



HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD CITY OF PALATKA

Minutes for the August 4th, 2011 Meeting

The Historic Preservation Board was called to order by Chairperson Robbi Correa.

The following members were present: Lynda Little Crabill, Elizabeth Van Rensburg, Mark Miles and Gilbert Evans Jr. The following members were absent: Robert Goodwin and Larry Beaton.

Staff present: Planning Director Thad Crowe and Recording Secretary Deena McCamey.

Motion made by Ms. Crabill to approve the April 6, 2011 minutes. Seconded made by Ms. Van Rensburg. All those present voted affirmative, motion passed.

Ms. Correa read appeal procedures.

OLD BUSINESS - none

NEW BUSINESS-

Case HB 11-31 **Address:** 503 N 3rd Street
 Applicant: Manderville, Mercedes

Request: For a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a 46 3/4" x 48' black metal fence to include matching gate.

Mr. Crowe gave a brief power point presentation explaining the applicant's request, including photographs of the property in question. He described the different types of metal fencing used within the city's historic and present times. He recommended approving the style of metal fencing the applicant is requesting.

Mr. Miles said the photos that came with the packet show a white house with blue or green shutters. His concern was the property appeared to have an existing white aluminum or wood fence.

Ms. Van Rensburg advised Mr. Miles to look at the Florida Master Site File (FMSF) photo of how the house appeared at that time and look at the most recent photo; there he should see all the improvements that have already occurred. She said the handicap ramp, the white vinyl fence was removed and the house was repainted with help from the TIF/HIP program. She also pointed out the house originally had black metal railing on the front porch steps as shown in the FMSF.

Mr. Miles said he was OK with it.

Ms. Correa said the house looked to be of the early 1900's construction and an American Four Square style.

Ms. Crabill estimated the date of construction to be around 1909 to 1915.

Ms. Correa asked if the decision to have the metal fence installed was for maintenance purposes instead of having a wooden or white picket fence.

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Mr. Gooding replied no, the addition that was added in the back will not be replaced and the only portion replaced will be the original structure.

Mr. Gilbert asked if the material will match.

Mr. Gooding said yes, that is why he decided not to use a colored roof so it would match.

Ms. Correa asked is the roof leaking and is that why he wants to replace the roof.

Mr. Gooding stated yes.

Ms. Correa told the members there is a need for this request.

Motion made by Mr. Miles to approve COA HB 11-32, second made by Ms. Crabill. All were in favor motion passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS-

A. Review Certified Local Government Application and Resolution.

Ms. Correa asked if everyone received the application & resolution along with a copy of the CLG program that Ms. McCamey handed out prior to the meeting.

Mr. Crowe told the board the (CLG) Certified Local Government is a partnership between the City, State Historic Preservation Office and the National Parks Service. The benefits consist of training, grants for planning, surveys and networking with other CLG jurisdictions and state. There are requirements that include reporting to the state of their active program which the city already has. He said the process takes six months to one year once the application has been sent out. It does require a resolution signed by the Mayor and an agreement between the city and state, which basically says we are going to continue with what we are already doing.

Mr. Crowe said he wanted to update the board concerning the downtown historic district. He spoke with the chair and they decided it would be more appropriate to discuss this matter at a board meeting, because of the sunshine law. He continued by saying the board has talked about strategies that would encourage an idea of having a downtown historic district along with the CLG program. He said this would be a good opportunity for educating downtown property owners, city commission and the public concerning the benefits of the CLG program and how it can work hand and hand with a downtown historic district. He said that the final resolution and application could come back before the board for a final vote. He said he wasn't sure if it would need to go to the planning board for approval, but he said he could find out, but it definitely needs to go to the city commission.

Ms. Correa said the Historic Preservation Board members have already formally voted and approved the CLG program along with Downtown Palatka, Inc., Merchant Group, Main Street, North Side Neighborhood Association and the South Side Neighborhood Association. She said she would forward copies of the minutes from those meetings.

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Mr. Crowe said once he has copies of the votes and the approved minutes from those meetings he can move forward to the city commission. The two agenda items will be paired together first the CLG program, which would be the resolution/application and if approved that would initiate the CLG in Tallahassee to begin that portion of the process. The other item would be to discuss the Downtown historic district, their direction and consensus from the commission. He said he plans to bring the idea of a district different than the present historic districts, which will be more flexible. He asked the chair to come up with some ideas to present this to the city commission. He said this will be different because the commercial buildings need more flexibility than residential historical districts in regard to design standards.

Ms. Correa said there are other perks such as tax incentives for the commercial districts and some grandfathering of building code requirements if adopted.

Mr. Crowe said one incentive would be the historic tax exemption. The State of Florida authorizes the use of such exemptions with National Register or Local Government designation, but such exemptions should not be provided with National Register designation since there is no protection or design review with this designation.

Ms. Correa said that's where the board could recommend that historic tax exemptions be tied into a local historic district, keeping the exemptions as an incentive for a downtown district.

A downtown district would also include flexible interpretation of building codes in exchange for a base level of regulation.

Ms. Correa said when the board gets to that point all of the board members needed to come to that city commission meeting as a presence for the historic preservation board as a support.

Mr. Crowe reiterated that since the board already voted to pursue moving forward with the CLG program, he will gather the required information and move forward.

Ms. Correa said she forwarded a copy of the whole packet with all of that information to Mr. Boynton and she will also get with Mr. Crowe.

Ms. Crabill asked Mr. Evans and Mr. Miles to send their resume into staff quickly so the board can move forward with that portion of required documents.

Ms. Correa said she forwarded a copy of the blank form to staff, she asked staff to forward it to Mr. Miles and Mr. Evans so they can also fill it out and forward back for processing.

Mr. Miles pointed out errors in the packet and asked for them to be corrected before any resolutions or ordinances be presented to the city commission.

B. Discussion of Historic Preservation Ordinance Issues.

Mr. Crowe said he received feedback from one city commissioner and some from residents in the short time he has been with the city and noted he had worked in other cities where this is common. He said one category would be to not require a COA for general maintenance of the home. He said staff should be able to approve

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certain things at the counter, as long as the original appearance of the historic structure is being maintained. If a change of appearance was requested that was not in keeping with the historic district then it should require going in front of the board for their approval.

Mr. Miles asked if he could suggest corrections.

Ms. Correa said she didn't think Mr. Crowe was looking for any corrections; he is looking for a thought process so the board could allow this in the future.

Mr. Crowe said he is not asking for anything at this time. He just wants the board to think about this concept and have the ability to come back with alternatives. But if the board would like to make those changes to the ordinance that would be acceptable to.

C. Review Staff/Board Responsibility (Matrix).

Mr. Miles said he had some typographical and spelling issues along with other issues. He supported easing staff and board's responsibilities as well as making it easier for the public. However he said the board definitely needs to get there and would like to have it come back to the board as early as Mr. Crowe can present it for the board to vote on.

Mr. Crowe asked the board if they liked the three-tiered review.

Ms. Correa said the tiered system looked appealing to her and it would be a good concept. When the board gets to the determination of what kind of design standards that it will use and if it's not going to be the Secretary of Interior Standards, then what will the board use for a definition.

Mr. Crowe said the Seabreeze example would be good because the board could go beyond the Secretary of Interior Standards in terms of specificity. Sometimes when looking at the secretary's standards it can be confusing how to know what is meant. The board can decide to go above and beyond the Secretary of Interior Standards.

Ms. Crabill suggested that if an issue comes up for example: If a homeowner had a leaking roof, staff could approve a temporary tarp to be placed on the homeowner's roof for a short period of time.

Mr. Miles asked staff to look at different locations of the hand out that was given to the board for review. He noted some minor punctuation and spelling errors and asked staff to amend and correct those errors.

Ms. Correa said the handout was a copy of the Seabreeze's guidelines, which was intended just as a reference purpose, it's not the City's guidelines.

Mr. Miles said if staff used their guidelines it in the future those corrections will need to be corrected before published.

Ms. Correa said if the board is going to approve any historical guidelines the board will at that time need to approve what is presented, making it the city's policy of guidelines.

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Mr. Miles asked staff if any reference should be made regarding the new lead paint law that recently was adopted.

Ms. Correa said the EPA has a new Certification for lead base paint removal.

Mr. Miles said he has come across this daily since the adoption as a contractor.

Mr. Crowe asked if he was suggesting that this be a change in the preservation ordinance.

Mr. Miles said that contractors have to become certified in lead-based paint removal. He added if a house is over (20) twenty years old and the contractor is not certified by the EPA and repaints over the existing layer they will be fined. He also suggested the residents should be notified of this new certification requirement.

Mr. Crowe said that if paint is going to be one of the Design Standards then yes it would be appropriate to notify the public.

Ms. Correa said for unpermitted work, most citizens don't realize that the EPA has stepped up their requirements for removing lead-based paint making it a requirement to be certified. She added that the TIF program already requires their painters to be certified before they are allowed to repaint in the Historic District.

Ms. Van Rensburg stated the EPA has brochures specifically for homeowners for the local building departments to distribute to the citizens.

Ms. Correa said depending on which tier painting will fall under, if it does become an item the staff can then approve the building department to have those brochures readily available for the homeowners before they start their process. She questioned if it would need to be in the ordinance or if it should just be information inseminated into the citizens.

Mr. Crowe said if the board went online to review the Seabreeze Design Standards they will see that it is a user friendly document with a lot of educational, technical and regulatory information, including a section of neighborhood history and architecture. They also have sections on how-to's regarding restoration of historic homes in their district. He said the City of Palatka can do the same, the citizens can go to a link and have their questions answered.

