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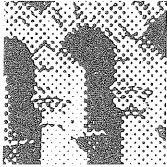
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November 19, 2008

The Honorable Will Wynn
Mayor, City of Austin
P. O. Box 1088
Austin, Texas 78767

Dear Mayor,

On behalf of the Heritage Society of Austin ("HSA"), I write in support of a package of proposed Land Development Code ("LDC") amendments intended to strengthen and update the City's historic preservation program. This effort began over two years ago with a working group that included HSA members developing a demolition by neglect ordinance, and was recently supplemented by City Legal suggesting a number of procedural revisions that have come to light in the operation and interpretation of the existing ordinance.



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On October 17th, the City Council adopted a resolution directing the City Manager to initiate LDC amendments to, among other things, prohibit the demolition by neglect of historic properties, revise the vote requirements for Historic Landmark Commission historic zoning recommendation, revise Historic Landmark Commission review of requested demolition permits and zoning, clarify the Historic Preservation Officer's authority to administratively approve minor projects in National Register Historic Districts, and to clarify City Code Section 11-1-22 regarding property tax exemptions for historic landmarks. The resolution further directs the City Manager to identify potential funding sources for an update of the city's historic preservation survey, and requests the City Manager to return with a contract for the survey for Council's consideration on or before April 16, 2009.

HSA appreciates the willingness of Council Members Leffingwell, Morrison and Shade to sponsor this resolution, and the unanimous vote of Council in its adoption. We offer our staff and members as a resource to Council, Staff, and Boards and Commissions as these LDC amendments are developed, and look forward to working with all stakeholders as the package moves forward.

Sincerely,

Julian Read

Julian Read
President

cc: The Honorable Brewster McCracken, Mayor Pro Tem
The Honorable Sheryl Cole
The Honorable Lee Leffingwell
The Honorable Mike Martinez
The Honorable Laura Morrison
The Honorable Randi Shade