

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD**  
**CITY OF PALATKA**  
**DRAFT Meeting Minutes October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Roberta Correa at 4:06 pm. Other members present included Larry Beaton, Lynda Crabill Gilbert Evans Jr., Robert Goodwin, Meri Rees, Elizabeth van Rensburg and Laura Schoenberger. Staff present: Planning Director Thad Crowe and Recording Secretary Ke'Ondra Wright.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion made by Ms. van Rensburg to approve the August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014 minutes with minor corrections, seconded by Mr. Goodwin. Motion passed unanimously.

**APPEALS PROCEDURE**

Chairperson Correa read the appeals procedures.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Case:** HB 14-28  
**Locations:** 1.) 105 N 2<sup>nd</sup> St  
2.) 109 N 2<sup>nd</sup> St  
3.) 124 St. Johns Ave  
4.) 113 N 2<sup>nd</sup> St  
5.) 117 N 2<sup>nd</sup> St

**Applicant:** Joseph "Corky" Diamond  
**Request:** **Certificate of Appropriateness** to rezone property within the DR (Downtown Riverfront District), adding the HD (Historic District) overlay); and to recommend nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for "the 100 Block," AKA "Century Block."

Mr. Crowe summarized his report and recommendations, noting that there were two separate actions for the Board's consideration. The first action is the local historic district overlay rezoning, which would then go before the Planning Board and the City Commission. The second action is to recommend nomination of the properties to the National Register of Historic Places to the State of Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation and the National Park Service. Staff made the decision to pursue this smaller district as a separate request from a downtown Historic District for several reasons. First of all the Applicant desires to advance the National Register nomination quickly and the Downtown National Register District is something that will take more time due to the need for public education and information. Expediting the nomination is important since the Applicant wishes to pursue economic benefits provided by the federal tax credits. Another reason to pursue this district separately is that it is isolated from the rest of the downtown, separated by vacant properties, and is essentially a free-standing remnant of the nineteenth century riverfront commercial district as opposed to what is seen in the 20<sup>th</sup> century linear Downtown District of St. Johns Avenue.

This proposed district includes four buildings. The first building, 122-126 St Johns Ave., is the Moragne Building. This building was constructed in 1885 and is an unusual example of the high style Italianate architectural style. Prominent physician Dr. Moragne established the City's first drug store in this building. The second building, 107-109 N 2<sup>nd</sup> St., is a Masonry Vernacular architectural style structure, also built in 1885. This building was known as the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company building and included a number of other stores through the years. The third building is 111-115 N 2<sup>nd</sup> St., also a Masonry Vernacular style building, built between 1915 and 1924. This building was known as the Bailey Building and housed a variety of offices and stores during the years. The fourth building is 117-119 N 2<sup>nd</sup> St. and is another Italianate

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Style building. This building was built in 1885 and housed a variety of businesses as well as upstairs apartments. Staff is recommending approval of local and national historic registration for these properties, and believes that at least one historic designation criterion for each building is met. Staff has been in discussions with the State of Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation regarding the historic nomination of these buildings, and State staff are very interested in working with City staff on recognizing and restoring these buildings. Staff is recommending approval for the rezoning and the nomination to the National Register and applying the HD local overlay zoning to the property.

Board members then disclosed communications with the Applicant. Mr. Goodwin said that he is currently employed by Mr. Diamond as a consultant on another project that is not connected with these four buildings (the St. Johns River Center). Chairperson Correa advised the board that she has had several conversations in the past about placement of these buildings on the National Register and federal historic tax credits. Ms. van Rensburg advised the board that she discussed the project in the past with Mr. Diamond and also stated that she and her husband have had a lot of discussion with Mr. Diamond, but as of today had not been hired by Mr. Diamond for anything to do with the restoration of these buildings. Mr. Crowe advised Ms. van Rensburg that as long as there no formal arrangement of contractual payment then there is no conflict of interest. Mr. Beaton advised the board that he has had discussion with Mr. Diamond about the historical significance of the buildings.

Corky Diamond, 110 S 2<sup>nd</sup> St, said that he is not sure the project would qualify for the tax credits, only because the credits are exclusively for income producing (rental/lease) properties and the residential units may be sold and therefore not be eligible. Whether or not the tax credits are utilized, he intends to follow the historic guidelines. He has saved historic interior elements such as the doors and wood trim, and will be restoring the wood floors. Mr. Diamond said he would like to reach out to the Secretary of State once everything is approved and let them know what he is planning on doing and also show off the Downtown. This will show the community that this type of historic renovation project is of great economic benefit. Mr. Diamond said that the work will commence at the end of the month.

**Public Comments**

No Public Comments.

