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February 20, 2015

William Bell
Mayor, The City of Birmingham
710-20th Street North
Birmingham, AL 35203

Re: The City of Birmingham's A.G. Gaston Motel Project

Dear Mayor Bell:

This letter is to commend and support you and the City of Birmingham for bringing to the fore a project to renovate the A.G. Gaston Motel for new use as part of an exciting new educational center. It is my understanding that the "integrity" of the historic motel (its exterior façade with its defining sign, interior auto courtyard, motel wing with its balconies, the café, and especially Room 30 -- the honeymoon suite and place where leaders of the Central Committee of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference who coordinated the marches and demonstrations of March-April 1963 met, as well as the room where not only the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., but nearly every prominent African American visitor to Birmingham, stayed -- is to be preserved in the current project.

As you know, Birmingham Historical Society was instrumental in researching and listing in 2006 the Gaston Motel as an integral part of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Register of Historic Places District, a district that is *nationally significant* on the National Register, thus making the motel eligible for federal funding, if and when that funding is available.

Birmingham Historic Society also published *MINUTES-Central Committee 1963 The Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights and Southern Christian Leadership Conference*, written by Ruth Pendleton Barefield. Mrs. Barefield-Pendleton took notes for her MINUTES during the meetings in Room 30 of the Gaston Motel. Her "you are there" account documents the daily strategy sessions and planning for the marches and demonstrations, adding to the significance of the site. See bhistorical.org/publications/minutes.

Cordially,

Marjorie L. White
Chairman of the Board