

HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
CITY OF PALATKA
Meeting Minutes October 25, 2016

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

APPEALS PROCEDURE

Chairperson Roberta Correa read the appeals procedures into the record.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Ms. Van Rensburg to approve the September 1, 2016 minutes, seconded by Ms. Rees, motion approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Case: HB 16-53
Locations: 810 Laurel St (Rotary Park)
Applicant: Putnam County
Request: Certificate of Appropriateness to replace existing manual scoreboard with a new 5-foot tall by 16-foot wide electronic scoreboard (changing sign).

Mr. Crowe summarized the request with a power point presentation. Mr. Crowe said that the Board has specific criteria that have to be considered. One Staff finding is that the sign will not impair architectural or historic values of adjacent structures - since the sign is approximately 700 feet away from the homes, it will not immediately contrast to the adjacent homes. The criteria outright prohibit whirling or flashing signs. The blue background color blends with the sky color, however the bright red digital copy is not compatible to the generally muted colors found within the historic district. Visual impacts of the scoreboard are limited to three homes on Laurel St., and there is an opportunity to minimize those impacts by planting several trees along Laurel St. between the homes and the scoreboard location. Since the City's sign ordinance does not define scoreboards, staff came up with a Sign Code change which would allow scoreboards in other active parks.

Mr. Crowe concluded that Staff recommends approval of the COA to install a new 5-foot tall by 16-foot wide electronic scoreboard (changing sign) with the following recommendations:

- applicant shall procure required sign permits from the City;
- scoreboard use limited to softball season, from January 1 to May 1;
- sign shall conform to submitted graphic representations, including blue color, maximum size for five feet in height by 16 feet in width, and light level of 2.8 foot-candles;
- sign height limited to 15 feet above grade;
- back of sign shall not be used for advertising purpose;
- only game-related scores and statistics, sports-related information, public service announcements, and team sponsors may be displayed on scoreboards;
- scoreboard shall only be utilized during games;
- no scrolling, flashing, or other movement shall be allowed other than change of image; and
- two additional trees shall be planed within the Laurel St. right-of-way across from 811 Laurel St. to assist in visually screening the scoreboard from the Laurel St. residences.
- illegal advertising signs shall be removed from outfield fence; and

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- deteriorated screening materials shall be removed from the outfield fence or replaced.

Chairperson Correa noted that she had ex-parte take communications about this item. She then opened up the floor to public comments.

Christy Sheffield Sanford, 312 Dodge St, Ms. Sheffield read a statement she prepared. The statement expressed concern with the electronic scoreboard. A neighborhood should be impacted by visual pollution. The existing advertising signs are eyesores and are not legal. She did note that she appreciated Rotary wanting to do something for the children and sports. The fencing along the park needs mending before any further projects are considered. The winged elms planted at Rotary Park by Keep Putnam Beautiful are not being maintained. If the Board decides to approve this variance all advertising signage on the outside fence should be screened from public view.

Carol Cartwright, 811 Laurel St, said she was a neighbor who would see the sign from her house, and expressed concern about the request. She said that in the past year there have been intensified activities at the park. Parking has been an issue. The fence on the east side is leaning badly. If the sign is approved there should be a strict maintenance of the field, because the neighbors are still tax payers indirectly supporting the field.

Tim Parker, 528 Kirby St (also owns rental property at 815 Laurel St.) said that he supported the request with the Staff conditions. He said that before the Rotary Club took over park maintenance there were people was sleeping in the dugout and the park and trash was abundant. Things have improved since then. However there are some issues with the park still. Activities for the youth are needed. He agreed that new trees would help to buffer the homes along Laurel St. and also said that the previously mentioned maintenance issues should be addressed.

Bob Taylor, 710 St Johns Ave, spoke as a Rotary Club member and an architect. He said he supported the request. He was concerned with Staff recommendations that limited the use of the scoreboard during the soft ball season from January 1 to May 1. He supported allowing scoreboard use year-round. He did not have a problem with a dusk to dawn restriction. Rotary Park is maintained by the Rotary Club of Palatka and its members. The Rotary Club of Palatka is a nonprofit serving the City of Palatka and Putnam County. (Prior to determining zoning conformance) the Club spent almost \$6,000 (\$5,000 for the new scoreboard, \$500 in engineering fees, and \$85 for an application to the Historic Board), and to purchase additional trees around the ball field would be a burdensome expense. Baseball and softball is what kids did after school, on the weekends, and during the summer. The existing scoreboard was dilapidated and need to be replaced. The existing scoreboard was electric and identified in an interlocal agreement between the City and County with the following language: "Rotary Park located at Laurel and 9th St. is a two acre park contains a lighted multipurpose field with clay end field with bleachers, with a storage building, and a concession stand." The park is classified in the Putnam County Comprehensive Plan as a community park because its active recreation use, despite its small size. Mr. Crowe advised the Board that staff did recommend amending the proposed restrictions to remove the two games per week restriction, while adding the condition to stop scoreboard use at 9 p.m. He added that the Applicants had agreed with the Staff conditions prior to tonight's meeting.

