

RESOLUTION NO. 20171207-058

WHEREAS, in 2006 voters approved a public safety bond proposition that was used to purchase approximately 20 acres of land at I-35 and St. Johns Avenue consisting of a former Home Depot and a former car dealership to be used for a potential police substation and courthouse, and this land is adjacent to existing undeveloped city property and a city park that has suffered from underinvestment (which all together shall be referenced as “the St. John Property”); and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has not moved forward with these plans in the last 10 years, and community members have called for a new vision for the property; and

WHEREAS, the St. John Property was purchased in the early 1900's as part of a 300 acre purchase by the St. John Regular Baptist Association for the educational, spiritual, and economic betterment of the community; and

WHEREAS, the St. John neighborhood is a historic community of Americans of African ancestry that remains very diverse and has many relatively affordable housing options, but lacks a full range of community services and is facing significant gentrification pressures; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that the St. John Property was purchased using the proceeds of bonds issued pursuant to a public safety bond proposition to be used as a police substation and courthouse, the St. John Property provides a significant opportunity to honor the history

of the area and to improve the well-being of the neighborhood and the rest of the community;

NOW, THEREFORE,

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

The City Manager is directed to partner with community members to create a new vision for the St. John Property. The vision should address the current and future needs of the individuals within the boundaries of the St. John neighborhood and the surrounding area, and respect the unique history of the area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The process for creating this new vision should be creative and open. A wide variety of options should be considered to capitalize on opportunities for this land and to overcome the challenges to fulfilling this Property's potential. The vision for the land can include, but should not be limited to:

- 1) income-restricted and market-rate housing for rent and for ownership;
- 2) local business opportunities;
- 3) space for recreation, aquatics, learning and culture;
- 4) partnerships with nonprofits, the housing authority, the school district, or other community organizations;
- 5) governmental facilities;
- 6) deliberate place making to honor the history of the neighborhood, especially as it relates to the St. John Regular Baptist Association and the historic community of Americans of African ancestry; and

- 7) intentional efforts to guide the vision of the neighborhood to ensure future diversity of racial and ethnic backgrounds in the neighborhood, income accessible housing for families and individuals in the neighborhood, services, and employment opportunities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager should conduct a community engagement process to gather information from community participants and identify potential paths to achieve the new vision for the St. John Property.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager should explore funding options to implement the vision, including but not limited to, ground leases, public private partnerships, creative financing options, revenue generation at the property, collaboration with other governmental and non-governmental organizations, direct public funding, and other potential means, and return to Council with proposals that have been reviewed by bond counsel to ensure compliance with the requirements relating to the bond funds used to purchase portions of the Property, as well as any requirements that are necessary to fund new options for the Property.

ADOPTED: December 7, 2017

ATTEST:



Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk