



**BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

**The City of Austin Human Rights Commission**

**Recommendation: Block 16 and Block 18 African American Cultural Space**

**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**, the African American Resource Advisory Commission supports the African American Cultural Heritage District Investment Initiative; 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 was recognized to enhance the quality of life for African Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, City staff has worked closely with numerous Cultural Arts organizations within the City to determine this area meets the District'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 a Government that Works for “All of Us”; and

**WHEREAS**, City Council adoption of the 1928 Master Plan required African Americans to relocate to the “Negro District” in order to receive basic City services, this plan strategically and systematically, along with additional ordinances were adopted to ensure full compliance with the

segregated 1928 Master Plan, and the lives of African Americans have been severely impacted socially and economically by years of intentional and systemic racism due to the implementation of the 1928 Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, In support of Resolution No. 20180215-082 we also ask the City Manager to, among other things, analyze and provide next steps for collaboration and support of an “Austin Cultural Trust” that could create spaces that support artists and arts organizations, preserve historic and iconic cultural buildings and spaces for creative and cultural uses that function in a way that provides cultural assets that exist in all parts of the City; and

**WHEREAS**, In support of Resolution No. 20190808-072 which reiterated prior Council direction to create an economic development entity that could manage a portfolio of projects including affordable housing developments, public/private partnerships with privately-led development, and a Cultural Trust to support acquisition and preservation of creative spaces; and

**WHEREAS**, we request the Creative Space Bond funds be used to acquire, build, improve or repurpose a multi-use/multi-purpose facility or facilities that meet the expressed needs of the arts and music communities while serving a public purpose and enriching the cultural life of the city; and

**WHEREAS**, in support of Resolution No. 20170608-033, The City Manager is directed to review the City of Austin’s capital project delivery planning and make recommendations that may accelerate investment in cultural venues and deployment of approved bond funding for creative space.

**WHEREAS**, Kenny Dorham’s Backyard is the last large leased space for outdoor (two acres) Black cultural arts, entertainment, dining, community garden and educational resources in East Austin; 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 DIRECT THE CITY MANAGER TO WORK WITH ANY APPROPRIATE CITY DEPARTMENTS, PRIVATE-NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, PRIVATE SECTOR CREATIVE INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS AND CONSULTANTS TO:**

**DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO:**

**1) IDENTIFY 1100 BLOCK OF E. 11TH STREET, BLOCK 18/VICTORY GRILL AND KENNY DORHAM’S BACKYARD AND BLOCK 16 AS EXISTING PUBLIC CULTURAL USE OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTY AND ESTABLISH THE LOCATION AS THE MUSIC-CENTRIC, MULTI-ARTS HUB OF THE DISTRICT, AND; PROCEED**

**WITH INVESTMENT INTO COSMETIC ENHANCEMENTS, INFRASTRUCTURE BUILD-OUT, AND FACILITY AMENITIES UPGRADES TO BE COMPLETED AND OPERATIONAL WITHIN 12 MONTHS.**

**2) WORK WITH A CONSORTIUM OF APPROPRIATE CITY DEPARTMENTS, COMMUNITY-BASED PRIVATE-NONPROFITS, PRIVATE-SECTOR CREATIVE INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS, CONSULTANTS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO ACTUALIZE THE KENNY DORHAM CENTER/AACHD CULTURAL HUB CONCEPT.**

**3) CONSISTENT WITH PRIOR DIRECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL FROM THE ARTS COMMISSION AND MUSIC COMMISSION, DEVELOPMENT OF THE KENNY DORHAM CENTER FACILITY SHOULD BE A MULTI-STORY, MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT, SUSTAINABLE, LONG-TERM CAPITAL INVESTMENT, OWNED BY THE CITY, BUT OPERATED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH A CONSORTIUM OF SPECIFICALLY-QUALIFIED, STRATEGICALLY SELECTED PARTIES.**

**THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,**

**THE CITY MANAGER MUST TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION:**

- 1) OPTIONS FOR CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF CULTURAL FACILITIES OPERATED BY THIRD PARTIES ON CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES; AND**
- 2) OPTIONS FOR PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS THAT MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY ACHIEVING OR NEED ADDITIONAL TIME TO MEET THEIR PRIVATE FUNDRAISING COMMITMENTS TO THE CITY; AND**
- 3) EARLY PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSALS FOR THE NEXT CREATIVE BOND PACKAGE.**