



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Sara L. Hensley, CPRP, Director
Austin Parks and Recreation Department

DATE: March 6, 2019

SUBJECT: Resolution No. 20170928-056 – Montopolis Negro School Property, Parks and Recreation Department update

This memorandum provides an update on the Parks and Recreation Department's (PAR) response to Council Resolution No. 20170928-056. The resolution directed the City Manager to acquire property located at 500 Montopolis Drive, which houses the Montopolis Negro School, one of the last remaining vestiges of segregated education in the Austin community. The Office of Real Estate Services (ORES) successfully completed the acquisition of 500 Montopolis Drive, and provided Council with an update in a January 24, 2019, [memo](#).

Following the acquisition of 500 Montopolis Drive, PAR staff began the process of securing the building in accordance with *National Park Service Brief 31: Mothballing Historic Buildings*. The mothballing process allows a building to be secured, protected, and monitored while planning for the site's future. To date, PAR staff have inspected and photographed the building's interior and exterior to establish the current physical condition and document the building's contents. Locks have been changed and air conditioning units have been removed. Remaining window openings have been covered with sheet metal. Vermin exclusion measures have been installed at key entry points around the foundation perimeter. PAR Forestry has been consulted regarding concerns about trees that are growing too close to the building and may need to be removed to protect the integrity of the structure. A security fence will be installed around the building to ensure its protection. PAR continues to coordinate with ORES on details related to the interior contents of the building, some of which will not convey with the acquisition.

Council Resolution No. 20170928-056 also directed the City Manager "to prepare a plan for restoration, management, operation, and funding of the property as a historic asset and museum that would attract tourists and convention delegates. Included in that plan should be an option for the City partnering with a nonprofit or community entity that would operate and/or maintain the property to attract tourists and convention delegates. A stakeholder process involving historic preservation professionals should occur to ensure the proper and correct preservation of the property and its grounds for all future generations of Austinites."

PAR will request funding for master planning for the site in FY20, in accordance with the resolution's direction. If funding is secured, PAR's Park Planning Division will prioritize this master planning effort in 2020.

Should you have any questions, please contact my office at (512) 974-6717.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Elaine Hart, Deputy City Manager
Chris Shorter, Assistant City Manager
Alex Gale, Interim Officer, Office of Real Estate Services