

October 27, 2009

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	Dennis Chestnut	Minnie Anderson
Henry Doskey	Roger Kammerer	Bryan Patonay

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ashley Wetherington	Ann Schwarzmann	Brad Ingalls
Charlotte Cohen		

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Seth Laughlin, Planner; Sarah Radcliff, Secretary; Jonathan Edwards, Communications Technician; Bill Little, Assistant City Attorney;

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: September 22, 2009 and October 7, 2009

Mr. Patonay noted three corrections to the September 22, 2009 minutes. He stated on page 5 in the fifth paragraph, line 3, "there" should be "their". Also on page 7, first paragraph, "side" should be "sides" and "pass" should be "past". Motion was made by Mr. Kammerer, seconded by Mr. Chestnut to approve the September 22, 2009 minutes as amended and the October 7, 2009 minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no public comments.

NEW BUSINESS

Memorandum of Agreement: Demolition of 714 Albemarle Avenue

Mr. Merrill Flood stated this item concerned a warehouse purchased by the city in May of 2004 as part of the beginning steps in the West Greenville Revitalization Program. Mr. Flood said the warehouse was determined to be a contributing structure in a potential district; however, there has not been a local designation or district for the structure. In March 2005 staff began a process to determine what would be needed to do an adaptive reuse project of the structure for elderly housing and began to market the structure as a result of the study. At that time the anticipated costs to fix the warehouse was close to six million dollars. Mr. Flood said marketing efforts were unsuccessful in getting the structure to be considered by a private partner that could go in and do an adaptive reuse. He said since that time the structure has come into a state of disrepair. In March of 2009 the City of Greenville Building Inspector identified that the roof and floor were in imminent danger of collapse rendering the structure in violation of the recently adopted non-residential fitness code. As a result, staff began discussions with the State Historic Preservation Office for the steps needed to remove the structure. Mr. Flood said there was a Memorandum of Agreement included in the packet that states the city would be responsible for cataloguing and identifying the architectural

qualities of the structure and ensuring a permanent record is kept regarding the structure and prior to any rebuilding on that parcel the city would have direct consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer. Mr. Flood said this was being brought before the Commission as an informational item and if action isn't taken to demolish the building they fear it will collapse on its own. He said the Commission does not have to take action on this item.

Mr. Patonay asked if stipulation 2 and 3 in the Memorandum of Agreement meant that the City of Greenville would have to get approval from the State Historic Preservation Officer before doing anything with the property.

Mr. Flood said that was correct.

Mr. Patonay asked if the City leveled the building and sold the property if the same stipulation would fall on the buyer of the property.

Mr. Flood said because the property was purchased with federal funds the next buyer would be subject to those same regulations.

Mr. Chestnut asked if there was anything in the warehouse.

Mr. Flood said it was vacant when they acquired it.

Mr. Kammerer asked if there were any future plans for the bricks and if there were limitations because of federal funds being used.

Mr. Flood said there were no plans for the bricks at this time and he didn't think there would be limitations on the use of them. He said typically it would become the property of the demolition contractor.

Mr. Patonay asked if the block grant money would be used to pay for the demolition.

Mr. Flood said they would be identifying a funding source that may include a Community Development Block Grant. He said the MOA would be the binding agreement for demolition.

Chairman Webb asked Mr. Flood to go into more detail about what triggered them to move forward with the demolition.

Mr. Flood said because they used federal funds to purchase the building, they were subject to the terms of the National Environmental Policy Act of which historic preservation is a part of. As part of that, if you have historic structures and/or nationally registered eligible districts you will consult with the SHPO before taking action with regard to an adverse action, such as demolition.

Chairman Webb said he was asking what got the building inspector there.

Mr. Flood said that City Council adopted a new non-residential building code in January and this structure was identified among several throughout the city where there were noticeable signs of decay in the building.

Chairman Webb asked if there were other city properties on the list.

Mr. Flood said this was the only city property that he was aware of.

Mr. Chestnut said he understood there was a demolition contract but said one of HPC's goals was to designate interests to places and districts. He said he would like to see them retain enough of the bricks to do an entrance or something of the sort.

Mr. Flood said they would explore that as they got closer to demolition.

Chairman Webb asked if the city had determined the property was not worth saving.

Mr. Flood said the period between 2005 and now was utilized to see if they could do something with the structure but over time the roof and floor had deteriorated to the extent that it couldn't be repaired.

Update on Intermodal Transportation Center – Thom Moton

Mr. Thom Moton, Assistant City Manager, gave an update on the Intermodal Transportation Center. Mr. Moton said property was bounded on the west by Evans Street, on the east by Cotanche Street, on the south by East 9th and the north by East 8th Street. Mr. Moton said the recommended site met certain criteria, one being that it be focused in the three modes of the Urban Core; downtown, Tobacco District and also close to the University. He said there were approximately twenty parcels on the site, one being the Jones Lee House, with one owned by the city and two owned by the state. There are several parcels on the site that are surface parking lots. Greenville Museum of Art is located to the west and to the south is A&B Auto Service, formerly known as Pure Oil Service. To the east is the ECU Student Recreation Center and northeast is one of the main hubs for the East Carolina Transit Authority. Mr. Moton said the purpose of the presentation was to update the Commission on the activities related to the Intermodal Transportation Center's regulatory process, to seek and obtain the HPC's participation in the agreement, and to briefly review the efforts to preserve vital information relative to the three historic properties. Mr. Moton stated city staff had completed the Environmental Site Assessment Phase 1 and were advised by the Federal Transit Administration to pursue an Environmental Assessment. He said Environmental Assessment was completed in July and submitted to FTA. Upon review there was a determination made that not only that the Jones Lee House was historic, the FTA recommended staff pursue the city's proposal to relocate that structure into a more suitable area. He said it was historic for its architecture, not its location. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires Federal agencies to take into

account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and afford the council a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings. This section is in place because the FTA provides 80% of the funds and the state provides 10%. Mr. Moton stated the key elements of the MOA are that the primary parties to the agreements are the FTA and the NCSHPO. The secondary parties are the NCDOT, City of Greenville and the HPC. Recordation work on all three properties is requested to preserve archivable records of the conditions and the architecture of the three properties in addition to preparation of a local designation report for A&B Auto and the Greenville Museum of Art. Mr. Moton stated he, Mr. Laughlin and Mr. Flood had met with the members of the art museum board of directors and presented this information to them and Mr. Moton had met with the owner and operator of Pure Oil Service Center relative to the MOA. Another element of the MOA is to move and reuse the Jones Lee House and put it in use as a private entity with certain covenants to protect its long-term liability. Finally, if the new center is approved, to apply design and layout principles taking the museum and the auto service center into account and buffering by landscape and routing bus traffic. The duration of the agreement will be five years. Mr. Moton said the action needed is for the Commission to authorize the Chair to execute the MOA, which means that the recordation work be completed and the Commission will require that there be a local designation report prepared on the two properties that currently are not designated historic. He said staff has the funds and existing qualified transit and historic preservation consultant who can prepare the recordation work as well as the local designation reports. He said the work had been reviewed by Mr. Laughlin and Mr. Flood and they felt confident that the scope of work and the price quoted is very competitive and will bring that item to the City Council as a staff recommendation as an amendment to the contract with Moser Mayer and Phoenix. Once the reports are prepared they will be presented to the Commission for review and consideration. Mr. Moton said the next step in the process is to bring the MOA to the November 9, 2009 City Council meeting. Once the City Council has approved the MOA, the recordation and local designation work can begin and is expected to be completed by December 2009. It will also give authorization for them to complete the FONSI, the Finding of No Significant Impact. Mr. Moton said the FTA officials have said they are nearing the end of the regulatory process and he hopes to have it wrapped up by the end of this year or first of next year. Mr. Moton stated many of the reports referenced could be found at www.greatnc.com.

Mr. Chestnut asked if neither of the properties showed interest after being agreed to for a local designation if they would just remain as they are.

Mr. Moton said that was correct.

Mr. Chestnut stated staff has approached both properties in the past multiple times for a local designation and neither have had any interest in pursuing it.

Mr. Moton said he was made aware of that through communications with them. He said they had some skepticism when talking about preparation of reports but he told them it

was the expectation of the city that they not be compelled to become a locally designated landmark. The MOA states “The commission shall cause to be prepared, in accordance with the local regulations and guidance for such reports, a local designation report for the Greenville Art Museum building and the former Pure Oil Service Station. The reports shall be provided to SHPO and Eastern Office of Archives and History for their records. The Commission, after consultation with the owners of the properties, may or may not move forward with the local designation process. The Commission shall inform the SHPO as to the City’s decision on local designation.”

Mr. Kammerer asked if the city owned the Jones Lee property.

Mr. Moton said they do not. He said until the regulatory review process is over, the process for acquisition of the land will not be initiated.

