had been born in Texas, and worked as a porter in a filling station.

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Aaron and Lelia Gilbert living at 2203 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Austin, a house they owned, which was worth \$300. Aaron Gilbert was a 42-year old Texas-born gardener for a florist. Lelia Gilbert was 40, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. Their daughter, Lenora, was 19, and had no occupation listed. In the garage apartment lived Henry R. Underwood, 27, a Texas-born gardener for a florist, his wife, Odessa, 21, who had been born in Texas and had no occupation shown; and a niece, Bular Finnin, 4, who had been born in Texas.

The 1930 U.S. Census also shows Aron and Tennie Gilbert renting a house on the Colton-Del Valle Road in Travis County. Aron Gilbert was a Texas-born farmer whose age cannot be deciphered from the census report. Tennie Gilbert was 38, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. Also in the household were a step-daughter, Velma L. Johns, 15, who had been born in Texas and had no occupation listed; and two grand-daughters: Vivian Show, 17, a farm laborer; and Corinne Shaw, 15. Both girls had been born in Texas.

The 1920 U.S. Census shows Aaron, Lelia, Odessa, and Lenora Gilbert living on a rented farm in rural Travis County; Aaron Gilbert was a farmer.

His 1959 death certificate shows that Aaron Gilbert was born in 1888 in Travis County, and was living at 2103 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street at the time of his death. He was married to Lelia B. Gilbert, and was a porter. There was no obituary in the Austin newspapers.

#### **Maude Estell Taylor (ca. 1948 – ca. 1964)**

M. Estell Taylor appears in the 1930 U.S. Census as the wife of Monroe Taylor, who owned his home at 2014 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Austin; that house was worth \$900. Monroe Taylor was 34, had been born in Texas, and was a yard hand at a lumber yard. M. Estell Taylor was 31, had been born in Texas, and had no occupation listed. They had 9 children, ranging in age from 16 to 5 months, including Ora L. Taylor, 10.

Her 1964 death certificate shows that Maud Estell Taylor was living at this house at the time of her death. She was born in 1895 in Texas, and was a widowed housewife.



There does not

**MRS. MAUD E. TAYLOR**  
 Mrs. Maud Estell Taylor, 2008 East 8th Street, died in a local hospital Saturday. She was a member of the Church of God in Christ. Survivors include four sons, Vernon D. Taylor of Philadelphia, William T. Taylor of San Antonio, Monroe Taylor Jr. and Roger L. Taylor both of Austin; six daughters, Mrs. Ardie McFord, Mrs. Marjorie Baty, Mrs. Ora Lee Nobles, Mrs. Mattie Joyce Perkins, Mrs. Julia Faye Mitchell and Miss Helen M. Taylor, all of Austin, 28 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.  
 Funeral services are pending at Phillips-Upshaw Funeral Home.

Obituary of Maud Estell Taylor  
 Austin American-Statesman, February 23, 1964



Estelle's Beauty Salon, 902 Mill Street

This building is connected by a breezeway to the house at 2014 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, where Maude Estell Taylor had lived prior to moving into this house on E. 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Spencer, Jr. and Ora L. Nobles (ca. 1964 – ca. 2004)**

Spencer Nobles, Jr. appears in the 1940 U.S. Census as the 14-year old son of Spencer and Viola Nobles, who owned their home on the Bastrop Highway in Travis County. Spencer was the oldest of Spencer and Viola's 7 children. He had been born in Texas and was a farm laborer. His father was also a Texas-born farm laborer. Nobody else in the family had an occupation listed.



Spencer and Ora Lee Nobles

In their 65 years of marriage, Spencer Nobles Jr. and Ora Lee Taylor Nobles left their mark on Austin.

They ran a popular East Austin barbecue restaurant for 40 years and campaigned to save their Blackshear neighborhood from the bulldozers of urban renewal, and to redevelop it for low-income housing.

Ora Lee Nobles also served as president of a redevelopment corporation and as a board member of the Legal Aid Society of Central Texas, winning awards for her community work.

"They were quite a couple," said friend John Henneberger, co-director of the nonprofit Texas Low-Income Housing Information Service. "Today you can see a whole hillside full of houses there, and it was Mr. Nobles and Mrs. Nobles, and the people of that neighborhood, who did it."

The couple died six days apart, after struggles with cancer. He passed away July 21 at their daughter's home. She died Tuesday at Seton Medical Center. They were both 83.

