



## Legislation Details (With Text)

<b>File #:</b>	17-0085	<b>Version:</b>	1	<b>Name:</b>	Proposal for a historical, cultural and educational display in Northgate
<b>Type:</b>	Presentation	<b>Status:</b>		<b>Status:</b>	Agenda Ready
<b>File created:</b>	2/16/2017	<b>In control:</b>		<b>In control:</b>	City Council Workshop
<b>On agenda:</b>	2/23/2017	<b>Final action:</b>		<b>Final action:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	Presentation, possible action, and discussion on a proposal for a historical, cultural and educational display in Northgate.				
<b>Sponsors:</b>	Jay Socol				
<b>Indexes:</b>					
<b>Code sections:</b>					
<b>Attachments:</b>					

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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Presentation, possible action, and discussion on a proposal for a historical, cultural and educational display in Northgate.

### Relationship to City Council Strategic Goals:

- Core Services & Infrastructure
- Diverse & Growing Economy

**Recommendation(s):** Receive staff presentation and provide feedback and/or direction, as desired.

**Summary:** Lyle Lovett and Robert Earl Keen began their lasting friendship by strumming, singing and songwriting on the front porch of the Church Avenue house Keen rented during their student years at Texas A&M University. While the two acclaimed artists weren't the first or only Aggie musicians to entertain crowds at Northgate, they are arguably the most renowned and routinely speak of their memories of College Station and A&M during their performances throughout the U.S.

More than a year ago, the Bryan-College Station Eagle newspaper approached the city about the possibility of establishing a cultural marker where "this old porch" - forever immortalized in song - used to be located, since the property is owned by the city. Since then, discussions have involved personnel from The Eagle, the city, some Northgate business owners, a professional artist and even Mr. Lovett and Mr. Keen.

The concept has grown, as has enthusiasm by all parties.

**Concept:** The legendary "Front Porch," where Keen and Lovett met and became friends, is re-created on the promenade behind the Dixie Chicken, a stone's throw from the actual location on Church Avenue. Keen and Lovett are depicted sitting, singing and playing guitar - similar to how the men posed for a Texas Monthly cover photo - but with a chair in between them. This creates an interactive element, so people can sit and pose for photos that can be shared via social media and

other means.

**Structure:** All bronze. The porch, including base and roof, the two 6-foot figures (Keen sitting on porch step, Lovett on a chair) with an additional chair for interactivity; a banjo leaning against one of the four poles. The roof of the porch is also represented. It may include latticework connected to the front two poles to stay true to the original porch.

**Dimensions:** Porch is 6 feet wide and 10 feet long. The four supports are 8 feet in the rear and 7 feet in the front. The top is a lean-to that is 6 feet by 10 feet, with a 12-inch pitch.

**Cost:** \$195,000 covers work by the artist and the foundry, all of whom are Aggies and willing to do the project at a reduced price. The price does not include lighting, signage that explains the history behind the project, and necessary site work.

**Event connections:** An unveiling event with the two artists, accompanied by speeches and a performance. With a strong media relations and marketing push, College Station would receive positive attention in a variety of markets and outlets.

**A concert series:** "The Front Porch Music Series" featuring local/regional acts, in coordination with the Northgate venues and, ideally, in proximity of the very area that Lovett and Keen helped make famous. A committee of talent buyers, Northgate managers and music-oriented locals would be formed to discuss the best way to present the series, including the frequency of the event, scope of artists, equipment needs and other logistics.

**Funding:** Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp has generously pledged to fund half of the project. It is proposed that the balance be paid with Hotel Tax revenues, although any private donations would reduce the city's HOT commitment.

**Conclusion:** Not only is it an important part of College Station's history worthy of recognition, but there is a rare opportunity to create an iconic "destination within a destination" that will attract and educate Aggies and visitors of all ages and generate a positive economic impact to our Northgate merchants.