

OFFICERS

John Philip Donisi
President
Julian Read
President-Elect
Mandy Dealey
First Vice President
Betsy Christian
Second Vice President

Susan Wittliff
Secretary
Kristen Wicke
Treasurer
Dennis McDaniel
Immediate Past President

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Betty Baker
Kent Collins
Matt Curtis
Rebecca Nelson Davis
Sharon Dunn
Amy Erben
Sandra Frazier
Connie Green

Kate Hersch
Dealey Herndon
Courtney Hoffman
Dennis Karbach
Amy Hornaday
John Mayfield
Rosemary Morrow
Tere O'Connell

Kristy Ozmun
Greg Phillips
Joe Pinnelli
Deanna Rickabaugh
John Rosato
Lindsay Rose
C. Aubrey Smith
Bratten Thomason

VOTING REPRESENTATIVES

Michael Holleran, UT School of Arch.
Sabrina Brown, Inherit Austin
Austin History Center Assoc.
Mike Ward, Pioneer Farms

STAFF

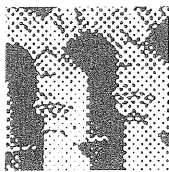
Jacqui Schraad
Executive Director
Lori Martin
Antiques Show Director

July 30, 2008

Mr. Kevin Cole, Esq.
Chairman, Urban Renewal Agency
City of Austin
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, TX 78768

Dear ~~Chairman~~ ^{Kevin} Cole,

We understand the City of Austin's Urban Renewal Agency is currently considering proposals for redevelopment of Block 16, bounded by East 11th, Juniper, Branch and Curve Streets. We also understand that up to \$1.5 million in funds resulting from the City of Austin's 2006 Bond Package may be dedicated for the redevelopment of Block 16.



HERITAGE SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

P.O. BOX 2113
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78768
512-474-5198
FAX 512-476-8687

The Dietrich-Hamilton House at 912 East 11th Street currently sits on Block 16. This home was the first to be purchased by freed slaves in Travis County. The City's African American Resource Advisory Commission has unanimously recommended that this structure be preserved and restored, and utilized as part of a larger development that would include various civic and cultural uses.

Unfortunately, some have proposed demolition of this structure – and utilization of the \$1.5 million in bond funds to construct an entirely new facility on the site. We believe this outcome would be a loss for preservation. As you know, the City's African American Quality of Life Initiative, an ongoing effort initiated in 2005, noted the lack of recognized historical sites relating to Austin's significant African American population, and recommended that the City more prominently acknowledge and promote this history. We believe the restoration of the Dietrich-Hamilton House would be an important step in meeting the stated objectives of the Initiative.

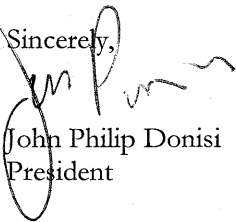
WATERLOO PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL

James Armstrong & Larry Connelly
Jannis & Robert Baldwin
Penny & Dan Burck
Ann Butler
June & Mark Chandler
Cissie & Dillon Ferguson
Donna & Steve Hicks
Regan & William Gammon, III
Connie & Allen Green
Jan Bullock & Robert Green
Dealey & David Herndon
Courtney & Clark Hoffman
Meta Butler Hunt
Judith & Lewis Jones
Roger Joseph
Lowell Lebermann, Jr.
Sue Brandt McBee
Leslie & Steve McConnico
Andrea & Dean McWilliams
Emily Moreland
Bettye & William Nowlin
C. Patrick Oles, Jr.
Stanya & James Owen
Mr. & Mrs. Howard Parker
Cheryl & Walt Penn
Gay & Shannon Ratliff
Vickie Roan
Cheryl & John Sauder
Sue & C. Aubrey Smith, Jr.
Louann & Larry Temple
Bobbi & Morton Topfer
Elisabeth & Steffen Waltz
Betty & Jim Wilson
David Wilson
Eva & Marvin Womack

We also believe this outcome may significantly undermine the trust of the electorate. Proposition Four was part of a broad package presented to the voters in November of 2006, generally addressing investment in cultural facilities. City-produced documents heralded the Proposition as "allow[ing] us to . . . renovate the Hamilton-Deitrich House on East 11th Street." Major publications covered the Proposition as "\$1.5 million toward the renovation of the Hamilton-Deitrich House, the first house in Austin bought by freed slaves" and editorialized in support, citing the lack of funding for such efforts in the past. The Proposition was approved with more than 57% of the vote.

The Heritage Society of Austin strongly urges the use of these bond proceeds for their intended use – the restoration of the Dietrich-Hamilton House, preserving it as a link to the past, while incorporating it into a facility dedicated to a positive future.

Sincerely,


John Philip Donisi
President