He then said based on what he has heard from the board, he will start developing outlines for amending the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Mr. Miles questioned the verbiage within the sentence on page 24 under the photographs where it says "it is important to repair or replace the roofing with materials similar to the original in size, color and texture" his concern is it says the word "Original" not "Current" what is the intended meaning.

Mr. Crowe replied it gets into a number of issues pertaining to people's budgets and how the roofing material has changed throughout the years. He said the board could always have a backstop for economic hardship which would allow the homeowner to use a more conventional style material. He added the word "Original" is intended for that historic time period, not necessarily the exact original material.

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Ms. Correa said that is what the Secretary of Interior Standards Guideline says, because roofs have to be replaced and there aren't too many homes with the original roofing material.

Ms. Crabill said it can also be hard to find out what the original material was, especially if there are no old photos or history on the house then it can nearly be impossible.

Mr. Crowe said that's where the homeowner would need to go by examples of the architecture and period.

Ms. Correa asked if there was anything else the board wanted to discuss.

Ms. Van Rensburg said since code enforcement has been ordered by the commission to only be strictly reactive as opposed to being proactive, she felt the board can make up all the rules they want to, but when it comes to enforcing the guidelines what is the point of doing all of this if the city is reactive and won't enforce new guidelines.

Ms. Correa said she thought part of it would be more of an educational piece. The guideline would help the homeowners and future homebuyers in a historic district by giving perspective buyers the ability to say here are the pluses and these are the responsibilities of being a historic homeowner. She added it can be hard to enforce such regulations.

Mr. Miles said that is why he moved into the South Historical District; because it is a deed restricted community that was what he wanted but unfortunately it isn't what he got.

Mr. Crowe said there is a comp plan policy that requires the city to have a higher level of vigilance in the historic districts. This becomes more of a matter of resources.

Mr. Miles suggested that each board member could do the same.

Ms. Van Rensburg said it is already hard to build a cohesive neighborhood of neighbors getting along, now there's a situation where neighbors are turning in neighbors and then that becomes a more compounded problem. She said she doesn't fully understand why other towns and cities can go out and run their code enforcement departments by going out and looking for violations but Palatka can't. She said what she heard was the city attorney had a problem with handling the enforcement.

Mr. Crowe said it is an issue of selective enforcement, where the city cannot single out people; it has to be equally applied to everyone.

Ms. Correa said unfortunately this is happening; there are selective people who target certain people (vigilante code enforcers) they choose to select certain people to call or report verses someone who may be their friend then it becomes a misuse by the community.

Mr. Crowe said there is nothing to prevent the city from doing targeted code enforcement where it can be a general area or a random area.

Mr. Miles said code enforcement is critical especially when it can increase the value of property in the city over time and without enforcement it does decrease the property value over time. He said he asked the city to be

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proactive with code enforcement, but the prior commissioners chose not to, maybe now that there are two new commissioners it could be asked again.

Mr. Crowe said if you are asking to target a more specific area like the historic districts the policy of the comp plan recognizes the importance of these historic districts and targeting these areas is appropriate since there is a policy foundation that says we are supposed to preserve and maintain our historical resources. Since the districts are small enough it wouldn't take much resources to enforce them by doing sweeps or something of that nature.

Ms. Correa said is this the appropriate time to target or attack that approach with the commissioners or should the board try to get the small things like guidelines through first. If the commission agrees with the ordinance then the board can push for more in the future. She said let's first get the ordinance in place then we as a board would be able to approach the code enforcement issue later.

Mr. Miles agreed saying sooner the better.

Ms. Correa asked if there were further discussion.

Mr. Crowe said he wanted to discuss advertisement with the board, explaining the code only requires new district designations to have a legal add, certified notice to surrounding neighbors and posting of the properties within a one hundred and fifty foot area of the proposed designation. This is not required for property owners when asking for a certificate of appropriateness, right now staff has in the past ran a newspaper ad, mailed notices by regular mail and posted the properties. He said he did not see why a certificate of appropriateness can't be a localized decision that does not require a newspaper ad, which costs a lot of money and with the city's budget not so good, he suggested the property should be posted, but did not believe the certified mail should continue because of the cost. What he recommended was to amend the code by requiring a ten day regular mail and a ten day property posting for any certificate of appropriateness and for district designations. He then asked the board for approval to move forward with this amendment to the code.

Mr. Gilbert asked this recommendation is for one hundred and fifty feet.

Mr. Crowe said yes it is, if the board wanted to go wider they could, but he recommended staying with the one hundred and fifty feet.

Ms. Correa said with this being a money saving amendment, it may be a bonus with some commissioners. She then asked the board if they agreed with that proposed amendment. All board members were in favor and recommended moving forward.

Mr. Crowe thanked them and said that was all he had for the board at this time.

Adjourn- Ms. Correa said with no further business this meeting is adjourned.

Meeting Adjourned- at 4:50pm