**Board Discussion**

Mr. Beaton asked if the enabling ordinance of the Historic Preservation Board limits the board to just the North and South Historic Districts or is it more open to future historic districts. Mr. Crowe replied that the ordinance does not put any parameters or restrictions on the Board in terms of historic district jurisdiction. The Board's job is to determine what is eligible for historical listing. Chairperson Correa asked staff that if another district was added if the board would have input on exterior alterations. Mr. Crowe answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Beaton asked who would prepare the application for the National Register, would the City do the application or the owner or the historical society. Mr. Crowe replied that this would be a shared responsibility between the City and the owner and after discussion with the state he believed it would be preferred if City staff took the lead. If any of the Board members would like to help with this process Mr. Crowe would send out information as the process goes along - their input would be greatly appreciated.

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Ms. Crabill asked Mr. Diamond on the difficulty of removing stucco from the brick. Mr. Diamond responded that when the buildings were being stuccoed some of the batches had more water and some had too much sand. In experimenting with stucco removal some materials came off easily and others portions were very difficult to remove. Attempts to remove stucco on the Snow building damaged the brick.

**Motion** made by Ms. Crabill to approve the staff recommendation to rezone property (105 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> St, 109 N 2<sup>nd</sup> St, 124 St Johns Ave, 113 N 2<sup>nd</sup> St, and 117 N 2<sup>nd</sup> St) with the HD (Historic District) designation, applied to the Downtown Riverfront district. The motion was seconded by Mr. Evans and approved unanimously.

**Motion** made by Ms. Crabill to approve the staff recommendation to recommend nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the “100 Block,” AKA “Century Block” as suggested by staff. The motion was seconded by Ms. Rees and approved unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Case:** HB 14-31

**Locations:** 1.) 1207 Washington St

**Applicant:** B&Z Staff

**Request:** **Certificate of Appropriateness** Resolution of support for Florida Special Category restoration grant.

Mr. Crowe said that Staff is working with the Palatka Housing Authority to apply for a (state) Special Category Restoration Grant funds for the beginning of the restoration process for the Central Academy. Staff apologized for this item being an emergency item, but this is the last opportunity to get the grant submitted because the deadline is this month. Staff is recommending approval.

Chairperson Correa read the resolution into the record.

Mr. Evans advised the board that he is a member of the Palatka Housing Authority Board.

**Public Comments**

John Nelson Jr., Palatka Housing Authority, 400 N 15<sup>th</sup> St, said that the Authority has owned this building since about 2007. The Authority received the building from the Putnam County School District and has worked with the Central Academy nonprofit group for feasible restoration of the building since the time of property acquisition. The Authority was made aware of this grant and requests that this resolution be approved to assist with procuring funds needed for immediate repairs. The Authority has drawings on the condition of the building and what exactly it’s going to take to make the repairs. Mr. Nelson passed out schematics indicating what needs to be done to the building. A lot of planning has been done for this building by architect Robert Taylor in the form of site drawings, plans, and rehabilitation cost estimates. Original rehabilitation costs were roughly two million dollars, which has probably increased by now. The first thing that needs to be done is to put a new roof on the building, as the temporary roof repairs previously done have failed.

Mr. Beaton asked what was the total amount for the restoration grant. Chairperson Correa stated the maximum amount of this grant cycle is \$350,000.

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Ms. Crabill asked what was the time frame for the grant. Chairperson Correa stated that grant has to be submitted by the end of the month. Ms. Crabill asked how long does it take to find out if the grant would be secured. Mr. Crowe advised the board that the grant has to go before a committee that meets in the upcoming months to rank the applications. City staff was contacted by State historic preservation staff, who strongly encouraged pursuing this grant. Mr. Beaton stated that this building is already on the National Register and that may help a lot as well.

Chairperson Correa stated that Palatka is in the limelight right now because the Secretary of State recognized the downtown as one of the most endangered historic places (again).

Mr. Beaton asked will the applicant be the Authority or the nonprofit group. Mr. Nelson stated the application will be a combination of the Authority, the nonprofit and the City of Palatka.

Robert Taylor, 241 Crystal Cove Dr, said that Mr. Nelson alluded to a lot of the studies that was done on this facility and much work has been done to evaluate the structure relative to environmental contamination, some of which has been cleaned up and some which has yet to be done. This structure is in increasing state of disrepair and will at some point be subject to collapse. Once the roof fails then it tends to push down the walls and the building could implode if action is not taken immediately. The first part of the restoration would be to place a new roof on the structure. So this application is timely.

Mr. Beaton asked if there was any contamination of soil in the school bus garage area because of fuel spills. Mr. Taylor stated that the assessment included the school bus garage and there was a phase one environmental study done. This study indicated that site itself was not impacted by any environmental contamination, but it is contiguous to the railroad track where chemicals were used to kill weeds in that area. This area will need to be cleaned up. The building itself contains lead based paint, asbestos other elements that will need to be abated.

**Motion** made by Ms. van Rensburg to approve the staff recommendation for a resolution of support for Florida Special Category Restoration Grant. The motion was seconded by Mr. Beaton and approved unanimously.

**OTHER BUSINESS** – no other business

**ADJOURNMENT** - with no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:39 pm.