

# THEATRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

June 14, 2018

DeKalb City Council  
DeKalb Municipal Building  
200 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
DeKalb, IL 60115

Dear Members of Council,

For nearly fifty years, Theatre Historical Society of America (THSA) has celebrated, documented, and promoted the architectural, cultural, and social relevance of America's theatre buildings. In that time we have come to know that historic buildings do not exist in a vacuum. These structures must be considered within their social context, their impact upon the people who attended them for movies, music, or live shows, and their contribution to the life and vitality of the streets in the neighborhoods where they were found.

It has come to our attention that the Egyptian Theatre is seeking, through its #ItsTimeFor12Months campaign, \$2.5 million in funding from available TIF funds to install air-conditioning, which will allow the theatre to be open year round. It has never had air-conditioning since it opened in 1929, and as such, the largest foot traffic generator Downtown DeKalb is closed during the summer months, causing a ripple effect on area businesses. I enthusiastically support this effort and I hope that the City of DeKalb Council will provide this needed funding and support, as I consider the Egyptian Theatre a place of national significance.

The Egyptian Theatre is one of only a few surviving Egyptian theaters in the country. Its provenance cannot be understated: its closure during summer months has a negative impact on surrounding businesses, and the lack of climate control has a significant impact on the preservation efforts of the theatre.

It is our hope that the Mayor of DeKalb and the members of DeKalb City Council understand the importance of the Egyptian Theatre's cultural significance. We fully support the efforts of the board and volunteers of the Egyptian Theatre and we join them in asking you to support their plans for the future.

The Theatre Historical Society of America celebrates our nation's rich heritage of theater buildings and we consider the Egyptian Theatre to be an important part of our national identity. On behalf of our membership, I encourage City Council to support the Egyptian Theatre's proposal; it truly is a notable and irreplaceable piece of the community's and the nation's theatre history.

Sincerely,



Richard L. Fosbrink, Executive Director