

## **GREENVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES**

July 30, 2007  
Greenville, NC

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:**

Greg Jarrell	Candace Pearce	Dale Sauter
Jeremy Jordan, Chair	Franceine Rees	Richard Weir

### **COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Dennis Chestnut	Rick Smiley
Yaprak Savut	Chris Woelkers

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sandy Gale Edmundson, Secretary; Bill Little, Assistant City Attorney; Carl Rees, Senior Planner; and Tom Wisemiller, Planner I

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Steve Kirkman

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

Mr. Jordan added the following items to the agenda: Item F. Update on Historic District Signs and Item G. Information on Façade Grants Transferring with the Property

Motion was made by Ms. Candace Pearce and seconded by Mr. Richard Weir to add the abovementioned items to the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 7, 2007 AND JUNE 26, 2007**

Ms. Pearce said that Ms. Christy Corn's name should be Ms. Christy Koren on the June 7, 2007 minutes. Also, she asked that it be added to the June 26, 2007 minutes that Rick Smiley said he would step down from the Commission if a resident of the College View Historic District would like to become a member.

Motion was made by Ms. Candace Pearce and seconded by Mr. Richard Weir to approve the June 7, 2007 as amended and the June 26, 2007 minutes as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

### **STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE (SHPO) COMMENTS ON PROPOSED CLOSURE OF PORTIONS OF WASHINGTON STREET, WEST SIXTH STREET AND DICKINSON AVENUE**

Mr. Jordan: The Commission sent a letter to Mr. Scott Power, Regional Supervisor in the Eastern Office of the State Historic Preservation Office requesting that he provide an opinion on the impacts of this plan on nearby historic properties and on the historic character of the area.

Mr. Jordan read the following letter from Scott Power in response to the Commission's request.

July 24, 2007

Mr. Jeremy Jordan  
Chairperson  
Greenville Historic Preservation Commission  
P. O. Box 7207  
Greenville, NC 27835-7207

Dear Jeremy,

In response to your request, and as professional commentary on the issue of closing portions of Washington Street, Sixth Street and Dickinson Avenue, I offer the following thoughts. First, as you queried in your letter, will this have an impact on the historic character of the area? The answer is yes. And in this instance, a significant negative impact to one of Greenville's most important early thoroughfares. For those who regularly travel Dickinson Avenue, the historical marker near the railroad overpass that denotes the construction of the antebellum Plank Road should be a familiar site. In 1850, the state legislature embraced a program to build plank roads that was promoted by Governor William A. Graham. Sixteen companies were chartered statewide with one focusing on linking Raleigh to Greenville. The use of heavy timbers made of heart pine and cypress as a level roadbed was a substantial improvement over muddy, ill-kept dirt roads. In conjunction with steamers on the Tar River, travelers could now access more inland locations in the state under more pleasant travel conditions.

As you know, Dickinson Avenue was the route of the famous Plank Road that brought western travelers into the downtown to the commercial, residential, and religious institutions that comprised the heart of the city. Given its historical significance arguably as Greenville's most important pre-Civil War nineteenth century roadway, the closing of any section of it would further diminish the important role it played in the early development of Greenville. It would also alter a historic thoroughfare plan that has been in place for over 157 years. This street pattern is vital for understanding the historical growth and development of Greenville, because it was a major factor in the later placement of Greenville's first railroad and subsequent development of the tobacco-related warehouse and processing district. At a period in the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the confluence of rail line, roadway, and steamboat river transportation made Greenville a natural place for the establishment of what came to be one of the most successful tobacco markets in the nation. One could easily extend that historical fact to

explain why Greenville's prominence today was borne out of its unique triptych transportation system with the Tar River and Plank Road being the earliest parts of the system.

When the Five Points intersection at Evans and Dickinson Avenue was changed in the 1970s, it did irreparable harm. This current proposal would further destroy an important vista looking northeast on the avenue from the west into the downtown area. Historically, the site of the downtown commercial buildings and large residences signaled the arrival by travelers to the heart of the city. These historic thoroughfare vistas are significant for the traveling public to be able to identify landmarks and make their way about in urban settings with familiarity.

