

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

May 24, 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:**

CHARLOTTE COHEN      JORDAN KEARNEY  
DENNIS CHESTNUT      KERRY CARLIN      JEREMY JORDAN  
ANN SCHWARZMANN      ROGER KAMMERER      JERRY WEITZ

**COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:**

RYAN WEBB

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** CHRIS PADGETT, CHIEF PLANNER; SETH LAUGHLIN, PLANNER; VALERIE PAUL, SECRETARY; JONATHAN EDWARDS, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNICIAN; BILL LITTLE, ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY

**ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA**

Mr. Seth Laughlin, Planner, asked to add "Local Landmark Update" under New Business and have it as item #3.

Mr. Chestnut asked if they could move the discussion about the items for TRUNA down under the Committee reports because he feels that there is information in the reports that could possibly impact the discussion.

**Mr. Chestnut made the motion to approve both changes, Mr. Kearney seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chairman Jordan pointed out a few places where the speakers were incorrectly identified and he noted that there was a new person taking minutes for that meeting.

**Motion was made by Mr. Kammerer, seconded by Ms. Cohen, to approve the minutes with amendments. The motion carried unanimously.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**FIG Program Guidelines Discussion**

Mr. Laughlin said that with just about every FIG cycle that he has had to coordinate, there are interested folks that have are not able to schedule their projects around the HPC's current two-tiered cycle. Staff discussions led to this proposal of an Open Cycle since the two-tiered cycle can be restrictive. With an available balance of over \$80,000, the HPC could consider methods for increasing availability. Staff will continue

to request \$25,000 in the annual department budget. Increasing FIG funding availability may increase guided redevelopment, which is a goal of the program. The proposed Open Cycle program would allow interested parties to submit applications throughout the year as long as there are funds available. Application deadlines could be structured like the deadlines for Certificates of Appropriateness (COA), where it would be due 20 working days prior to the next meeting. Applications would still be reviewed by the Design Review Committee (DRC) and their recommendations would be given to the full HPC for final recommendations to the City Manager's Office. If this is an option that the HPC wanted to consider, then they could make a request and staff would work with the DRC on specific language changes and bring it back to the HPC at a subsequent public hearing for a first reading. New program guidelines could be adopted after a second reading at a public hearing.

Chairman Jordan asked if they would work with the applicants on a one-on-one basis rather than hold workshops if they chose to do it this way.

Mr. Laughlin answered that was one of the details that would be worked out, but he would not mind meeting with applicants on a one-on-one basis.

Mr. Chestnut asked if the logic behind having an open cycle would be to get more input.

Mr. Laughlin answered that it would allow more flexibility and the potential to influence as many projects as possible.

Mr. Chestnut said that they have gone from that approach, which was at times chaotic, because they wanted more structure. They wanted those who may not have a project right now to come in and participate in the workshop so that they could prepare for the next cycle. To him, taking a one-on-one approach takes away from the educational function of workshops. He said that they did not want to fund projects that were not thought out. That would be his objection to changing the structure of the process.

Mr. Laughlin said that would be fine and that staff had just wanted to present another option to the Commission.

Chairman Jordan said that he is concerned because they have just gotten a decent balance and he would hate for them not be allocated anything because they are not spending the money that they have.

Mr. Laughlin agreed that they had to use some of the balance.

Mr. Chestnut said that he is not willing to drop back into a convoluted system. He said that they do not have to spend it if people do not apply for it.

Ms. Cohen said that it sounds like more people would have liked to participate, but the program does not meet their timeline.

Mr. Laughlin confirmed that she was correct. He said that he had one person who had already completed their project ask if they could do an after-the-fact funding, but that is definitely not allowed under the current guidelines. He feels that they could have more influence over the project if they could have applied for the grant throughout the year.

Ms. Cohen said that she could tell you from a personal experience that there were tax credits for the area. She bought her house in that district and asked if she was aware of the credit, but she would have had to move her mortgage back just to participate. She can see how that would happen to someone.

Mr. Laughlin said that if it was an option that the Commission would like staff to pursue, then they could work out the details so that everyone would be comfortable with it.

Chairman Jordan said that they could have staff bring back more information to the Commission, but that would not mean that they would have to make a change.

**Ms. Cohen made a motion to that effect, Mr. Karlin seconded and it passed unanimously.**

#### FIG Program Comprehensive History

Mr. Laughlin said that this was a request made by Ms. Cohen at the previous meeting asking for document that would show how long the program has been in existence and a history of the funding. A spreadsheet had been included in their packets dating back to 1999.

Chairman Jordan said that it was interesting to see what properties had been worked on in the past.

Mr. Kammerer commented that some of them were unusual.

Mr. Laughlin said that there are some trends that you can see in the document.

Chairman Jordan said that there were times where there were so many applications that they had to decide who would get funding because there was not enough money.

Mr. Chestnut said that as buildings were refurbished, there were less and less that met the criteria. He said that they have stretched the parameters of the grant to serve more people and that is why he is questioning how much more they are going to try to do.

#### Local Landmark Update

Mr. Laughlin said that this is being brought before the Commission because of a request

from Dr. Chestnut. He had asked where we stood on being able to fund local designation reports. The sites on the Priority List are eligible for a local designation report to be done by a SHPO approved consultant and paid for by the City. The estimated cost is \$1,500 - \$2,000 per report; staff has been budgeting \$2,000 for the last couple of budget years. \$2,000 was awarded this year and staff has requested and is anticipating \$2,000 for the 2011-2012 budget year. Expenditures are required to be spent by mid-May and they do not roll over, so the HPC will not be able to use this years' budgeted amount. Staff feels confident that if the designation process moves forward then they will be able to fund one report in the next coming budget year.

Mr. Chestnut said that he thinks that the report is great. He asked if they could add a paragraph stating the benefits of being locally designated.

Mr. Laughlin said that he could revise the memo and add that information in there.

Mr. Chestnut said that he is comfortable to have it brought back to the next meeting.

Chairman Jordan said that basically when a property is designated as a local landmark, the property owners benefit because they receive a 50% property tax deferral. The benefit for the City and the citizens is that once the property is designated as a local landmark, it will fall under the Commission's guidelines and any proposed changes will have to comply to those guidelines like the other properties in the College View District.

Ms. Schwarzmann asked how they determined the order of the properties on the list.

Chairman Jordan answered that the Selection Committee has developed the list based on historic value and by contacting the owners to see if they were interested in being added to the list.

Mr. Chestnut said that last year the Selection Committee had come up with a step-by-step process of the ranking of properties and how it occurs. He said that staff should be able to pull up the minutes from that meeting. It was around September or October of 2010.

Mr. Laughlin said that any changes made to the FIG program, the updated memo can be linked to the City's website to make it more available to the citizens.

#### Staff Report: Minor Works COA

- Repair of fascia, flashing, gutters, and caulking at 401 E. 4<sup>th</sup> St. (St. Paul's)
- Installation of a wooden ramp (medical access) to the rear entrance at 508 W. 5<sup>th</sup> St. (ZTA Sorority, Locally Designate Landmark)
- Sewer line replacement and associated front yard repair located at 801 E. 4<sup>th</sup> St.

Staff Report: Update on non-compliant properties

None to report.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

There were no speakers present so Chairman Jordan closed the Public Hearing. He noted that there is public comment period at every meeting.

Mr. Laughlin said that they encourage the public to come out and speak.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Design Review Committee

Chairman Jordan said that they had not met because there were no COA's for this meeting.

Publicity Committee

Ms. Cohen said that they had not met, but they did do some follow up after last month's meeting. They put out a press release regarding the school.

Selection Committee

Mr. Chestnut said that they had not met, but they were planning to meet on June 14, and they were just waiting to hear from Ms. Valerie Paul, Secretary, to confirm their meeting space.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Addressing TRUNA letter

Chairman Jordan said that there was a copy of a letter from the Tar River University Neighborhood Association in everyone's packet. He wanted to address their concerns because there are a few things that the Commission already does:

1. ***Establishing ongoing reporting on the progress of the HPC:*** The Commission does have a yearly report that they give to City Council in November.

*Revitalization of neighborhoods:* The College View District was created in February 1994 so there are a few things in the district that some find unsightly but pre-date the Commission's guidelines and are therefore out of the Commission's purview unless they try to make a change; then it would have to come into compliance with the guidelines.

*Enhancing the quality of life:* The HPC's guidelines helps preserve the historic character of homes in the College View Area and of the landmarks. A person who wants to restore a home can move into the district and do that without

worrying that his neighbor might make ultra modern renovations to their home and detract from their work.

*Stimulating economic development:* This issue goes beyond the College View district. The FIG program and the new loan program have stimulated economic development. The fact that the historic district exists gives the property owners the opportunity to take advantage of the tax credits. There are whole streets that have been restored properly by investors following the guidelines and it has increased property values.

