

HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
CITY OF PALATKA
DRAFT Meeting Minutes October 1st, 2015

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Roberta Correa at 4:00 pm. Other members present included Lynda Crabill, Meri Rees, Larry Beaton, Laura Schoenberger, and Elizabeth van Rensburg. Absent members included Robert Goodwin, and Gilbert Evans Jr., Staff present: Planning Director Thad Crowe and Recording Secretary Ke'Ondra Wright.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Ms. van Rensburg to approve the May 7th, 2015 minutes, seconded by Ms. Crabill. Motion passed unanimously.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

Chairperson Correa read the appeals procedures.

NEW BUSINESS

Case: HB 15-42
Locations:
Applicant: City of Palatka
Request: Historic Preservation Element of Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Crowe said that state statutes require the City to update its Comprehensive Plan every seven years. The deadline for plan amendment was moved back from 2011 to 2016 (July). The Plan has 11 elements, and in previous workshops the consensus was to create a stand-alone Historic Preservation Element, moving goals, objectives, and policies (GOPs) into this new element from the Future Land Use and Housing Elements, and adding new GOPs. Existing GOPs oblige the City to be proactively involved in design review within historic districts, keep an inventory of historic resources, and ensure that new construction is compatible with historic districts. Ms. Rees asked how Staff would enforce Policy A.1.5.2, which requires that property owners maintain historic buildings. Mr. Crowe answered that the code enforcement office, housed in the police department, enforces this policy. Chairperson Correa added that the South Historic District Neighborhood Association has a liaison with code enforcement and funnels complaints directly to the code enforcement officer. Ms. van Rensburg said the North Historic District Neighborhood Association does the same thing. Ms. van Rensburg wondered if language could be added to give City staff more leeway to enforce minimum maintenance of historic structures. Ms. Crabill added that City properties aren't even being maintained. Mr. Crowe asked which City properties aren't being maintained. Ms. Crabill replied the property on Laurel St and 9th St. that the City is trying to sell. Chairperson Correa told Mr. Crowe there is another unmaintained City property on Dodge St as well. Mr. Crowe said he would be happy to invite the code enforcement officer to the next Historic Preservation Board meeting to address these issues.

Mr. Beaton said the new Element should direct the City to inventory areas like Palatka Heights that have not been surveyed for historic resources. Ms. van Rensburg added that there is language in the current Plan that suggests a historic survey of Palatka Heights. Chairperson Correa said the Wilson House and Mulholland Park are not in historic districts, but are significant architecturally. Chairperson Correa said downtown should also be considered for historic designation. Ms. Crabill said that when she ran for City Commission in 2005 a lot of people were adamant that they didn't want their house to be historically designated.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
CITY OF PALATKA
DRAFT Meeting Minutes October 1st, 2015

Ms. van Rensburg said that even in the historic districts if no one is monitoring minimum maintenance then nothing gets done. Chairperson Correa advised that goes back to the resources problem, with only one code enforcement officer and maybe three police officers certified for code enforcement. Ms. van Rensburg said the Putnam County Historical Society could help identify unrecognized historic resources. Mr. Beaton said he knew that Staff was trying to move forward with a citywide survey of historic buildings, but also felt it was important to work to better maintain the existing inventory. Mr. Crowe said that staff would add this language. Mr. Beaton added that brick streets and granite curbs are as historically significant as some structures and there are other items such as the fountains on the courthouse lawn that are also important, just to name one. Ms. van Rensburg said the idea of an additional Northside CRA district is a good idea, but the idea of expanding current CRA districts will not work. Mr. Crowe said staff and the City Commission have discussed a new CRA along some of the main road corridors like Reid St. along with adjoining residential areas. Mr. Crowe advised the board that changing the corridors of the current CRA districts is not being proposed at this time. Ms. van Rensburg advised that if a new CRA was established there would be some mentorship opportunities from the Northside and Southside Historic Districts.

Chairperson Correa said that eco-tourism could be added to heritage tourism as a great opportunity for the City (Page C-13). Mr. Crowe agreed.

Ms. Rees said that in New York every town had a historian who managed historic archives. The historian would have genealogy files, historical files, history books and other materials. Mr. Crowe said that that the future of archiving may be on the web. Ms. van Rensburg stated that this ties into the Historical Society's new software which allows documentation and archiving of scanned materials.

Mr. Beaton asked if there was a way to identify buildings that become historic over time, maybe using the 50-year test? Mr. Crowe answered that this was possible, but it would take some leg work and the Property Appraiser records are not always accurate as to date of construction. Mr. Crowe said it would be ideal to incorporate information from the master site files to the property appraiser records, but was not sure how that would work. Chairperson Correa asked about the status of the CLG historic survey grant application, and if these grants could support updating property appraisal records. Mr. Crowe answered that he hasn't heard yet about the grant. He added that Staff could inquire how other communities track potential historic resources over time. Ms. Rees advised staff she like the third paragraph on page C-5 which recommends property tax hike freezes on historic properties to encourage renovation. Chairperson Correa said the other part of such freezes is that they decrease CRA tax increment funds, but she understood the trade-off. Mr. Crowe said the City could be selective about the use of such freezes, maybe only using them for special cases, like significant historic buildings. Ms. van Rensburg said the freezes were beneficial because they encouraged positive action, which in turn encouraged neighbors to also improve their properties.

Mr. Crowe said that acquisition of unmaintained historic properties was possible, but took around seven years of documentation and legal notification. Ms. van Rensburg said if the ground work was in place for such actions then in about two years such properties could be acquired.

Chairperson Correa said as a realtor she had found that Palatka is sometimes a hard sale and having incentives like tax freezes would likely attract new investors and residents.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
CITY OF PALATKA
DRAFT Meeting Minutes October 1st, 2015

Ms. Crabill was impressed with the support of the mural program in the Comprehensive Plan and would like to see the reduction or elimination of costly fees, which is tough on the nonprofit mural committee. Mr. Crowe agreed. Chairperson Correa said the City might an art in public places ordinances, for example to treat murals differently than other signage. Ms. von Rensburg said that another nonprofit group, the Historical Society, puts on the Occupation of Palatka for the public school system and doesn't make money, so maybe the City should form some kind of committee that works with such nonprofit groups.

Mr. Beaton said there should be some historic signage for parks, including information on the namesake of the park and its history. Mr. Crowe said that this type of activity is eligible for the 100 % matching state grant funds. Ms. Crabill said that the Pilot Club has also raised money and brought items for Hank Bryan Park. Mr. Crowe thinks the City and Historical Society should get together and talk about historical signage and where it should be placed. Chairperson Correa said such a plan would be nice. Mr. Beaton suggested adding the golf course and airport as historically significant sites. Chairperson Correa asked will there be any other forums for review going to be taken place for review of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Crowe answered that the Planning Board will be reviewing all changes to elements.

Ms. Rees said that on page C-19 (fourth bullet) it should read the Putnam County Historical Society.

Public Comments

The Chairperson then closed the public comments portion of this item.

Motion by Ms. van Rensburg to approve the Historic Preservation Element Comprehensive Plan as submitted with recommended changes. Motion seconded by Ms. Crabill and passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT – meeting was adjourned at 4:53 PM.