

**Columbus Consolidated Government
Council Meeting Agenda Item**

TO:	Mayor and Councilors
AGENDA SUBJECT:	Liberty Theatre
AGENDA SUMMARY:	Approval is requested to accept the Liberty Theatre. The revitalization of the Liberty Theatre will preserve this historic structure in the Liberty District. There will be minimal cost to accept the donation of the Liberty Theatre. The annual operating budget is anticipated to be \$150,000 for direct expenditures plus additional pass thru expenditures with the expectation for programming to offset the expenditures after the facility is revitalized. The facility will be programmed and managed by the existing staff of the Civic Center.
INITIATED BY:	Community Reinvestment

Recommendation: Approval is requested to accept the Liberty Theatre.

Background:

- On October 29, 2019, a presentation was made to City Council regarding the current condition of the Liberty Theatre and the request from the Liberty Theatre representatives to assume ownership. The former Mayor Pro Tem Pugh requested staff to assess the feasibility of the City assuming ownership of the Liberty Theatre.
- On February 25, 2020, a presentation was made to City Council regarding the findings of the assessment of the Liberty Theatre and an estimated budget to revitalize the facility of \$3 million.
- The mission of the facility is to promote African America heritage, cultural and intellectual activities for the benefit and enjoyment of all who live in and visit Columbus, Georgia

Analysis: The revitalization of the Liberty Theatre will preserve this historic structure in the Liberty District. There are grant opportunities available to the Liberty Theatre if the facility is owned by a municipality. The findings of the assessment include major roof issues, severe water damage, fire alarm and fire protection systems not in working condition, HVAC units at the end of their useful life, electrical system repairs needed, replacement of theater lighting and A/V, kitchen renovation needed, interior and exterior improvements needed, and other items.

Financial Considerations: There will be minimal cost to accept the donation of the Liberty Theatre. The annual operating budget is anticipated to be \$150,000 for direct expenditures plus additional pass thru expenditures with the expectation for programming to offset the expenditures after the facility is revitalized. The facility will be programmed and managed by the existing staff of the Civic Center. An option is to add an Event Coordinator to the Civic Center staff at a total cost of \$49,015. The City will not take responsibility for any outstanding liabilities for the Liberty Theatre.

Legal Considerations: Council must approve acceptance of the Liberty Theatre.

Recommendation/Action: Approval is requested to accept the Liberty Theatre.

A RESOLUTION

NO.

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE LIBERTY THEATRE.

WHEREAS, the Liberty Theatre first opened its doors in 1924 as a segregated theatre where music legends performed; and,

WHEREAS, the Liberty Theatre closed in the 1970’s due to decline and reopened after renovations in 1996; and,

WHEREAS, privately owned and operated by the Liberty Theatre Cultural Center Inc.; and,

WHEREAS, the Liberty Theatre is in need of revitalization; and,

WHEREAS, there is grant funding available if the facility was owned by a municipality; and,

WHEREAS, the City performed an assessment and estimated the renovation costs to be \$3 million; and,

WHEREAS, the Liberty Theatre has offered to donate the facility to the City.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:

That the City Manager is hereby authorized to accept the Liberty Theatre.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia held on the _____ day of _____ 2020 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of ten members of said Council.

- Councilor Allen voting _____.
- Councilor Barnes voting _____.
- Councilor Crabb voting _____.
- Councilor Davis voting _____.
- Councilor Garrett voting _____.
- Councilor House voting _____.
- Councilor Huff voting _____.
- Councilor Thomas voting _____.
- Councilor Thompson voting _____.
- Councilor Woodson voting _____.

Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

B.H. “Skip” Henderson, Mayor