

RESOLUTION NO. 20140925-081

WHEREAS, the Imagine Austin plan identifies activity centers with vibrant night-time economies; and

WHEREAS, Austin's self-proclaimed brand as the Live Music Capital of the World represents not only a cultural badge but also a significant economic driver; and

WHEREAS, ensuring safe environments are vital to the entire city; and

WHEREAS, in 2008 the Live Music Task Force made a series of recommendations, many of which have been implemented but some of which remain; and

WHEREAS, in 2009 a Hospitality Zone Assessment was conducted by the Responsible Hospitality Institute and identified challenges to ensuring a safe and vibrant hospitality zone; and

WHEREAS, the Downtown Austin Plan was adopted December 8, 2011 and states as a goal that downtown will have a dense and livable pattern of development that supports a vibrant daytime and nighttime environment; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, in conjunction with the Downtown Austin Alliance, Old Pecan Street Association and SXSW, the City of Austin Music & Entertainment Division conducted a three-day workshop led by the world's foremost crowd expert, Professor Keith Still, to discuss crowd management & flow, programmed entertainment, lighting and policing tactics; and

WHEREAS, East 6th Street attracts thousands of patrons on any given weekend and can reach into hundreds of thousands during festival weekends; and

WHEREAS, large crowds, fueled by alcohol, pose significant health, public safety and transportation issues; and

WHEREAS, overcrowding results in violations of occupancy limits and also poses significant health and public safety issues; and

WHEREAS, updated emergency management plans are integral to a best managed city; and

WHEREAS, East 6th Street is part of the East 6th Street National Register Historic District (NRHD), and most of this district is subject to a 45-foot height limit established by City Code as the Pecan Street Overlay District; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin values maintaining the historic character of our city by offering property tax exemptions for historically designated structures, some of which are downtown; and

WHEREAS, many historic buildings have been repurposed and are used for businesses involved in our night-time economy; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to engage relevant stakeholders and City departments to ensure the City of Austin is creating a safe and vibrant environment in downtown entertainment districts, to examine issues as further described below related to the Downtown Entertainment Districts, and to bring a report back to Council within 90 days with recommendations for any necessary City Code changes that would address the issues that the City Manager identifies.

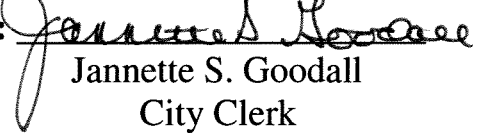
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

In complying with this resolution, the City Manager should consider issues and possible solutions that address:

- Creation of an entertainment license to support consistent enforcement of the sound ordinance, safety and security provisions, including consideration of formalizing PACE using the fee structure approved in the FY 14-15 Budget.
- Making information about conditional use permits and conditions of sound permits readily available to enforcement staff, such as through the use of QR codes;
- Enforcement difficulties resulting from limits on who can enforce certain provisions and consideration of expanding that authority.
- Identification of a lead department or office to be responsible in leading the city's efforts to preserve or enhance the nightlife economy while ensuring a safe and vibrant environment.
- Determination of the cost and providing of a time line for improved street lighting.
- Activation of closed streets on weekends with performance artists and mobile food vendors.
- Opening city garages for public night-time use.

- Examining the revocation of historic property tax exemptions for structures whose tenants have received multiple code violations related to capacity loading, fire safety and underage drinking.

ADOPTED: September 25, 2014

ATTEST: 
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk