

**MINUTES ADOPTED BY THE GREENVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

May 24, 2016

The Greenville Historic Preservation Commission held a meeting on the above date at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of City Hall located at 200 West Fifth Street.

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:**

JEREMY JORDAN-CHAIR	DAVID HURSH-VICE CHAIR
DAVID DENNARD	ALICE ARNOLD
KERRY CARLIN	WILLIAM GEE
ELIZABETH WOOTEN	JAKE POSTMA
TYRONE WALSTON	

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** COLLETTE KINANE, PLANNER II; THOMAS WEITNAUER, CHIEF PLANNER and AMY NUNEZ, SECRETARY

**OTHERS PRESENT:** BILL LITTLE, ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY and KELVIN THOMAS, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNICIAN

**ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA**

**Mr. Carlin made a motion to accept the agenda as written, Mr. Gee seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Ms. Arnold requested to change her statement on page 5 to include “either a reactive or proactive effort”. Mr. Dennard requested to add the word “persons” on page 4 where Attorney Little stated he will suggest a recess “to calm down”.**

**Ms. Arnold made a motion to approve the April 26, 2016 minutes with the requested changes, Mr. Dennard seconded, and it passed unanimously.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**FIG: 718 Dickinson Avenue**

Ms. Kinane stated the Design Review Committee met to review the application. The applicant was not present but provided a letter that was in the Commissioners’ packets. She stated the applicant calls his project a “true live work place.” The property will have two retail shops on the first level and two apartments above. The FIG includes: repainting the exterior \$7,800, stucco work \$2,000, new windows \$6,164, new storefront glass \$10,660, a steel staircase (west side), and metal awnings \$6,850. The windows would be excluded since they have been installed before this hearing. The applicant had requested feedback regarding the color of the exterior. The submitted plan has a green/grey color. Ms. Kinane stated the application was geared toward the Dickinson side façade (south side).

Chairman Jordan stated that the three façades of the property are eligible, but only one application was received. Each side needs its own application.

Ms. Kinane stated the applicant only provided information on the west and south sides.

Chairman Jordan stated the Design Review Committee reviewed the application and recommends funding a single façade grant for \$5,000 for the front of the building.

Mr. Hursh asked if the applicant could apply for another façade and receive funds.

Ms. Kinane stated yes but could only be considered if work was not done before the public hearing.

Mr. Postma asked if the storefront glass would have a more historic look if this façade grant was approved.

Ms. Kinane stated that Commissioners can make recommendations. The Design Guidelines state that eligible funding for glass includes repair or replacement of non-historic windows. She stated typically historic designed windows include a knee wall which was proposed in the submitted design.

**Mr. Dennard made a motion to approve the FIG for \$5,000.00 for front side of 718 Dickinson Ave., seconded by Ms. Wooten and the motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Postma asked for the history of the building.

Attorney Little stated years ago it was the license plate agency. In the 1960's it was a bank. It stated he doesn't remember it having historical significance.

Chairman Jordan asked for suggestions regarding color per the applicant's request.

Mr. Hursh stated he prefers neutral with contrasting accent color.

Mr. Postma stated he would like to see a mural since it is in the Arts District.

Mr. Hursh stated that the applicant's information stated that there is a mural that could possibly be saved on the west side of the building.

Ms. Wooten would like to see color in the awnings or stucco.

Chairman Jordan stated he would like to see a contrast in colors.

Mr. Carlin stated that the Pender Moore House and the Jones Lee House are good examples of color.

### **Request to City Council for Preservation Easement on Imperial Site**

Ms. Kinane stated City Council decided at the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting to defund their intent to complete the purchase of the Imperial Tobacco Warehouse site. The City purchased the site for one dollar with the intent that, once the clean up was completed, they would complete the purchase. Chairman Jordan suggested to Staff that the HPC should raise attention to City Council of the historical significance of the site. There are two buildings, an office and a garage, on the site that are viable for adaptive reuse. A preservation easement was recommended. Chairman Jordan wrote a letter, which was included in the packet. If the Commission approves it, he will sign it and it will be forwarded to City Council.

Chairman Jordan stated the remaining buildings are in the same architectural style as the warehouse was.

Ms. Kinane stated that Chairman Jordan asked for SHPO's (State Historic Preservation Office) opinion. Scott Power responded to the request stating that "preservation easements and covenants can be very effective tools to encourage the preservation of historic buildings. As you are probably aware, the HPC has the statutory authority to hold easements as provided by the state enabling legislation. If successful, easements might be the best way of preserving the former Imperial Tobacco Company office building. The building has a great similarity to its sister Imperial office building in Kinston which is currently being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. And, like the one here in Greenville, the office building in Kinston is also the sole remaining building for what was once a much larger complex. These buildings represent both architectural and commercial significance as it relates to the dominant tobacco industry in eastern North Carolina during the early to mid-twentieth century. If you reference the Dickinson Avenue Historic District nomination and the Greenville architecture publication, I believe the Imperial office building is discussed in both."

Chairman Jordan stated that the letter suggests that a preservation easement be placed on the two remaining buildings on the site if the City does not complete the purchase. It means the buildings will need to be adaptively reused versus demolished.

Ms. Wooten asked about current protections without a preservation easement just by the nature of the two buildings being contributing structures to the historic district.

Ms. Kinane stated none. Contributing structures to the National Registry is just an honorary designation. It makes it eligible for federal and state tax credits.

Ms. Wooten asked about the City's option to purchase the site.

Ms. Kinane stated the City is the current owner. In order to apply for Brownfield's Grants, the City has to own the property. As part of the agreement with the previous owner, once the clean up was complete, the City would complete the purchase.

Chairman Jordan stated the City could purchase or revert the property back to the original owner.

Mr. Postma asked if the easement would be placed if the City owned it or not.

Ms. Kinane stated the easement would be attached to the deed in perpetuity if the City sells the property.

Mr. Postma asked if the owner could do what he wished with the rest of the property.

Ms. Kinane stated yes, but not to demolish the two buildings.

Mr. Dennard asked about enforcement.

Attorney Little stated that the easement will run in perpetuity with the land. If there is a violation, there would be a statutory remedy. The municipality would enforce the easement through the injunctive process with the courts.

Ms. Wooten asked if the City contract would allow a preservation easement.

Chairman Jordan stated at the City Council meeting, a Councilmember asked the City Attorney if the City had fee simple possession. The City Attorney stated yes. The agreement stated that the City will make a payment at the end of the clean up or the property back will revert back to the original owner.

Attorney Little stated there are two types of fee simple. One is a fee simple which is unrestricted ownership. The other is conditional or reversionary fee simple which means that as long as you comply with the conditional clause, you own the property.

Ms. Wooten asked if the City could do an easement before it reverts.

Attorney Little stated yes.

Mr. Dennard asked how popular preservation easements are.

Attorney Little stated it depends on the prospective purchaser. Revitalize, capitalize, or for another use. It narrows the scope of a potential buyer.

Ms. Arnold stated it would be more attractive to buyers without the easement.

Attorney Little stated the City could place the easement later while finding buyers and convey to buyers of the easement. If it goes back to the original owner, then the easement would be placed then.

Chairman Jordan stated the intent is to preserve the remaining structures on this site. He stated it is the HPC's job to identify and protect such properties. City Council will ultimately make the decision.

Ms. Kinane stated the preservation easement tool will not limit or prohibit development. It only states that the remaining buildings not be demolished.

Ms. Wooten asked if the easement was approved, could the new owners request demolition to City Council.

Ms. Kinane stated yes, there are scenarios where demolition could be allowed.

Mr. Hursh stated that these buildings are in good condition.

Chairman Jordan stated the garage is in good condition. The office building has a little fire damage but still has good bones that should be preserved.

Ms. Wooten stated Ms. Arnold concern is valid. It is our job of the HPC to bring this to the attention of City Council. The two buildings are in the middle of the property and it could be limiting to a developer's prospective. She is content with knowing that the easement could be amended under the right circumstances. She will recommend the easement request.

Mr. Dennard stated they need to be strong advocates for historic preservation and send this message to City Council. He stated developers will make it work.

**Mr. Hursh made a motion to approve the Imperial Site preservation easement request to City Council, seconded by Mr. Gee. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **Planning Division Response to HPC Request for Trash Violations Report**

Mr. Thomas Weitnauer stated as supervisor over the Planning Division staff that provides a staff liaison to the HPC, one of his responsibilities is to monitor meetings to ensure the HPC is working toward fulfilling areas of the Commission's stated purpose. He has served as a staff liaison to other HPCs for 15 years and understands the challenges that arise so that the Commission can grow into the most effective Commission it can be through achieving positive successes in its work program and within its authority. Upon receipt of an e-mail he was copied on whereby Ms. Kinane started to request a trash violation report from Public Works, he intervened and withdrew the request and directed Ms. Kinane to add him to the agenda so he

could address the Commission on this matter. He determined that expending Commission and staff resources on an area not within the purview of the Historic Preservation Commission's authority is taking away from other historic preservation programs that need to be pursued. The motion for information from Public Works and Code Enforcement has been intercepted and is not something that should be pursued. He stated he agrees with the problem of trash and trash violations without any progress. The College View Historic District is not as pristine and vibrant as it should be. The role of the HPC is to identify and preserve. The Commission is project based and by sticking to the mission statement, they will get more support by City Council. The Commission is doing an excellent job and the committees are meeting regularly. The Dickinson Avenue Expansion will create more work and hopefully more success. He stated he has seen the trash issues in the College View area. He stated he will help with ways to address it. He recommended that the Commission stick to the work plan and stay within the purview of the HPC.

Mr. Hursh stated he has no problem with not continuing with the violation report. He understands that individual residents need to make the complaints. He asked if it was possible to make a statement to city Council.

Mr. Weitnauer stated yes, but not a resolution or project. He has raised awareness about this to the City Manager's Office.

Mr. Postma stated he does not have a problem with not following up with the violation reports. He stated the problem does continue. Although it is not a function of the HPC, it needs to be acknowledged and he will mention it in every meeting. The issue cannot be ignored and something has to be done. As a property owner in the historic district, he must come before the Commission to improve his property but trash cans can be out and that does not protect his investment.

Mr. Weitnauer stated that lack of attention can possibly cause more issues.

Mr. Dennard stated the concern has to do with education of people moving in and out of the area. The reports they requested would be evidence of the problem.

Mr. Weitnauer stated that he could follow up to see what type of report is available and get the information to the right people so they can hear your concerns. He has seen pamphlets regarding properties in the historic district and stated there should be one also for tenants to educate them in the care of the district.

Mr. Hursh stated that the Publicity Committee has been looking into brochures to educate. The problem arises due to the amount of rental properties in this district. Owners need to be responsible and they need to communicate to their tenants. He suggested research to see if this issue exists in historic districts in other areas/states.

Mr. Weitnauer stated he could look into it. There are a few new apartment buildings going up that could have an economic impact the historic district. He suggested preparing information and working with property owners to educate tenants.

Mr. Hursh stated it is a catch-22 because they will push to have 4-unrelated tenants.

Ms. Arnold made a motion to request the City to make a concerted effort to enforce the rules regarding trash cans and trash removal processes.

Mr. Hursh stated that the motion should be broader and include the general maintenance and expectation of the College View District.

Mr. Dennard stated they should focus on trash and consider other issues later.

Mr. Hursh stated to include “due to a visual decline in the College View District” and to first address trash. This would leave the door open for future issues.

**Ms. Arnold made a motion, due to the visual decline of the College View District, to request the City to make a concerted effort to enforce the rules regarding trash cans and trash removal processes in the College View Area, seconded by Mr. Gee and the motion passed unanimously.**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

No one spoke for public comment.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### *Design Review Committee*

Chairman Jordan stated they met regarding tonight’s FIG application.

#### *Publicity Committee*

Mr. Postma stated they did not meet.

#### *Selection Committee*

Chairman Jordan stated they did not meet because they currently do not have a task.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Kinane stated as a reminder that the June 28<sup>th</sup> and July 26<sup>th</sup> 2016 HPC meetings will be located in Room 337 of City Hall.

Mr. Postma stated he emailed Ms. Kinane about construction going on at a property on Eastern Street in the historic district. He stated there were putting on an aluminum roof.

Ms. Kinane stated that a building permit was not needed. The property is at 311 S. Eastern Street. She has made contact with the landlord who told him that the roofing company said they had gotten pre-approval. She will contact the roofing company. The landlord will submit an after-the-fact certificate of appropriateness application. He said there was a serious leak due to rain that needed repair. The COA will be at the June 2016 meeting.

Mr. Dennard stated that this scenario shows why education is important.

Chairman Jordan stated that in the past after-the-fact COAs was common but education has helped since there has not been an application for one in a long time. Over the years, the relationship with the College View District has improved.

Attorney Little stated that if you see something in the historic district, let Ms. Kinane know and she will follow up.

Mr. Weitnauer stated that they have COA signs for approval. If there is work being done and no COA sign, please call the Planning Division.

Mr. Hursh stated that information should also be sent to realtors.

Ms. Kinane stated she reached out to the Association of Realtors of Pitt County to add historic preservation as a topic to their monthly meetings. They would consider it.

**With there being no further discussion, Mr. Dennard made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Hursh, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Collette Kinane, Planner II