Since the 1960s, Greenville has suffered almost immeasurably from the demolition of very important historic landmarks, both public and private, particularly in the downtown area. For decades, the lack of interest in historic preservation at the decision-making level has resulted in the diminishment of much of the City's cultural and historical fabric. The current situation provides the City of Greenville with an opportunity to recognize the importance of the physical history inherent in the city's plan. Intrinsic in any historic downtown is the system of roadways and thoroughfares that establishes the layout for development and over time builds a community that is familiar to the public and important within itself. Buildings are sometimes replaced due to many factors, but that underlying pattern of movement and transportation within a community is all important as the framework upon which the historic fabric is dependent. Our professional opinion is that removing this important section of Dickinson Avenue from Greenville's historic street pattern would adversely affect the surrounding historic landmarks as well as the adjacent historic districts on Dickinson Avenue and Evans Street.

If you or members of the Historic Preservation Commission have any questions related to my comments, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue for the City of Greenville.

Sincerely,

Scott Power  
Regional Supervisor  
Eastern Office  
State Historic Preservation Office

Ms. Pearce: I move to issue a resolution from the Historic Preservation Commission to the City Council to vote no to closing the street on August 10, 2007 based on the letter from Scott Power of the State Historic Preservation Office.

Mr. Little: It is not within the authority of the Historic Preservation Commission to do. Under its power as set forth in Title 9, Section 10, Paragraph 15 of the City Code sets forth the powers and duties of the Commission. One of those is to make recommendations for consideration by City Council. City Council has the final authority to make those decisions. The Commission can make a motion that the report by Scott Power be considered when City Council makes its final decision on the Sixth Street relocation closure. The resolution to vote no is not appropriate nor is it within the Commission's authority to do.

Ms. Pearce: Can the Commission make a motion to recommend?

Mr. Little: No.

Ms. Pearce: That was not one of the things that you just said.

Mr. Little: I said you can make a motion or it can be considered by the City Council for whatever purposes the City Council wants to use it. The Commission can make that recommendation.

Motion was made by Ms. Candace Pearce and seconded by Mr. Richard Weir to recommend that the City Council consider the letter from the State Historic Preservation Office in its deliberations on August 10, 2007 regarding the closing of Dickinson Avenue, Sixth Street, and Washington Street. Motion carried unanimously.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

No public comments were made.

### **CONSIDERATION OF AN APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

#### **COA 07-07: 409 Rotary Avenue**

Mr. Jordan asked that anyone speaking pertaining to the application be sworn in by the Notary Public.

The Notary Public, Sandy Gale Edmundson, swore in Ms. Marie E. Pokomy and Mr. Tom Wisemiller.

Mr. Wisemiller: COA Application 07-07 was submitted by Marie Pokomy and Robert Thompson for 409 Rotary Avenue to install an awning on the rear elevation of the house.

## **Background**

Built in the traditional New England Cape Cod style, this one-and-a-half-story frame house has a front door with a Doric surround. Three gable-roof dormers and an interior chimney pierce the steeply-pitched front roof slope. The first known occupant of the house was Allen H. Taft, Jr. who, with his brother, started Taft Furniture Company

The applicants request approval to install an awning on the rear elevation of the house.

### Considerations

Applicant seeks approval to install a retractable canvas awning to cover much of the existing rear wooden deck. The proposed Sunbrella brand awning would have scalloped valances. The rear deck is not visible from the street or sidewalk on Rotary Avenue.

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Pages</u>
2	Porches, Entrances, Balconies	22-23

**11.** It is not appropriate to add elements or details to a porch or an entrance in an attempt to create false historical appearance.

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Pages</u>
2	Decks	48-49

2. Locate decks in inconspicuous areas, usually on the rear or least character-defining elevation of the historic building.
3. Screen decks from public view.
5. Construct decks so that they can be removed in the future without damaging the historic structure.

Mr. Jordan: Would the applicant like to speak?

Ms. Pockomy: My husband and I submitted this application for 409 Rotary Avenue to install an awning on the rear elevation of the house that can be rolled in and out. I will answer any questions of the Commission.

