

THE LIBERTY THEATRE

Liberty Theater Cultural Center

City Council Meeting

February 25, 2020

About

- First opened its doors in 1924
- Closed in the 1970's due to decline, but reopened in 1996 after renovations
- Privately owned and operated by Liberty Theater Cultural Center Inc.
- Last theater production was in 2016
- Priorities for the center include renovations, expansion, community involvement and sustainability
- Mission: To promote African American heritage, cultural and intellectual activities for the benefit and enjoyment of all who live in and visit the Columbus, Georgia area



Current Challenges and Opportunities

- No renovations in almost 25 years
 - Roof leaks, water damage in theater, no lighting or sound system, no air conditioning, need new electric system, etc.
- Small number of staff/no funding to hire additional staff

Funding Opportunities

- One Georgia Special Purpose Award (DCA) - \$150,000
- Urgent/Emergency Needs Grant (Fox Theater Institute) - \$50,000



October 29, 2019

Considerations

- DCA grant requires that the property be owned by a public entity or have a long-term leasehold interest (99-year lease)
- Option to assess the property and conduct a feasibility study to determine if City ownership is an option
- Once renovated, consider using Civic Center staff for operations and programming



Assessment

- Participation
 - City staff to include Engineering, Inspections & Code, and Public Works
 - Contractors = Roofing, Fire Alarm, Fire Protection and HVAC
 - Liberty Theater engaged Brasfield & Gorrie
- Findings
 - Major roof issues
 - Severe water damage
 - Fire alarm and fire protection systems not in working order
 - HVAC units are at the end of the useful life
 - Electrical system repairs needed
 - Theater Lighting replacement
 - Theater A/V replacements
 - Kitchen renovation
 - Exterior improvements
 - Upgrade interior finishes
 - Paved access to loading dock
- Projected Budget = \$3 million



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QUESTIONS
