

RESOLUTION NO. 20210902-048

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20071213-058 created the African American Cultural Arts District with the following boundaries:

- (1) West Boundary: I-35 East frontage road
- (2) East Boundary: Airport Blvd.
- (3) North Boundary: Manor Rd.
- (4) South Boundary: Beginning on East 11th St., then South on Chalmers Ave., then East on East 7th St., then North on Chicon St., then East on Rosewood Ave., then merge into Oak Springs Dr. until connection with the East Boundary (Airport Blvd); and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20080214-056 renamed the African American Cultural Arts District to the African American Cultural Heritage District; and

WHEREAS, in addition to being located adjacent to downtown, the State Capitol, numerous City and State cultural and heritage sites, and the Red River Cultural District, the African American Cultural Heritage District has within its boundaries significant economic, historical, cultural and heritage tourism assets, such as:

- (1) the oldest institution of higher learning in the City, Huston-Tillotson University, and the National Register historically-designated buildings on campus,
- (2) the State Cemetery,
- (3) the Oakwood Cemetery,
- (4) the French Legation,

- (5) the Victory Grill,
- (6) the historic East 11th and 12th Street African American Music and Commercial Corridors (The East End),
- (7) the original Austin Public Library Building and George Washington Carver Museum,
- (8) three of the City's oldest religious congregations, African American or otherwise: the Ebenezer Baptist Church, the Metropolitan AME, and the Wesley United Methodist Church;
- (9) historic site locations of the City's first and only African American owned pharmacy;
- (10) the home of famed jazz musician Kenny Dorham;
- (11) the temporary home of Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall;
- (12) the first federal Public Housing Projects in the nation;
- (13) scores of designated historically significant homes and buildings;
- (14) prime examples of period architecture; and
- (15) the core of the Historic African American Community of Austin; and,

WHEREAS, on October 27, 2005, City staff briefed the City Council on 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 living in Austin; and

WHEREAS, the non-profit organization “Six Square” was created in 2013 as an outgrowth of the City Council’s African American Quality of Life Initiative, and has been dedicated to improving the quality of life for Black African American residents through preservation of historic Black spaces, artistic cultivation, and by serving as a catalyst for social and economic development as the African American Cultural Heritage District, as designated by the Texas Commission on the Arts, also known as “Six Square” and the “Black Cultural District”; and

WHEREAS, the Urban Renewal Agency was created as a result of an election in 1959, and the Urban Renewal Board has assisted steering important planning and community development in the East 11th and 12th street areas since 1962; and

WHEREAS, City staff has worked closely with numerous Cultural Arts organizations within the City to determine if this area meets the District's criteria; and

WHEREAS, the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan illustrates:

- (1) how creativity is a cornerstone of Austin's identity and economic prosperity,
- (2) that arts, culture, and creativity are essential keys to the City's unique and distinctive identity and are further valued as vital contributors to our community's character, quality of life and economy, and
- (3) collectively, the Austin music and creative ecosystem generates rich, social, cultural and economic benefits; and

WHEREAS, on March 3, 2016, Council approved Resolution No. 20160303-019, the Music and Creative Ecosystem Omnibus Resolution, which affirmed support for the music and creative ecosystem through short- and long-

term goals specific to cultural tourism, revenue development, and venue retention; and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Department committed more than \$1.3 million of Great Streets funding for streetscape improvements for Fiscal Year 2020, with the Economic Development Department managing that project; and

WHEREAS, on May 23, 2019, Council approved Resolution No. 20190523-029 directing the City Manager to bring forward a Palm District Master Plan, which is adjacent to the African American Cultural Heritage District as a prominent component, and presents opportunities for East-West connectivity; and

WHEREAS, on February 15, 2018, Council approved Resolution No. 20180215-082 directing 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, and function in a way that provides for cultural assets to exist in all parts of the City; and

WHEREAS, working creatives residencies can create a synergistic cultural hub community, foster professional development, and provides opportunities for Austin creatives to be able to afford to live adjacent to professional opportunities in the arts; and

WHEREAS, on August 8, 2019, Council approved Resolution No. 20190808-072 reiterating prior Council direction to create an economic development entity that could manage a portfolio of projects, including affordable housing developments, public-private partnerships with private-led development, and a Cultural Trust to support acquisition and preservation of creative space; and

WHEREAS, on October 1, 2020, Council approved Resolution No. 20201001-055 authorizing the creation of the Austin Economic Development Corporation; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

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

The City Council reaffirms the designated African American Cultural Heritage District that formally recognizes areas that have a concentration of existing Black African American landmarks, historical and cultural assets, and the legacy of what once was the diverse and thriving Black African American residential, commercial, and cultural core of Black Life in Austin;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to determine required strategies to implement, as soon as feasible, the following actions:

- (1) Update all official City Maps that show designated Cultural and Historic Districts and Landmarks to include the African American Cultural Heritage District (AACHD);
- (2) Develop an official detailed map of the AACHD;
- (3) Develop way-finding signage for public rights-of-way that provide directional guidance for locating the AACHD in general, and specific landmarks and significant places of interests within the AACHD;
- (4) Fund and implement a highly-visible Place-making program within the District (signage, public art, streetscape features, AACHD branded street signs/markers, historic neighborhood identifiers, etc.);
- (5) Use the cultural/historic/heritage assets inventory list found in the East Austin Historical Survey to assist with designation of historic

sub-districts throughout the AACHD to get placement on local, state, and national registers;

- (6) Work with the African American Resource Advisory Commission, Six Square, East Austin Creative Coalition, and other relevant organizations to craft an incentives program specifically to attract and nurture growth of professional entertainment and creative industry businesses, and culture-based organizations to locate into and do business within the AACHD;
- (7) Work with the Music Commission, Arts Commission, African American Resource Advisory Commission, Six Square, East Austin Creative Coalition, and other relevant organizations to establish a funding mechanism specifically to support public arts and culture programming within the AACHD;
- (8) Engage stakeholders, including but not limited to, Six Square, East Austin Creative Coalition, Austin Revitalization Authority, Urban Renewal Board, and other relevant organizations, to create a strategic plan to steer sustainable development and growth of the AACHD;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to recommend potential short- and long-term design solutions for the physical landscape of the AACHD to increase pedestrian mobility and safety, and to support place-making efforts;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to complete the streetscape and place-making work in the AACHD;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to consult with the Music Commission, the Live Music Fund Working Group, and the Austin Economic Development Corporation to explore ways of using the Live Music Fund to support the long-term sustainability of Black African American culture-based music industry projects located or producing within the District, and other investments that would help enhance the live music and cultural tourism economy. The City Manager is also directed to work with relevant departments and organizations to continue to address historic underrepresentation in City funding programs and plot a course to direct City focus on issues of affordability, professional development, business development/mentorship, educational programs, venue establishment and support, and related programs to assure development, growth, and sustainability of the East Austin Music Community within the AACHD;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

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 funding for creative spaces. This review should reflect the Joint Working Group recommendations unanimously passed by both the Music Commission and Arts Commission on January 6 and 9, 2020, respectively;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to review the prior work conducted by the Urban Renewal Agency and the joint Arts Commission and Music Commission recommendations set forth and submitted to Council in January 2020 as guidance, consider the current programs and capacity of the Austin Economic Development Corporation (AEDC), and collaborate and work with the Urban Renewal Agency

to determine how to announce and initiate a solicitation for detailed plans and cost estimates. The Urban Renewal Board or City Manager, for property within their respective ownership, may solicit possible participation from entities including the AEDC, community-based nonprofits, and private-sector and creative industry professionals, regarding the holistic development of property, that may include but may not be limited to, city owned property or property owned by the Urban Renewal Board within the district, for a multi-story mixed-use development that can accommodate:

- (1) Outdoor performance space/amphitheater and publicly accessible green space;
- (2) Indoor performance space, with a café and/or pub;
- (3) Audio/video Recording studio (that has learning laboratory and professional capabilities);
- (4) Rehearsal space;
- (5) Space that can be used as a classroom, meeting room, and conference room;
- (6) Small studio rooms for practice, lessons, and art-making;
- (7) Shared work/office space for nonprofit arts organizations that reflect the intent of the AACHD, and AACHD professional creatives and students;
- (8) An art gallery;
- (9) The Kenny Dorham Museum (a mini-archival collection dedicated to the life and music of Kenny Dorham, but also home to an active research project/educational site for the study and collection of

materials documenting Black Music History of Austin and the cultural history of Central East Austin and the AACHD);

- (10) Street-level retail; and
- (11) Residential units, with significant emphasis on housing at or below 60% MFI, and a portion of units reserved for working creatives residencies of 2-3 years maximum;

The City Manager is directed to provide the support resources required for the Urban Renewal Board's role to complete this process efficiently. Once the Urban Renewal Agency of the City of Austin have a plan to issue such a solicitation, and the City Manager has completed the strategic plan, the City Manager will present the respective plans to the City Council before proceeding or implementing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Council adopts this recommendation to correct deficiencies found in the original Resolution establishing the AACHD and plots a path forward to fully recognize, support, and invest in the District's growth and sustainability into the future.

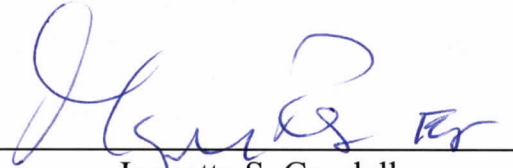
[The remainder of this page left intentionally blank]

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

This initiative shall not work in a way that is in conflict with other initiatives serving similar populations and shall not be prioritized in a way that hinders other similar initiatives, fiscal or otherwise, serving similar populations including but not limited to Six Square and the Black Austin Coalition with the understanding that all initiatives are encouraged to explore collaboration wherever possible, to the benefit of the greater community.

ADOPTED: September 2, 2021

ATTEST:



Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk