

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD**  
**CITY OF PALATKA**  
**DRAFT Meeting Minutes December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Roberta Correa at 4:01 pm. Other members present included Larry Beaton, Elizabeth van Rensburg, Meri Rees and Laura Schoenberger. Absent: Gilbert Evans Jr., Robert Goodwin and Lynda Crabill. Staff present: Planning Director Thad Crowe and Recording Secretary Ke'Ondra Wright.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion made by Ms. Van Rensburg to approve the December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014 minutes, seconded by Mr. Beaton. Motion passed unanimously.

**APPEALS PROCEDURE**

Chairperson Correa read the appeals procedures.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Case:** HB 14-39  
**Locations:** 1.) 4015 Reid St; Unit 7  
**Applicant:** Administrative Request  
**Request:** Preliminary determination of Historic Status

Mr. Crowe summarized this case, which was carried over from the last meeting. He said there was no new information from staff since the original staff report was issued. Staff's recommendation was still to confirm the finding that the structure was not eligible for historic nomination. Staff recognized Michael Czymbor, City Manager and John Youell, Airport Manager.

**Board Discussion**

Ms. van Rensburg said that she went to the airport with her husband, Coenraad van Rensburg where they spoke with John Youell. Ms. van Rensburg examined the inside and outside of the Quonset Hut, and it seemed fairly solid. After looking at the sandbags Ms. van Rensburg suspected the structure might have been built out of WWII surplus material after the war was over. She said that while it was a "groovy" structure, it has no use and stands in the way of building additional hangers that would generate revenue. If there were an organization that wanted to start a Quonset Hut museum, an airport pilot association that wanted to use it as a club house, or an individual/ private entity that would of wanted to turn it into a pub that would be great, but none of these options are available. Maybe years from now someone may say that the Quonset Hut may have been historic, but at this time the determination is that it is not historic in nature and the additional hanger space would be a better option.

Chairperson Correa said she went out to look at the Quonset Hut with Mike Gagnon (who is a retired contractor) it is very solid and "cool." Chairperson Correa does think it has historic merit in its own right, but questioned if this was enough to maintain and retain it. She said that she has mixed feelings, but understands the need to expand if that in fact that brings in revenue for the airport and the City.

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Mr. Beaton said that he too looked at the Quonset Hut and found it to be very unique. There is some question about where it was put up as part of WWII use by the military or if it was actually surplus and moved there at a later time. It would be nice to be able to determine if it was used as part of a facility. One problem in collecting information is that it would have to come from the navy because the newspaper articles of that period had restrictions on photography or reporting of military facilities. Another possibility was the relocation of the structure to another area in the airport. It is a difficult decision to decide to either destroy something that can't be replaced or to expand the hangers.

Mike Czymbor, City Manager, said that just because something is dated or old doesn't mean it is historically significant. In this case the City has a structure with unknown origins, which makes it difficult to declare it historical. City officials have a fiduciary responsibility to make the airport enterprise fund self-sustaining. The expansion of the airport resulted in a \$100,000-plus deficit. One of the City's duties is to make sure taxpayer dollars aren't supporting a business unit that not all taxpayers utilize, because not everybody owns an airplane. The airport is an economic driver for the city but at the same point those resources could be used to benefit other programs. If you talk about two to three hangers that could be built there each hanger could produce \$300 to \$400 per month for the 30 to 35-year useful life of the hangers. This is a significant amount of money that could be used to offset airport expenses. Staff strongly urges the Board to determine that the structure is not historically significant. He said that Staff would be willing to see if the structure could be disassembled for possible future use.

Chairperson Correa asked if all the current hangers occupied. Mr. Czymbor answered in the affirmative and added that there was a waiting list. He said there were a several main things that make the airport self-sufficient: more hangers, more fuel sales, and sale of land or aviation related business.

Mr. Beaton asked if the building could be placed somewhere until it could be reassembled and restored. Mr. Czymbor answered that the City could look into this. The City opened bids today for the hanger construction and is in the process of determining a bid award. The City would do all due diligence to see if disassembly and storage is a viable option. Mr. Beaton stated with historic structures the best possibility leave it in place but when you start moving it around it's never the same, but under the circumstances with what's going on as far as the hangar space if just the fabric itself could just be stored until funding becomes available to relocate the structure. Chairperson Correa advised the board that the task is to determine if the structure rises to the level of being nominated for the national and local historic register. Ms. Van Rensburg advised the board to keep in mind that if the structure is disassembled and moved it will not qualify for most historic renovation grants.

Ms. Rees said she has a nostalgic association with quonset huts as she went to school in one in Germany. She observed that they were not meant to be permanent structures, but were made to be disposable. She did not think the hut has that much historical significance. Chairperson Correa thinks the nostalgic factor makes them more significant to people. Chairperson Correa said that the first Quonset Hut was first built in Rhode Island, her home state.

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**Motion** made by Ms. Van Rensburg to find that the airport Quonset Hut is not eligible for inclusion in the Historic District Overlay zoning as recommended by staff. The motion was seconded by Mr. Beaton.

Ms. Rees asked if there was any way to reach out to an individual or clubs to see if they are interested in the Quonset Hut. Chairperson Correa asked if anyone would like to add something to the motion regarding disassembly.

Mr. Beaton asked Ms. Van Rensburg if she would like to amend the motion to include a request that Staff attempt to save the components for the possibility of later reassembly into a building in another location. Ms. van Rensburg agreed to amend her motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Public Comments**

No Public Comments.

**OTHER BUSINESS** – Mr. Crowe told the Board he was seeking their direction on a shed at the corner of Laurel & S. 3<sup>rd</sup> St. It is a metal accessory building constructed around 1930. It has original features such as some wood siding in the rear, a metal roof and walls, and metal beams, but it is an undistinguished building with no real utility at this time. It is owned by a private property owner who wishes to remove it. There have been problems with homeless people living in it in the past. There is the possibility of moving it to a site behind the Tilghman House, which is close by. Chairperson Correa advised Mr. Crowe the shed could also be moved to the back of Hammock Hall. Mr. Beaton said he believes it was used to house the hearses and other materials for a nearby funeral home. Chairperson Correa asked the Board for some consensus on whether this item should be placed on the next agenda for determination of historical significance. The Board agreed that they were comfortable with staff making the decision on whether to demolish it or relocate it to a nearby site.

Ms. van Rensburg told the Board that the St Marks Episcopal Church has a new vestry and it appears that they no longer want to part company with the lot at the corner of Main and 3<sup>rd</sup> that the James House was to be located to. Mr. Crowe said that all parties were close to agreeing on the moving of the house and the partition of the lot. Mr. Crowe added that the City has in the past held off on code enforcement fines thinking the church was working in good faith to save the building. Ms. Scheonberger asked if such fines could be retroactive. Mr. Crowe replied in the negative.

Chairperson Correa advised the board that the houses on the 900 block of Laurel St have been demolished. Mr. Crowe advised the board that the houses were a life and safety hazard and the retroactive approval will come before the board at the January meeting. Mr. Beaton asked if the foundation on the house on Laurel St was salvageable. Mr. Crowe advised the board that the building was a total loss. Chairperson Correa advised the board that the flooring that was in the house is now in Patti and John Vogt's house on South 4<sup>th</sup> St. in their kitchen and looks very nice. The previous owners removed the flooring from the house.

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**ADJOURNMENT - Motion** to adjourn made by Ms. Van Rensburg to adjourn the meeting, at 4:33 pm.