2. ***Input/listening sessions:*** The Commission can certainly have a meeting where TRUNA is invited. Attorney Bill Little, Assistant City Attorney, has stated that it must be a regular meeting. There is a Public Comment Period at every meeting where speakers can address any item that does not have a public hearing that night.
3. ***A review of the size of the Commission:*** The size of the board has been set by the ordinance that created it. The size of the board has been set so that there will be a variety of influence and expertise and it prevents any particular interest from having too much influence on the board. The size also pretty much ensures that there will be a quorum so that the Commission will not have to wait to take action on any business.
4. ***A review of the make-up of the HPC:*** TRUNA members are free to fill out a Talent Bank application if they would like to join the HPC. However, the HPC is not just for the College View district, it's for the whole city. TRUNA also covers some areas not under the Commission's purview.

Ms. Schwarzmann asked if TRUNA had a certain percentage of members in mind.

Mr. Jordan said that was not information that they had at this time. He said that they would have a meeting with TRUNA and they would find the information out at that time.

Ms. Cohen said that you want people on the board that are not in the historic as well because if you have a lot of people in the group that have the same interest then it becomes a little clique-ish.

5. ***Annual Sessions held by the HPC:*** TRUNA expressed a interest in having annual sessions held by the HPC where they would discuss the implications of living in the historic district, the tax credit, how to apply for a COA, which may be a good idea. All of these ideas are up for discussion; but some of these things are already being done like at the Facade Improvement Grant workshops, it will be done for the new loan program, it's done at the regular meetings and there is a lot of information

now available on the website. Mr. Merrill Flood, Community Development Director, said that there is a little money available to some things so they will look into revising and reprinting their College View brochure.

Ms. Cohen said that she is a TRUNA member and she lives in the district so she understands. She says that there is a perceived difficulty about the whole process because if you want to do something to your home, then you have to come before the Commission and there is a perception that it's difficult. There is an educational process needed. She said that she and Ryan Webb met with TRUNA's Board last year to listen to their concerns. She understands that it does directly affect their neighborhood and she sees why they want a voice and she feels that they are entitled to one.

Mr. Chestnut said that there are often vacancies on the Commission and everyone is free to fill out a Talent Bank application.

Ms. Cohen agreed and said that they needed to make that clearer to them.

Mr. Chestnut said that Public Comment would be the time to come. To him, if you know how to get information in because you want to change something about your home, then the process of how to join the Commission should be just as easy. He read from a memo dated November 23, 2009 regarding a Selection Committee meeting on October 19, 2009 that established their meeting times, local designation process update, the HPC's direction regarding the Selection Committee's Skinnerville Information program. He said that they had set up a public meeting for Skinnerville because they were under the impression that the Commission was going to take over their neighborhood. He said that these things have not been ignored, but this serves as a good reminder.

Attorney Little addressed Ms. Cohen's comment about the process being difficult to do. He feels that it is an easy process, but people fail to read the directions and use the information that is readily there. Applications come in with varying degrees of detail. He has found that they have had the most problems with applications that lack details. He suggested utilizing the website by putting more information up there and using the Publicity Committee to make sure that everyone knows what's available on the site.

Chairman Jordan said that the Design Review Committee was created to try and make the process easier for people so that applicants could be prepared before they presented to the full Commission so that they would not have to come back and re-apply. He feels that the Commission is in a steady place to where they can do that. He said that there is always a certain degree of tension when you tell the owners what they can and cannot do with their property and they cannot take away from that, but they can try to make the whole process more user-friendly.

Mr. Weitz wanted to add to Chairman Jordan's response to TRUNA's Issue 4.) *A review of the make-up of the HPC.* He said that it might not be impossible to have some sort of makeup that is geographically based on the HPC, but you have to remember that the HPC's composition is by ordinance which in turn is by NC Statutes enabling legislation that sets out certain requirements for a certain percentage of Commission members to have certain degrees of expertise in varying things. So the HPC is constrained by state laws on how they are composed.

Chairman Jordan said that vacancies are filled by the Talent Bank and there is usually not an overflow of applicants for the HPC. He said that there is currently a vacancy and he urged interested parties to apply.

Mr. Laughlin gave his office number in case anyone was interested and said that they could also stop by his office or by the City Clerk's Office.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS/OTHER**

Chairman Jordan said that he had spoken with Ms. Claudia Deviney with Preservation North Carolina and he said that they are very interested in Third Street School. He said that Ms. Deviney would be contacting the Pitt County School Board to offer their services to them.

Mr. Laughlin introduced Mr. Chris Padgett, Chief Planner, to the Board.

Mr. Padgett greeted the Commission and said that he looked forward to working with them.

Attorney Little thanked the Commission members for coming out to the HPC Workshop.

**With there being no further discussion, Mr. Carlin made the motion to adjourn, Mr. Kearney seconded it and it passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Seth Laughlin, Planner II