

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

June 27, 2017

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

### **COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Candace Pearce - Chair	Chris Nunnally
Kerry Carlin	William Gee
Myron Caspar	Mary Ellen Cole

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** Collette Kinane, Planner II; Ben Griffith, Director of Community Development and Amy Nunez, Staff Specialist II

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Donald Phillips, Assistant City Attorney; Kelvin Thomas, Communications Technician, Christian Lockamy, Senior Economic Developer and Shyla Boskey with the Economic Development Division

### **ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA**

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

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Ms. Cole made a motion to approve the May 23, 2017 minutes as presented, Mr. Carlin seconded, and it passed unanimously.**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Imperial Site Update**

Mr. Christian Lockamy stated the property is located in the center of two major areas: the Central Business District/Urban Core and West Greenville. It was a tobacco business that for 100 years was the largest employer of African Americans. In 2008, Mr. Tom Taft attempted to restore the building to resemble the American Tobacco building in Durham, NC, but the building caught fire and was too expensive to continue the project. The property consists of 9-12 acres with a dilapidated building and land. The City bailed out the owner by purchasing the land for \$1 dollar and \$1,000,033 to be paid later with the purpose to clean up the site. The cleaning process cost over half million dollars to complete, which included removal of two oil tanks and dirt that could not be removed by any companies in North Carolina. The new vision for the property is to have a combination of development and redevelopment to maximize the tax value. It could include new offices, businesses, job creation and more. J Davis Architect firm out of Raleigh and Philadelphia drew the plan to show the big picture phase. (pages 1-9 of PowerPoint presentation.)

Ms. Shyla Boskey continued the presentation. She stated the City decided to do the next steps, which was to get help for the development from UNC School of Government, which they use DFI (Development Finance Initiative). DFI has worked on over 90 projects throughout NC. One project was The Water Street Parking Deck Redevelopment in Wilmington, NC. The purpose was to take a current parking structure, revitalize it and make it part of their vibrant urban core. DFI looked at 4 components: public interest, site analysis, market analysis and financial analysis. The project is under construction. It is a \$78 million development.

The Imperial site is deemed the largest remaining development tract, it is in the Center City and strategically connected to ECU. Developers wanted to add student housing. Citizens wanted affordable housing, arts, new jobs, parking and more. DFI provided the estimate of potential mix of uses:

1. Residential = 316 units
2. Retail = 20,177 SF
3. Office = 66,408 SF
4. Parking = 1,094 spaces
5. Green Space = 12,400 SF (pages 10-14 of PowerPoint presentation)

The estimated cost is \$68,000,000 of private investment. Therefore the project is now at the process of releasing the solicitation to developers. Once responses are received, they will be evaluated and staff will continue to move forward.

Mr. Lockamy stated that the RFP (request for proposal) has been sent out. There will be a developer meeting on July 13<sup>th</sup> to show them the site and receive public input. The design could look a little different from the PowerPoint presentation and the DFI proposal. It is not too late for citizen input. Citizens can attend City Council meetings to have their opinions heard.

### **Façade Improvement Grant Program Review**

Ms. Kinane stated Chairwoman Pearce asked her to go through the FIG files and create a before/after overview. She showed the before and after overviews which consisted of 70 out of 130 grants, with 3 grants in progress. Some of the buildings have been demolished and others have had repeated FIG grants. She indicated that for every grant dollar spent the property owner/developer spent \$5.05. She also stated that there were a lot of incomplete files which included no before, no after, or neither pictures. The FIG files span the years from 1997 to the present.

Chairwoman Pearce asked to add the historic nature of the building to the FIG application.

Ms. Kinane stated that not all the eligibility area is included in a national register district. Requiring Chairwoman Pearce's request would disadvantage some property owners and make the process not equal.

Chairwoman Pearce stated that it cannot be justified for an applicant to follow the Design Guidelines if the historic nature of the building is not included. More documentation and pictures are needed to justify the grants.

Ms. Kinane stated being historic and pictures are not requirements of receiving the grant.

Mr. Gee asked what benefits are received of knowing the old use of a property if it is not being restored to that use.

Chairwoman Pearce stated that someone may want to restore a property to its original use.

Mr. Gee stated that it should be up to the applicant at that time for the history and not to an applicant who wants to add an awning or paint the building.

Chairwoman Pearce stated that a record should be kept of the history throughout the changes to know how the grant money is being spent.

Ms. Cole suggested that information regarding previous grants be included on current FIG applications. She stated she is more interested in what the properties have become since the grant program started versus their entire history.

Ms. Kinane stated that a picture could be more informative than the history.

Mr. Caspar stated FIG grants are designed to improve the looks of neighborhoods.

Mr. Nunnally stated that a balance is needed. It is important to acknowledge the history but making it a requirement might discourage applicants.

Mr. Caspar asked the purpose of the current discussion.

Ms. Kinane stated Chairwoman Pearce requested before/after information of FIG applications.

Chairwoman Pearce stated that not everyone understands what a façade is and how the request adheres to the Historic Secretary of Standards. The information will help educate applicants.

Attorney Phillips stated the Façade Improvement Guidelines that currently exists, under process for receiving grant item #3 states: *Two professional estimates on cost, picture of the façade, a diagram and a paragraph illustrating the proposed work are to be included with the application.* Also item #8 states: *Upon project completion, copies of paid statements and*

*canceled checks along with photos of the completed work must be submitted to the City of Greenville to claim reimbursement.*

Ms. Kinane stated she assures that photos are received and applications are complete. She cannot go back in time and complete the incomplete files.

Chairwoman Pearce read items 2 and 3 under Purpose from the FIG Guidelines: *2. Encourage good design projects that capitalize on rehabilitation of the original fabric or design of existing properties; and 3. Preserve the unique character of Greenville's historic central business district.* She stated that applications need to be filled correctly as requirement to receive the grant.

### **Overview of Properties Chosen by Selection Committee for Potential Local Landmark Designation**

Ms. Kinane presented the six sites to be reviewed for landmark designation:

1. Ken's Furniture / Hines Building – 905 Dickinson Avenue. This ca. 1916 Hines Building is the district's only example of a commercial Richardsonian Romanesque Revival-style building. The Hines Building is one of the finest, intact, early-twentieth-century commercial buildings in Greenville. The massive two-story building is constructed of dark red brick with granite trim. It was built for James M. Hines, proprietor of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company in Greenville; and occupied by Ken's Furniture Company through the 1960s and 1970s.
2. Roxy Theater – 629 Albemarle Avenue. This 1948, one-story brick Art Deco movie theater was built for the African American community. It features a raised, stepped parapet with vertical metal trim and has its original metal marquee. The ticket office has been removed. The building is currently utilized as a church.
3. Tar River Locks – no address. Construction on the locks was begun in 1853 by Col. W.B. Thompson through a state appropriation of \$25,000. A second appropriation of \$15,000 was made in 1855, but construction was never completed. The remains of the locks below Greenville remained a landmark on the river and were a stopping place for steamboats to flat their goods to Greenville during low water as late as 1899.
4. Brody's Department Store – 410 Evans Street. With its parapet roof line and terra cotta veneer facade this two-story, c. 1925 Gothic-inspired building has distinctive corner turrets. Although the storefront has been altered, the second story retains its integrity. Three arched metal casement windows on the second story are set in vouissour surrounds. The windows surmount a decorative band of blind arches. This design element is repeated in the cornice. Although Brody's operated out of this building in the 1940s and 1950s, city directories name Coburn Shoes as the occupant in 1940, and W. B. Dry Goods in 1926.
5. Dr. Andrew Best House and Practice - 401 Moyewood Drive. Dr. Andrew Best and Malene Irons brought about desegregation in Pitt County's hospital. Dr. Best provided leadership as ECU desegregated and provided housing for ECU's first African-American

student, Laura Elliott (Leary). During the 60's and 70's, many meetings took place here as part of the Civil Rights movement in Greenville. Dr. Best also provided tutoring to students to help them through high school and resulted in their college admission.

6. Dr. James A. Battle – 1208 W. Fourth Street. This property was built and lived in by Dr. and Mrs. James A. Battle. Dr. Battle (1885-1953) was one of the first African American physicians to practice in Greenville. He was on the staff at Pitt Memorial Hospital until his death. The house was later sold to Dr. Andrew Best. This house is significant to the history of the African American professional class in Greenville at the beginning of the 20th century.

Ms. Kinane has been in contact with Dr. Battle's granddaughter. The only property that has a response is the Tar River Locks. Mr. Vince Bellis submitted the application.

Chairwoman Pearce asked about the wait time for a response.

Ms. Kinane stated she sends out a first letter than a second. If no response, the property returns to the list. There is funding for 2 markers a year.

#### **Public Comment Period**

No public comments were provided.

#### **Committee Reports**

Committees did not meet.

#### **Announcements/Other**

Ms. Kinane attended a staff workshop two weeks ago in Raleigh, NC and received a Certificate from the National Parks Services. The certificate was thanking the City of Greenville HPC for being a Certified Local Government (CLG) since 1990.

**With no further discussion, Mr. Gee made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Carlin seconded, and it passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:11 pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Collette Kinane, Planner II