Mr. Patonay asked if the museum and service center would be affected by the oversight that is build into the MOA.

Mr. Moton said they would not be affected. He said one of the primary benefits of the work is to have a good history of what was there if the buildings are ever sold or in need of repair or restoration.

Mr. Patonay said a representative from the first district in NC was instrumental in securing near \$3 million from the federal government for the project. Mr. Patonay asked if there was any concern that the oversight from Raleigh might hamper the desired ideal construction or plans of the Intermodal Transportation Center.

Mr. Moton said the council that Mr. Patonay was referencing declined participation in the project. He said it was the nature of a project involving federal funds to have the state involved. He said the city had every obligation to mitigate the impact a structure could have on the area. Mr. Moton said the MOA reflects what had been discussed as a group between the city, FTA, the consultants and NCSHPO to maximize the project and minimize the adverse impact it has on the area. He said moving the Jones Lee House to another site has always been the city’s preferred approach.

Chairman Webb said according to the agreement it would have to be secured before it was moved.

Mr. Moton said it had to be secured or stabilized. He said it would be their intention to set it back up and prepare it for sale.

Mr. Chestnut stated this was currently a private property, not owned by the city. He said he was concerned that when they were paid for the property the owners would tear it down.

Mr. Moton said the city would acquire the property prior to moving it and they would be

responsible for getting it to its new location.

Mr. Chestnut said the Jones Lee House was one of the most charming houses on Evans Street and it was more than just the house to him. He said history was also part of memory of where things were and he felt trying to design the project around the house and incorporating the old into the new was important.

Mr. Moton said they gave that a great deal of consideration and felt the structure was isolated and what made it historic was not the location, but the architecture. He said they felt it would be better served to have it an area that was more compatible, such as a residential or office area with buildings of a similar nature. Mr. Moton said the new facility would be a first class facility that would contribute overall to enhancing the area.

Motion was made by Mr. Doskey, seconded by Mr. Kammerer, to authorize the chair of HPC to execute the memorandum of agreement. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion of Date for HPC Training Session

Mr. Laughlin stated there were a few dates that legal staff had available for training sessions. Those dates were November 4th, 11th-17th and 20th. Mr. Laughlin said since there were several members absent tonight, they could send out an email to all members and see what worked for everyone.

Mr. Chestnut said they usually ran from around 9am to 4pm and he really couldn't say a time that he was available right now. He suggested surveying each member to see what worked best for them and selecting a time that way.

Update on FIG Funds Availability

Mr. Laughlin stated the original total available for the fall cycle was \$27,148.44. On October 7, 2009 HPC voted against extending the deadlines for grants 08-20, 08-21, 08-22, 08-23 issued to George Saad totaling \$20,000.00. That money was rolled back into the total giving us an updated total for fall 2009 cycle of \$47,148.44. Mr. Laughlin said he anticipated Mr. Saad would reapply in the fall cycle.

Staff Report: Minor Works COA's

Mr. Laughlin said there was one MWCOA issued for 312 South Rotary Street for the addition of a storm door.

Staff Report: Update on non-compliant historic properties

Mr. Laughlin said there were no cases at this time.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Design Review Committee

Design Review Committee has not met.

Publicity Committee

Publicity Committee did meet however no one from the committee was present to give the report.

Selection Committee

Mr. Chestnut said Selection Committee met on October 13th. Members present were Henry Doskey, Dennis Chestnut and Bryan Patonay. Discussion at the meeting resulted in the following items to be presented to the full HPC: 1) Selection Committee will hold regular monthly meetings the second Tuesday of each month at 5:45 pm at City Hall depending upon availability; 2) Local designation process update; 3) HPC's direction in regards to Selection Committee Skinnerville Information Program. Mr. Chestnut said he had presented to the Selection Committee in May a draft proposal outlining possible strategies to address the issue of an open dialogue with owners of historic properties in the Skinnerville National Register District and adjoining neighborhoods. He asked how the Commission wished to proceed.

Mr. Kammerer said Pitt County would be celebrating its 250th anniversary next year and the Historical Society is planning a number of seminars to talk about the history of Pitt County and Greenville.

Mr. Chestnut asked if the Commission wanted to proceed with the project.

Mr. Little said because the item was not previously on the agenda it could not be voted on tonight.

Motion was made by Mr. Chestnut, seconded by Mr. Doskey to place the item on the agenda for November. Motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:02p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Seth M. Laughlin
Planner II