

DRAFT OF MINUTES PROPOSED FOR ADOPTION BY THE GREENVILLE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

April 26, 2011

The Greenville Historic Preservation Commission held a meeting on the above date at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of City Hall located at 200 West Fifth Street.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

RYAN WEBB	JORDAN KEARNEY	
DENNIS CHESTNUT	KERRY CARLIN	JEREMY JORDAN, CHAIR
ROGER KAMMERER	JERRY WEITZ	CHARLOTTE COHEN, VICE CHAIR

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:

BRAD INGALLS	ANN SCHWARZMANN
--------------	-----------------

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: SETH LAUGHLIN, PLANNER; VALERIE PAUL, SECRETARY; MERRILL FLOOD, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR; BILL LITTLE, ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY; JONATHAN EDWARDS, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNICIAN;

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

(None)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Jordan asked if there were any changes or deletions to the minutes and there were none. **Chairman Jordan moved for the admission of the minutes as proposed, and Ryan Webb seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted unanimously.**

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Third Street School discussion and resolution

Mr. Laughlin thanked everyone for coming out despite the torrential rainstorms and began the discussion for the preservation resolution for the 3rd St. School, property located at 600 W. 3rd St., parcel number 28933.

Chairman Jordan concurred that there has been no official request yet to demolish the building, and observed some preliminary interest in considering it as an option.

The structure was built between 1929 and 1930 in the northern Italian Renaissance revival style. It was built to replace the Evans St. School that burned in 1929. The

building and grounds became a locally designated landmark by the Greenville City Council in 1988, at the request of the property owner, the Pitt County Board of Education. Recently the Pitt County Board of Education has expressed interest in demolition of the school building. Although staff has not received a formal request, a request Mr. Laughlin anticipates would come in the form of a COA to the agency.

Chairman Jordan then proposed a resolution to make as strong a statement as possible in response to this developing situation. The HPC did do a resolution about Third Street School in 2009 which was when the school board first communicated they were going to stop using the building as a school. At that time they stated they wanted to sell the property, and the HPC did a resolution for preservation of the building and asking the City to look into working with the school board, to whatever end would provide a suitable use for this historic building.

Chairman Jordan passed out a proposed resolution "requesting preservation Third Street School and grounds," and read the draft document into the record and asked for discussion.

Attorney Bill Little suggested a motion and a second before there be any discussion.

A motion was made by Mr. Chestnut and seconded by Ms. Cohen.

Chairman Jordan then asked for any discussion, and Mr. Chestnut suggested a small modification to the text of the resolution, specifically in the last paragraph; to the effect of potentially including private developers, in addition to state and/or nonprofit preservation organizations.

Chairman Jordan suggested modification to the language to include "or other interested parties," specifically, the language to be added here in bold text;

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Greenville that it does hereby request the City Council to work with the Pitt County Board of Education, appropriate state agencies, non-profit preservation organizations **and/or other interested persons** to save and protect the Third Street School and Grounds and find an appropriate use made of this designated historic property consistent with its historical significance.

Mr. Chestnut was agreeable to this amendment.

The proposal to amend the resolution was moved by Ms. Cohen, and seconded by Mr. Kammerer. The amendment passed unanimously.

Chairman Jordan requested a motion to accept the amended resolution as approved by the Council. **Mr. Kammerer made the motion and Ms. Cohen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Seth Laughlin, Planner, announced he would effect the requested changes forthwith.

FIG (Façade Improvement Grant) Update

Mr. Laughlin announced that for the Spring Cycle of 2011, a workshop had been scheduled to be held on Monday, May 2, 2011, to be located in Conference Room 337 of City Hall, 200 W. 5th St.; applications being due a month later on June 2. City Council approved to carry forward the funds from the last fiscal year to the amount of \$56,537. Combining this with the yearly allowance of \$25,000 per year, a total of \$84,822 (given a small accounting discrepancy, approximately \$3000 unaccounted) \$4725 remain outstanding from fall 2010, from the Greenville Museum of Art Façade Group Grant Application. Mr. Laughlin speculates that since they have till August, this doesn't represent any danger, and that the work will be completed shortly. Irregardless, this leaves a grand total available balance of \$80,097.

Discussion of HPC Workshop Dates

Mr. Laughlin reminded Commission members that the month of May is Preservation Month and that subsequently; a good time for a workshop; he suggested the following dates: 17th, 18th, 19th, 25th and 26th of May. He also requested that Commission members offer any particular topics they would like to see discussed or any potential speakers they would like to suggest.

Chairman Jordan instructed commission members to contact Mr. Laughlin at their earliest convenience via e-mail, and to let Mr. Laughlin know if there are any obvious conflicts. The workshops are anticipated to be approximately a half day long each. All Commission members should allot them half a day, according to Mr. Laughlin.

Staff report: Minor Works COA's

Mr. Laughlin announced that there are two this month, two next-door neighbors doing HVAC work, 1203 and 1205 E. 5th St. He anticipates more such work as summer warms up.

Staff Report: Update On Non-compliant Historic Properties

There are no noncompliant cases going on at this time.

Mr. Webb raised the question of fire damage in re: HPC compliance. Or specifically, “The two fires that we've had recently, will they now be considered noncompliant? How do you keep watch on those?”

Mr. Laughlin deferred the question to Attorney Little who replied that they generally don't “fall” at this point, “because this point what they've done where the fires have occurred is that they're having to either finish the demolition, since the two that were involved were not designated landmark properties. It may have been in the district, but they were not designated as landmark properties. They should obtain authorization through the HPC for a COA to finish the demolition. I don't know if that has been done, if they want to get with the owners on that.” This demolition is not of major significance according to Attorney Little.

Chairman Jordan brought it to Attorney Little's attention that the Higgs House is a local landmark, to which Attorney Little replied that “If they are designated landmark, then you're going to have to go through procedures for either the demolition, as provided by the (unintelligible), or for remodeling.

The question was raised of how the decision is made to demolish or not in the case of a building that is burned but not utterly burned to the ground, which is the case with both properties.

Mr. Laughlin said that he and Mr. Flood did visit the Higgs House the day of the fire, in addition to the property owner and the fire department, and “The damage to the house is not extensive enough to have it condemned due to fire damage. It had significant other maintenance issues but the property owner is aware that any reconstruction is going to have to meet the guidelines, as far as the exterior goes.”

Mr. Laughlin: “I did check with our chief building inspector this morning about the house on Summit St. to see if he knew where the property owner stood on that. He had not heard anything from him in some time.” He promised to keep the Commission updated as events unfold for both houses, particularly the Summit Street house.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no speakers present for the Public Comment Period.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr. Webb said that they had not met.

PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

Ms. Cohen said that they had not met.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

Chairman Jordan announced they had not met.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/OTHER

Mr. Chestnut raised the question, "Are you going to get someone to convene the Selection Committee?"

Chairman Jordan replied that "we could add that to the agenda under "other;" can we not, Counsel?"

Attorney Little concurred.

Chairman Jordan asked who would like to be the chairperson of the Selection Committee, to which Mr. Chestnut volunteered. Chairman Jordan asked Mr. Laughlin if there are funds to select a landmark property, as "that's usually what the selection committee mainly works on."

Mr. Laughlin: "I need to check that account but I feel pretty confident that we still have enough for one or two."

Mr. Flood concurred, but warned of the approaching end to the fiscal year, and that time is of the essence to get on the current year's budget.

Chairman Jordan: All right, and I'll ask one more question before we leave it to the committee. When I was last on commission and serving that committee, we had a priority list. Does it still exist?

Mr. Chestnut replied "In some form, yes."

Chairman Jordan said our last discussion was on the priority list. I think we did vote on that list. I think we need to go back and check and see exactly where we are on -- I know we were supposed to be contacting people to make sure they wanted to remain on the list. Chairman Jordan instructed Mr. Laughlin that if he could find the status of that priority list, and how much time we have, to see if it's possible we can do it this year or not, then the committee can convene and get to work on that.

Mr. Chestnut brought to the attention of Chairman Jordan a clerical error on the HPC's list of staff or commissioned members that he is listed, erroneously, as Vice Chair. Mr. Chestnut brought to the attention of Chairman Jordan of another clerical error, listing Mr. Ryan Webb erroneously as chairman.

Mr. Carlin brought forth the question about the current status of Brad Ingalls. He said that he was under the impression that his term was over.

Chairman Jordan said that either way he's now missed a three sessions so the council has one vacancy.

Mr. Laughlin: "we were talking to counsel this evening that Mr. Ingles has missed three in a row, which would constitute stepping down from the commission. We would like to give him an opportunity to come to the next meeting, if he does wish to continue."

Mr. Flood: Is that all right with everybody else, since he's missed three, to go ahead and give him another chance to come back if he wants to?

To which Chairman Jordan was agreeable.

Mr. Chestnut put out the initial warning that he was going to be calling folks on the Selection Committee and to try to convene the committee.

The issue was raised that some committees are referred to as subcommittees and others not. Chairman Jordan explained that in fact all are subcommittees.

Mr. Chestnut: "We've read about the loan for locally designated -- I've read about it in the paper, yet I've not heard us say anything about it. So I would like for us to really talk about it. And if we talked about it, it was a very hurried and -- but if I remember -- it was for locally designated landmarks for exterior work. And I'd like for us to really put this out there because on some of our locally-designated -- the Higgs House being one. They are -- other couple was one on 14th St. all I know is it's being refurbished.

Chairman Jordan: "it's actually for local landmarks or even -- basically anything our guidelines apply to can use those funds. And we did discuss it briefly at my first meeting back, which I think was January. And I went to the city Council meeting where they discussed it and very quickly approved it."

Mr. Laughlin said that flyers and application similar to the Façade Improvement Grant would be sent out next week.

Mr. Chestnut: And that note would go to all of owners of the locally designated landmarks?

Mr. Flood: all local designated properties. So that's our landmarks and ECU College View district. So in this case it will go to property owners."

Mr. Chestnut: "You said had to be in the College View?"

Mr. Laughlin: "or a local landmark. Anything locally designated, that's right - in the entire district.

Mr. Chestnut: "I can certainly see letters going to the locally designated landmarks because those are the ones again sometimes that are more distant than the property owners. And I'm saying owners because I hope that's where it's going.

Mr. Laughlin: "That's correct."

Mr. Chestnut: I don't know, again, what the mechanism is for College View, but that is a substantial amount of apps.

Mr. Laughlin: "we do large-scale mailings all the time, so that will be 256 letters for the college view, plus or minus 21 for the landmarks, assuming there aren't multiple owners.

Mr. Chestnut: is it possible for you while you are there just to run through it real, real quick, as an announcement type of thing that people will know that's available?

Mr. Flood was agreeable.

Mr. Laughlin: said the program was approved by City Council approximately 2 weeks ago on Thursday. "The program, as we've said, is valid for all properties of the College View Historic District as well as our locally designated landmarks. The loan amounts are up to \$10,000, and they are zero interest loans. So they will be recorded with the deed of trust as guaranteed loans, I guess is the best way to put that. It can be up to \$10,000. They can be amortized over six years, I believe it is. And all works will have to comply with the design guidelines, similar to the Façade Improvement Grant. So it's going to be for the exterior of the property, or for the contributing elements of the grounds; outbuildings, retaining walls, things that we obviously see before us. So we certainly encourage people to come out and make these applications. All the applicable property owners will be receiving a mailer with all the applicable information, within the next week or so.

Mr. Kammerer inquired about the status of the Intermodal Transportation Center and he asked what was going on with that neighborhood. He observed seeing heavy work going on, and heavy work being done on the church at Forbes and 10th St.

Chairman Jordan responded that the church is owned by the East Carolina University, and he believes their intention is to clear that site, and they did check with him beforehand to see if there were any historic designations the property would be considered eligible for national registration by the survey that went out for the 10th St. connector project, and that was the extent of it, so there is no binding protection for that property. And as for the house that just got razed, Chairman Jordan observed he had

just noticed that one himself.

Chairman Jordan asked Mr. Flood for the latest update on the Intermodal Transportation Center.