Ms. Pearce: The awning will provide shade for the homeowners.

Mr. Jordan: Is there anybody to speak in favor or opposition of the request? What is staff's recommendation?

Mr. Wisemiller: Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the request to install a retractable, removable canvas awning over the rear deck of the house at 409 Rotary Avenue based on the following findings:

- The proposed awning would be generally compatible with the architecture of the house
- The awning would not create a false historical appearance
- The deck and proposed awning are located in an inconspicuous location of the property and are screened from public view
- The proposed awning could be removed in the future without damaging the historic structure

**Recommended Motion:** Approval of the request to install a retractable, removable canvas awning over the rear deck of the house at 409 Rotary Avenue.

Mr. Jordan: What is the recommendation of the Design Review Committee?

Ms. Pearce: The Design Review Committee had no problem with the application.

Mr. Jordan: Is there a motion?

Motion was made by Ms. Franceine Rees and seconded by Mr. Greg Jarrell to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application 07-07 for 409 Rotary Avenue submitted by Ms. Marie E. Pokomy and Mr. Robert Thompson. Motion carried unanimously.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Design Review Committee**

The Design Review Committee met to discuss the Certificate of Appropriateness application.

### **Selection Committee**

The Selection Committee did not meet.

### **Publicity Committee**

The Publicity Committee did not meet.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Minor Works Certificate of Appropriateness (MWCOA) Report**

Mr. Wisemiller: There are no Minor Works Certificate of Appropriateness applications to report.

## **Discussion of HPC Annual Report to City Council**

Mr. Wisemiller: What items should be addressed with City Council in the report? Mr. Jeremy Jordan, Chairman, will be making an Annual Report on the Historic Preservation Commission's behalf to City Council.

Mr. Jordan: Tom Wisemiller and I will get together prior to making the report to City Council to make sure that pertinent information will be presented.

## **2007-08 HPC Annual Work Plan**

Mr. Wisemiller said he had received comments from Commission members.

Mr. Jordan: Are there any other comments concerning the 2007-08 Annual Work Plan? If there are any comments or changes, please submit them to Tom Wisemiller prior to the August Commission meeting.

## **Initial Discussion of CLG Annual Report**

Mr. Wisemiller: The CLG Annual Report will be coming up. Commission members are being asked for accomplishments and special projects for the CLG Annual Report.

Mr. Jordan asked Commission members to be thinking about the CLG Annual Report for further comment at the August Commission meeting.

## **Update on Historic District Signs**

Mr. Wisemiller: Staff is in the process of ordering the signs and the vendor would deliver a minimum of 24 signs and Public Works has requested that there be 2 signs per location. Two districts are being held off on because the citywide wayfinding system is going on at the same time and that will have historic district signs in wayfinding. This particular design is intended to go on top of street name plate signs. The dimensions for the oval signs will be 12 x 18, and it will have a brown background with white lettering.

Ms. Pearce: What is the reason for not having the Tobacco Warehouse District sign and the Central Business District sign?

Mr. Wisemiller: Those two districts are fairly small and do not have many entry way points. Given the fact that the City is working on the wayfinding project at the same time, we thought we could concentrate on the two larger districts. We were having difficulty finding entry street corners leading into the Tobacco Warehouse and Dickinson Avenue Historic District and decided that it would make more sense to incorporate that into the wayfinding system.

### **Information on Façade Grants Transferring with the Property**

Mr. Wisemiller: At the June meeting, a Commission member asked if the Façade Grant award given to a property owner and the property owner sells the property, does the award convey to the next property owner. Speaking with the City Attorney's office, it would convey if either the owner or tenant who received the grant had it spelled out in the purchase agreement when the property is transferred over. If there is no such agreement, the City would need a written statement that the new property owner who is interested in holding on to the grant would assume responsibility and liability for the contract.

Mr. Jordan: Is that in the guidelines?

Mr. Wisemiller: No, so the guidelines need to be made clearer.

Mr. Little: Staff will put a proposal together for review by the Commission at the August meeting.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS/OTHER**

The Central Business Historic District is having its third Umbrella Market on Saturday, August 4, 2007 from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Wisemiller  
Planner I