



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The City of Austin Human Rights Commission

Recommendation 20201026-002d: Black Arts and Cultural District Recommendation

WHEREAS, the African American Resource Advisory Commission (“the Commission”) is authorized by Austin City Codes: 2-1-101 to advise the City Council on issues related to the quality of life for the City’s African American community; and

WHEREAS, the Commission is specifically authorized to recommend programs designed to alleviate any inequities that may confront African Americans in social, economic, and vocational pursuits, including (1) health care, (2) housing, including affordable housing, home ownership, and homelessness, (3) entertainment opportunities for professionals and students (4) employment, (5) cultural venues, including museums, theaters, art galleries, and music venues, and (6) Public Safety; 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 (AACHD) was recognized to enhance the quality of life for African Americans; and

WHEREAS, African American historic landmarks represent only 47 of the 629 historical landmarks in the City of Austin and City staff have worked closely with numerous Cultural Arts organizations within the city to determine the African American Cultural Heritage District meets the City of Austin's criteria; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has detailed Strategic Direction 2023 to “strive to create a complete community where every Austinite has choices at every stage of life that allow us to experience and contribute to all of the following outcomes: Economic Opportunities, Mobility, Safety, Health and Environment, Culture and Life-long learning, and Government that Works for “All of Us”; and

WHEREAS, March 2017, the Mayor’s Task Force issued a report on Institutional Racism and Systemic Inequities that is inclusive of a list of recommendations aimed at the dismantling of institutional racism and systemic inequities in the City of Austin and the Austin region; and

WHEREAS, African Americans account for 8% of the population in Travis County, 13% of African Americans live below the poverty line, 34% of the homeless population are African

Americans and 25% of those serving sentences in Travis County Jail are African American men and women. In addition, 34% of children in low income homes do not receive any learning support services while African American children make up 90% of children in low income homes; and

WHEREAS, on August 5, 2020 Mayor Steve Adler highlighted the institutional racism and systemic inequities that exist in our community and across the country, referenced actions taken by other southern cities, such as Asheville, North Carolina who recognize the significance of reinvesting into Black communities to aid in rectifying years of systemic racism via the City Council, approved “RESOLUTION SUPPORTING COMMUNITY REPARATIONS FOR BLACK ASHEVILLE”; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Adler requested and stated “the City Council members will begin planning a path toward restitution and city leaders should support those trying to push the initiative forward. It will require us to be intentional about addressing our history and righting the wrongs. It is the work of saying Black Lives Matter.”; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE AFRICAN AMERICAN RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMISSION, IN SUPPORT OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE DISTRICT INVESTMENT INITIATIVE PUT FORTH BY DIVERSE ARTS AND THE EAST AUSTIN CREATIVE COALITION, AND IN SUPPORT OF ADDRESSING THE INSTITUTIONAL RACISM AND SYSTEMIC INEQUITIES IN THE CITY OF AUSTIN WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY COUNCIL:

(1) REAFFIRM 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;

2) DIRECT THE CITY MANAGER TO:

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN ACTIONABLE PLAN ADDRESSING THE POINT IDENTIFIED BY THE CITY’S AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP TO CREATE AND NURTURE A DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE, AND EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS;

UPDATE ALL OFFICIAL CITY ZONING MAPS THAT SHOW DESIGNATED CULTURAL AND HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND LANDMARKS TO INCLUDE THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE DISTRICT;

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, AND ADD THOSE LOCATIONS TO OFFICIAL MAPS;

INSTRUCT THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT TO USE THE CULTURAL/HISTORIC/HERITAGE ASSETS INVENTORY LIST FOUND IN THE EAST AUSTIN HISTORICAL SURVEY TO INITIATE DESIGNATION ACTIVITIES TO ESTABLISH PLACEMENT ON THE NATIONAL REGISTRY OF HISTORIC PLACES;

INSTRUCT THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT TO USE CULTURAL/HISTORIC/HERITAGE ASSETS INVENTORY LIST FOUND IN THE 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 THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, AFRICAN AMERICAN RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMISSION, URBAN RENEWAL BOARD, SIX SQUARE, THE AUSTIN REVITALIZATION AUTHORITY, THE URBAN LEAGUE, THE BLACK CHAMBER AND OTHER BLACK ORGANIZATIONS/LEADERS TO CRAFT AN INCENTIVES & FUNDING PROGRAM SPECIFICALLY TO ATTRACT AND NURTURE GROWTH OF PROFESSIONAL BLACK ENTERTAINMENT AND CREATIVE INDUSTRY BUSINESSES, AND CULTURE-BASED ORGANIZATIONS TO LOCATE/DO BUSINESS WITHIN THE DISTRICT;

WORK WITH CITY OF AUSTIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PARKS AND RECREATION, SMALL AND MINORITY BUSINESS DEPARTMENTS, THE EQUITY OFFICE, AND THE INNOVATION OFFICE TO STRATEGIZE A ROUTE TO ESTABLISH A BLACK ART FUND TO ADDRESS HISTORIC UNDERREPRESENTATION IN THE CITY'S 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 ARTIST COMMUNITY WITHIN THE DISTRICT;

3) ESTABLISH A COMMISSION/TASK FORCE TO WORK WITH IN DEVELOPING POLICY TO PUSH THE MAYOR'S RESTITUTION INITIATIVE FORWARD; AND

4) DEVELOP A QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT THAT WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE AFRICAN AMERICAN RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMISSION.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT THE AFRICAN AMERICAN RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMISSION SUPPORTS ALL EFFORTS TO ADDRESS STRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM AND ALL EFFORTS TO ADDRESS ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH

DISPARITIES DUE TO RACIAL INEQUITIES; AND,

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMISSION WILL PARTNER MORE FREQUENTLY WITH THE AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE CITY TO ACHIEVE SAFE AND EQUITABLE OUTCOMES FOR THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY; AND,

THAT THE AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL, MAYOR, CITY MANAGER, AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP MUST EMBED RACIAL EQUITY IN ALL SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS, BUILDING COMMUNITY POWER, VOICE AND CAPACITY TO REDUCE RACISM'S HARMFUL EFFECTS, THEREFORE, REMAINING COMMITTED TO THE PROMISES MADE TO ALL CONSTITUENTS IN PROVIDING A CITY THAT WORKS FOR ALL.