Mr. Flood referenced the memorandum (see packet) from Thomas Moton Jr., Assistant City Manager and Project Manager for the Intermodal Transportation Center. "As you know, the historic preservation commission signed on, maybe several years back, with the MOA for this project along with the Federal Transit Administration. The project is still moving forward, still in the environmental assessment phase of the project specifically, related to the Jones Lee House, to be sure that it is safe and meets the requirements, to be preserved in a manner that is not only in keeping with the commission's guidelines, but also with Federal Transit Administration, and through the MEPA process. The memorandum basically provides a timeline for the project of anticipated hopeful Notice of Availability -- which we are in right now the public comment period, which began on April 11. The idea is to get a Finding Of No Significant Impact, or FONSI, statement, which will allow for the transition to hopefully move the home to a suitable site, and that's the goal of this project, is to move the home to a suitable site, preserve it, and give it a certain afterlife that will make it a productive member of and would preserve the structure in the community. So we anticipate getting to that process shortly, following the public comment period. Hopefully, the Federal Transit Administration will go forward with the issuance of that FONSI and following that, there would be a selection of a suitable site, and moving the home to that site upon completion of the process."

Mr. Webb asked, when the steering committee is formed for this, would it be possible to have somebody from this commission be on the steering committee?

Mr. Flood promised to mention that to the project, and concurred that that sounded appropriate.

Mr. Webb said that some of the guidelines that are laid down at that agreement, I'm not sure how we're supposed to have input on that, without just signing off on it at the end.

Mr. Webb said that "the other thing about that whole area that's -- I guess you're kind of looking at three different blocks over there, with three different things going on. ECU has one block, Intermodal transportation Center has a block, and then there is a development on the other block that's creating quite a bit of blight already there. Is there something we can do to not let that sit there like that for 3 to 5 years?"

Mr. Flood replied that "And we're also starting to look at that corridor for our next phase of streetscape initiatives and it's very important to us, just as you mentioned, that that

block have a certain "curb appeal," so that we don't expose the blight and just leave it there. So the city will be working, you know, within our projects as well as our partners, to determine the most expedient way to repair what we have there so that it doesn't become an eyesore for the community that we have to look at for a 3-5 year period."

Mr. Webb asked, how long can those vacant building just sit there boarded up, with the parking lot rented around them?

Mr. Flood offered to look into this and get an answer for the commission on that.

Mr. Webb said that "I think you're looking at three different cases there, but I think it's happening at all three of those different blocks, where there is just a bunch of derelict structures that are being -- parking lots that are being rented out for ECU students, and I'm sure they'll let that go on as long as they can."

Mr. Flood offered to put this on the next development committee group with the University.

Mr. Webb mentioned receiving an e-mail, from a parking perspective, at ECU, "of all the things going on there which I think involves that church where all the stained glass has just been removed, the parking adjustments taking place over there. But the gist of it is that the parking adjustments are happening because several things are going to be demolished."

Mr. Flood said, "I don't know if some of the commission was part of the master planning process for the university. I know that as part of their update to their master plan, the University has determined possible buildings that would be placed in these areas where the buildings are coming down, in the future. The timing is anyone's best guess at this point." Mr. Flood offered that the university has a long-range vision for how that intersection will function, and those vacant parcels are what will occupy them in the future.

Mr. Chestnut mentioned, in regard to the church at Forbes Street, that there had been some previous attempts at getting it under a local designation but it was turned down by the owners long ago. "Just for a matter of record, I would hope that people that are doing the development, speaking in this case particularly of the University, would know that to have something look attractive and be appealing doesn't always mean tearing something down. We want to bring people, and I would hope in our wisdom that the University would know that you want to bring people in -- and some of those quite attractive things that make a difference is what calls a person to take a swing to go through that area rather than just a Starbucks or the Champs Élysées Greenville. And I want that for a matter of record, that they seem to be oblivious to doing that, and I've

seen cities and towns where the university did that until it was nothing but just strip malls, when it was supposed to be attractive and appealing."

Chairman Jordan mentioned also that the University had just renovated the Mamie Jenkins building on campus and that he had gone in there and checked it out. He said that he was pleased to see that they had kept the original windows, the original doors, even the original radiators, which are nonfunctional, just for aesthetics. Overall, Chairman Jordan commended the work on the building.

Mr. Chestnut said, "Which is on campus however, which means people from the street who often may not go into the -- and I do commend that kind of thing, but doesn't change the fact that we bulldoze things down outside of them."

Chairman Jordan requested any further input, and there being none, **Mr. Carlin made the motion to adjourn, Mr. Chestnut seconded it and it passed unanimously.** The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Seth Laughlin, Planner