They were born a few miles apart in 1921, she in Austin, and he in Webberville in southeastern Travis County. Her father worked in a lumberyard, while his father was a sharecropper who later worked in maintenance at Huston-Tillotson College. Together, they attended Austin's segregated public schools.

"They got married in 1939," her brother Roger Taylor of Austin said. "Our families knew each other. We picked cotton together and attended the same church."

They were entrepreneurs. When they married, she owned an East Austin beauty shop, which she kept until 1996. He worked at various jobs, saving his money and buying and managing rental properties.

They soon had their only child, a daughter they named Lennie.

"God blessed me with the best parents in the world," Lennie Nobles Cook said.

During World War II, Spencer Nobles Jr. worked at a shipyard on the Texas coast and, later, in a munitions plant in North Austin. After the war, he joined a brother in the barbecue business, learning the craft until 1957, when he and his wife opened their restaurant, the Rosewood Barbecue Center on Rosewood Avenue.

By 1990, the restaurant's menu was southern and soul, and they served chicken, ribs and mutton, chitterlings, ham hocks and greens, peach cobbler and sweet potato pie. Their customers included President Johnson and rock star Tina Turner.

"(Spencer) always says it's the fire," Ora Lee Nobles told the Austin American-Statesman in 1990.

"It's how to keep the fire and the pit. That's the secret."

"My wife has a sauce she makes," he added. "And that's something else."

It was the restaurant that got them into community activism. In the early 1960s, their first location was torn down in a federal urban renewal project to revitalize East Austin. The project's bulldozers devastated other businesses along the street and the old homes of the nearby Blackshear neighborhood.

"They were displaced," Henneberger said. "Urban renewal made a lot of promises about rebuilding, but they were broken promises."

In 1964, Ora Lee Nobles joined her neighbors in organizing the Blackshear Residents Organization, for which she served as president. The group organized families and drove to San Antonio to talk to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which controlled the bulldozers. Group members attended hundreds of Austin City Council meetings and fought banks that were refusing loans to the area.

"We just kept working and working, and fighting and fighting," Nobles once said.

In 1983, she was president of the Blackshear Neighborhood Development Corporation, which was rebuilding homes with federal grant money acquired with the city's help.

"They took no money, they only gave," Henneberger said. "She stood alone a lot. She insisted that people be treated fairly, and she prevailed."

The Nobles are survived by several brothers and sisters, their daughter, and a host of friends.

Funeral services for both are today at 1 p.m. at the St. James Missionary Baptist Church, 1812 E.M. Franklin Ave.

Published in Austin American-Statesman on July 28, 2004





The Spencer and Ora Lee Nobles Hope Center of the Rosewood Avenue Baptist Church (formerly the Rosewood Barbecue Center), 1807 Rosewood Avenue.

#### RESOLUTION NO 20070607-061

WHEREAS, the late Ora Lee Nobles was a lifelong resident of Austin, and an active East Austin civil rights advocate, business owner, and neighborhood leader, and

WHEREAS, Ms Nobles and her husband, Spencer Nobles, Jr, owned and operated Rosewood BarBQ Center for forty years, from 1957 to 1997, and

WHEREAS, She helped organize the Blackshear/Prospect Hill Neighborhood Association, was instrumental in creating the Blackshear Neighborhood Development Corporation, a non-profit group that was responsible for the building of thirty two home for low income families, and served on the board of the Austin Revitalization Authority, and

WHEREAS, in 2001 she was awarded the Texas Houser Award by the Texas Low-Income Housing Information Service, in 1994 she received the Lady of Valor award from the United States Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency, and in 1991 she was selected by KVLJE Channel 24 to receive a "Five Who Care" award for her community service, and

WHEREAS, The City wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Ora Lee Nobles to this community, and WHEREAS, The pavilion under construction in Lott Park near Boggy Creek is an appropriate facility to name in honor of Ora Lee Nobles,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN That the pavilion located in Lott Park is named the "Nobles Pavilion" This resolution furnishes the criteria and procedures for the naming of the facility authorized by Section 14-1-33(1) of the City Code

ADOPTED June 7, 2007 ATTEST Shirley A City Clerk Gentry

Water service permit to Hattie Dale for this house, which has the old address of 2002 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Street and the current address of 2008 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Street (1932)

Sewer service permit for this address (1938)

Maude Estell Taylor

2008 East 8th St.

~~28~~

12

21

8

B

29

Grandview Heights

frame addition to rear of residence.

54439 8-10-53

\$200.00

James Scott

-

Building permit to Maude Estell Taylor for a frame addition to the rear of the house (1953)