Terry Goodwin, 110 Peniel Rd, a representative of Peniel Church, which runs the programs in the park, spoke in support of the request. The church entered into a lease agreement with the Putnam County Recreation

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Department several years back and at that time the field was poorly kept. Since then many improvements have been made, included the fencing, He noted that Hurricane Matthew damaged the fencing, and it will be repaired. The scoreboard angle will face more of the Campbell building than the Laurel St. homes. He apologized about the advertising signage, saying he thought it was allowed, and said the signs would be removed. He requested a little flexibility on using the scoreboard after 9 p.m. when circumstances lead to late games. The games generally start at 6 p.m. but it is hard to judge the length of the games, and during tournaments there will be multiple games which might lead to later game times. Peniel is not the only group that uses the field, but is the group that maintains it. There are some other travel softball clubs who utilize the field and that is why the field is being used year round. Chairperson Correa asked if the games run late if there was a flexibility to set a stop time on using the field to later than a certain time. Mr. Goodwin replied that generally the games start at 6 p.m., but tournament times vary.

Chairperson Correa said it would be helpful for notice of events/games to be provided to the South Historic District Neighborhood Association. Chairperson Correa said there should be give some and take and some solutions. The Board's primary focus is the design of the sign and the impact the sign would have on the neighborhood.

Mr. Beaton asked Mr. Crowe if there was a diagram or something that reflect the position of the new sign. Mr. Crowe advised that what was submitted to staff is what is in the presentation, so it appears that the Applicant has shifted the sign location. Mr. Crowe stated that in making the motion you can advise when staff works with the applicant staff will make sure the orientation of the sign points in the right direction. Mr. Beaton asked for clarification on page two of staff report it talks about the existing sign ordinance the formula that is used to determine the brightness of the sign as it relates to the light conditions to the time of day. The brightness of the sign should be considered more now since we know the games will run later than 9 p.m. Do the sign have to ability to change as it gets darker? Mr. Crowe responded that the nighttime was the time of the greatest light intensity impacts, and the changing sign standards limited that intensity to a level that was not overly bright and intensive. Mr. Beaton asked what the distance is from the proposed sign to the homes on Laurel St. Mr. Crowe answered that the distance is about 200 feet. Mr. Taylor added that the intensity level that Mr. Crowe and he calculated at the ordinance 100-foot distance was 0.0003, a very low number, and the only thing that is lighted is the numbers on the sign.

Mr. Stackpole asked how bright the sign was, and also asked to confirm that the background would not be lighted, just the numbers. Mr. Taylor answered that the light is 2.8 footcandles, which is not that bright. Mr. Stackpole said he knows the sign height limit is 15 feet high, but what part of that sign does that refer to, the top? Mr. Taylor answered in the affirmative and noted that the sign top would be around 13 feet above the ground.

Ms. Rees asked if anyone could address the advertising signs on the fence. Mr. Crowe advised that the Sign Code only allows off-site advertising in the M-1 Industrial zoning district and essentially billboards are the only off-site advertising allowed in the sign code.

Mr. Crowe said that he has heard for the first time the Applicant's request to not limit the use of the sign to just the softball season, and added that Staff doesn't have a problem with allowing sign usage for the rest of the year, as long as everyone understands that there will be no real limit to scoreboard usage frequency once this is

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approved. Chairperson Correa asked is this something that could be worked out to to give notification of games to the neighborhood in advance.

Name (*Unintelligible*), 6106 1st Manor W, said that Rotary Park is the only girl's softball field in the community. So when Rotary was working with staff on this language the other girls softball team's schedules were considered (Spring only).

Chairperson Correa noted that the Board would like to see the ball field utilized.

Ms. Van Rensburg asked how long Rotary Park has been a ball field. Mr. Taylor answered since the mid 1970s. Ms. Van Rensburg asked how was this particular field different from Fred Green Park where anyone could rent? Chairperson Correa answered that Peniel Baptist Church would handle all of the scheduling to make sure there were no conflicts, however this was still a community park. Mr. Goodwin advised with the lease agreement Peniel Baptist Church also paid the power bill for the field. The different teams or organizations will contact Peniel Baptist Church directly. Mr. Crowe asked if the request was for the scoreboard to be used year-around. Mr. Goodwin answered in the affirmative.

Chairperson Correa closed the public comments.

Motion made by Mr. Beaton and seconded by Ms. Scheonberger to approve the requested Certificate of Appropriateness to install within Rotary Park a five-foot tall by 16-foot wide electronic scoreboard (changing sign) with the following recommendations:

1. applicant shall procure required sign permits from the City;
2. scoreboard use with games starting promptly at 6 p.m. shall not continue beyond 9:30 p.m. with flexibility provided for late-running softball games;
3. sign shall conform to submitted graphic representations, including blue color, maximum size for five feet in height by 16 feet in width, and light level of 2.8 footcandles;
4. a revised site plan shall show the sign pointed more toward the Campbell building;
5. sign height limited to 15 feet above grade;
6. back of sign shall not be used for advertising purpose;
7. only game-related scores and statistics, sports-related information, public service announcements, and team sponsors may be displayed on scoreboards;
8. scoreboard shall only be utilized during games;
9. no scrolling, flashing, or other movement shall be allowed other than change of image;
10. two additional trees shall be planted within the Laurel St. right-of-way across from 811 Laurel St. to assist in visually screening the scoreboard from the Laurel St. residences,
11. advertising signs shall be removed from inside and outside of outfield fence;
12. deteriorated fence screening mesh shall be removed or replaced; and
13. Peniel Church or its successor will communicate with the South Historic Neighborhood Association on a monthly basis with time, games, and date of park and scoreboard use.

