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Jacqui Schraad
Executive Director

August 2, 2010

Mayor Lee Leffingwell,
 Mayor Pro Tem Martinez, and City Council Members
 City of Austin
 Post Office Box 1088
 Austin, TX 78767-8865

Re: Preservation Program Interim Changes

Dear Mayor Leffingwell, Mayor Pro Tem Martinez and Council Members:



HERITAGE
 SOCIETY OF
 AUSTIN

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

Regarding the recommendations related to the Historic Preservation Program that are coming to Council this week, the Heritage Society of Austin endorses the recommendations coming from the Historic Landmark Commission through the Codes and Ordinances Committee and the Planning Commission. In addition, we support the following additional recommendations:

1. Set no limit to the number of owner-initiated applications that could be *received*, but set the limit for the number of cases that the HLC could *recommend* to a maximum of 3 per month, to be selected from among all existing applications on the basis of merit [defined as best meeting the criteria in 25-2-352(A)(3)(b)].
2. Extend the time limits for scheduling hearings on these applications to a maximum of 180 days, for the purpose of allowing HLC to manage its work by grouping hearings and making competitive merit determinations from a larger pool (e.g. bimonthly recommending up to 6 designations, or quarterly recommending up to 9 designations).

The purpose of these two changes – which belong together -- would be to enable the Landmark Commission to develop a cyclical approach to handling owner-initiated cases, in order to improve the quality of the applications as well as to achieve a more efficient use of staff and commission members' time. A longer time limit would give the commission flexibility in determining the best way to set the decision-making schedule within its

work flow throughout the year. If this change is adopted now, action on new owner-initiated applications could be held off until next year, allowing time to focus on other pressing program issues in the coming months.

3. Include the expiration date of December 31, 2011 or sooner.

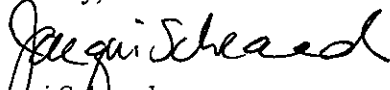
The questions before the Landmark Commission are substantive and significant and we believe that more time should be allotted in order to assure that the Commission will have sufficient time to complete its work.

4. Prohibit consultants from preparing applications for owner-initiated cases on a contingency-fee basis.

This provision would not prevent consultants from charging professional fees for preparing applications. Rather, it would bring the rules for representation in landmark cases in line with the rules for lobbying on other zoning cases.

We hope that you will support these changes, and that you will contact Lin Team at 917-1930 or Michael Holleran at 303-898-5535 if you have questions.

Sincerely,


Jacqui Schraad
Executive Director