

Historic NSB Preservation Commission Meeting February 12, 2020

Commissioners Present Lianne Bennett, chair; Dr. Angeline Barretta-Herman; Joanna Mahood; Anna O'Mara; Anne Scalf; and Dr. Harriet Winokur. **City staff included** Assistant City Attorney Chris Ryan, Senior Planner Robert Mathen, and Board Secretary Stephanie Ferrara.

Public Participation. A citizen expressed concern about the “avenue” streets in southern beachside area, where several houses “have been destroyed.” She also inquired as to dangers posed to the Flagler Avenue historic district.

Mr. Mathen stated that parts of Flagler Avenue are in a National Register Historic District and offered to provide a map. Dr. Winokur repeated her recommendation that structures built in the 1950s and 1960s be considered “historic.” The meeting packet included note that the current fine for destruction of an historic property without a permit is \$5,000.

CA-1-20: 219 Live Oak St. Certificate of Appropriateness requested to replace shingles on a c. 1912 frame vernacular contributing structure. Dr. Berretta-Hermann asked about diamond-shaped shingles found on some similar buildings. Mr. Mathen responded that diamond shingles had asbestos and cannot be used now. **Passed unanimously.**

CA- 2-20: 314 Palmetto St. Certificate of Appropriateness requested to replace a non-contributing, detached two-car garage with a two-story garage with a shingled gable roof, Hardie Board lap siding, double-hung windows, colonial style doors and a covered balcony. Staff recommended approval with archaeological monitoring during construction at the owner’s expense. An archaeologist who lives in NSB asked that approval require more than monitoring, such as archaeological shovel-testing around the perimeter of the proposed structure. Discussion followed about possible financial hardship to the owner from more extensive archaeology on a small project. No one was able to provide estimates of projected archaeological costs. **Passed unanimously,** as recommended by staff with archaeological monitoring.

2020 Donnadine Miller Preservation Award. Mr. Mathen recommended extending the application deadline to March 31, 2020, as only one application has been submitted for the award, despite publicity by the city. **Recommendation passed unanimously.**

Historic Preservation Grants Available to Private Citizens. Mr. Mathen, responding to a commission request at the December meeting presenting the results of his research into city, county, and state grants that might be available to private owners of contributing structures in the city’s National Register historic districts. County grants are from the “ECHO” program, which will end in 2021 unless reauthorized by voters. State grants are not available to private owners, except for certain nonprofit entities.

Lengthy discussion and comments ensued. Currently city grants are only for external repairs to condemned structures with low to middle-income owners. A citizen stated that low-income folks often faced “deathbed legacies” that created unclear or disputed property titles, resulting in ineligibility for the grants. Mr. Mathen explained that the city grants are limited and funded by an “enterprise fund” (not appropriated funds); they cannot easily be spent except as an alternative to demolition costs. No one has applied for these grants at least since 2013 (and probably before). Dr Barretta-Herman said the local grants as written do not seem very practical; Msrs. Ryan and Mathen responded that they could look at clarifying and cleaning up the grant language.

After further discussion, Dr. Barretta-Herman asked that the commission ask the city commission to devote staff time to looking for other possible historic grants and funding sources. Her recommendation passed unanimously.

Comments from Commission Members and City Staff Ideas about continued publicity for the Donnadine Miller preservation awards were discussed. Mr. Mathen is the city’s current Historic Preservation Officer. Dr. Barretta-Herman expressed interested in increasing NSB’s landmark properties.