Upon vote, motion approved unanimously.

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Case: HB 16-55
Locations: 516 River St
Applicant: Putnam County
Request: Certificate of Appropriateness to construct an addition to rear carport of existing house (South Historic District).

Mr. Crowe summarized the request with a power point presentation. Regarding the criteria calling for similar materials, textures, and colors; the proposed addition utilized similar exterior materials to existing carport, including vertical siding in the carport gable, wood posts, and metal roofing. The addition will continue the benefit of differentiating the new construction from surrounding historic homes. The rear carport addition is almost completely hidden by vegetation from Emmett St and the adjacent properties. Staff recommends approval to construct the rear carport addition as submitted with similar post/supports, gable with vertical wood siding, and metal roof to the existing carport.

Chairperson Correa opened the floor to public comments.

Kenny Downs, 2020 Ashbrooke Lane and the contractor for this project, spoke in agreement with the Certificate of Appropriateness request. Mr. Downs advised the Board that this is just a small carport added onto the house just to cover a vehicle. Maybe one neighbor would look outside and see the carport.

Chairperson Correa closed the public comments.

Motion made by Ms. Van Rensburg and seconded by Ms. Rees to approve the requested Certificate of Appropriateness to construct an addition to rear carport of existing house as submitted with post/supports, gable with vertical wood siding, and metal roof that are similar to the existing carport. Upon vote, motion passed unanimously.

Case: HB 16-25
Locations: 42-10-27-6850-0001-0260
Applicant: Normand Jutras
Request: Rezone and remove a portion of property (southwest corner of River and Morris Streets) from local Designation (South Historic District).

Mr. Crowe summarized the request with a power point presentation. The South Historic District boundaries were established in 1982 along with the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The criteria for “un-designation” pertains to historic, architectural, and cultural significance. This property is in the historic district, but not in the Community Redevelopment Area. Staff has not found any documentation to indicate that this was an error, in fact there are several other properties in the same situation (in the historic district but not in the Community Redevelopment Area). If the Board approves this request for un-designation there would be a precedent to do the same for the other properties. Review criteria are associated with significant historic, architectural or cultural significance. The 1915 Sanborn map identifies a gas station on the property, which does not rise to a level of significance to trip the threshold for significance.

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Mr. Crowe said that the un-designation is considered a rezoning which is approved by the City Commission however the Board will provide a recommendation to the City Commission. The Planning Board has met on this item and recommended approval under the rezoning criteria; however the Historic Preservation Board is evaluating this purely under historic district criteria, namely the significance test. While they should not be considered by the Board, Mr. Crowe referenced Planning Board findings on rezoning criteria. Positive rezoning criteria findings included the truing up of Historic District and Community Redevelopment Area boundaries for consistency, removal of split zoning on property, and not granting any special privilege. Negative rezoning criteria findings include the fact that the property can be developed under the current zoning, some potential negative visual impacts of new development due to loss of design review, and the precedent set for the removal of the other two similar properties. However since the site does not possess any historic, architectural, or cultural significance, Staff recommends approval to rezone and remove a portion of property (southwest corner of River and Morris Streets) from local historic district designation (South Historic District).

The Chairperson opened up the floor for public comments.

Applicant Normand Jutras, 412 Mulholland Park, supported the rezoning and removal of a portion of property (southwest corner of River and Morris Streets) from local Designation. He said that the intent of the historic district nomination in 1979 to follow the river to Morris St., and this property was not intended to be included. The legal description of the historic district had a number of mistakes.

Lynda Crider, 116 Kirkland St, said she trusted Mr. Jutras to develop the property in an appropriate manner that would not negatively impact nearby historic district residents, but future owners might not choose to do so.

Ms. Rees asked why Mr. Jutras would he like this property removed from the Historic District now. Mr. Jutras advised that he has been working on removing this property from the Historic District for a long time and in concert with future development of the larger tract of land.

Mr. Stackpole asked if the Board would just be approving the removal of the property from the Historic District. Chairperson Correa answered in the affirmative.

Chairperson Correa advised there was nothing of historical significance or culture significance that we are aware of on this property. She closed the public comments.

Motion made by Mr. Stackpole and seconded by Mr. Beaton to approve the requested Certificate of Appropriateness to rezone and remove a portion of property (southwest corner of River and Morris Streets) from local historic designation (South Historic District). Upon vote, motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:04 pm.