

NSB Historical Preservation Commission Meeting (NSBHPC) June 10, 2020

Present Dr. Angeline Barretta-Herman, Lianne Bennett, Anna Marie O'Mara, Marvin Owens, Joann Mahood, Anne Scalf. **City Staff** Assistant City Attorney Chris Ryan, Senior Planner Robert Mathen and Board Secretary Stephanie Ferrara

New Business:

DM 1-20: Approval for demolition due to economic hardship – 309 Downing St. The single-story building (circa 1948) is in a mixed-use zone and suffered major hurricane damage without follow-up repair. **Staff recommended demolition on conditions** that the replacement design would not exceed 2 stories, would be compatible with the neighborhood, would be approved by the NSBHPC and any salvageable materials be re-purposed.

Mark Rogowski, representing the property owner, presented information on the condition of the property. He described major structural issues, extensive damage due to vandalism, vagrants, and termites. While some material might be salvageable, the cost of demolition is estimated between \$100,000 and \$200,000. He also presented a property history and stated there is a potential buyer at \$750,000, contingent upon the demolition of the current structure. A tentative proposal for re-development involves the construction of homes like the Tabby House project with no structure being higher than three stories.

The property owner reaffirmed that the plans for the property were tentative and the property has not been placed on the market, further indicating that the building was not historic, and the city's economic board supports the demolition. He is considering developing the property himself, as the damage makes repair untenable.

Three letters from neighbors, supporting the demolition, were also presented. They cited property rights, anticipated economic boost to Canal Street, and the fact that the property has been a haven for vagrants and the homeless for years. Mark Hall, attorney, described his involvement in CRA and expressed his view that the demolition of the structure would be "smart growth" that would reduce urban sprawl.

Dr. Barretta-Herman said that she had visited the property, inspecting its exterior. She expressed the following concerns:

- 41 buildings were demolished in the city in 2019, including 21 single-family homes, 5 in the historical district.
- The structure has not been condemned by the city.
- The owner has not attempted to maintain the property or repair hurricane damage.

Ms. Bennett noted the financial gain the owner could reap upon demolition.

Mr. Owens noted that the owner had allowed the deterioration and asked how demolition could be based on economic hardship if the owner of property was considering developing the property himself.

Ms. Scalf and Ms. Mahood asked if estimate for repairs have been done. Mr. Cole responded "no."

Dr. Barretta-Herman expressed her concerns about future height. She asked if a 120 days delay was appropriate in this case so the owner could explore other options for the property. Mr. Rogowski responded that the owner wanted an approval or a denial, not a delay.

A motion to find the property historically significant was unanimously approved. The motion to permit the demolition based on economic hardship was defeated 4-2. Voting for approval: Mahood, Scalf

DM-2-20: 110 Florida Avenue A garage, constructed in 1960, on a 60"W x240'D parcel will be replaced by a two-story structure. **Staff recommended approval** with conditions.

A representative of Delmar construction explained that the garage is listing, that property line issues are involved, and that the garage would be hand demolished and useable materials salvaged. It would be replaced with a larger garage. A second speaker stressed the need for a careful archeological study as historical burial grounds have been found nearby. The third speaker claimed that the current garage is on her property and that the garage is just a shed.

The demolition certificate request required three motions:

1. The building has historical value.
2. The building condition warrants demolition
3. The demolition must be approved by the HNSBPC with replacement to comply with staff guidelines. **All three motions passed unanimously.**

Comments from Commission Members and Staff

- A. Mr Mathen reported that staff was following up on archeological study at 211 & 215 Orange Street.
- B. Mr. Mathen presented a city map showing the location of city monuments and landmarks.
 - **Dr. Barretta-Herman** expressed her surprise that only 13 landmarks and monuments exist. She suggested that the banyan tree on Flagler Ave. and the city golf course be considered. Mr. Mathen explained that usually one such designation is made each year, and that the city could consider her recommendations in 2020.
- C. Brian Fields, Assistant City Manager, reported that the minutes of all city meetings will be standardized to make them more concise. He also noted that the perimeters of the city's two historical districts must be formally adopted in order to be legally enforceable. He noted that national standards and local standards often differ.
- D. Dr. Barretta-Herman requested that the Preservation Commission be given more guidance in the process of advancing requests from citizens so that the commission has a clearer understanding of the nuances of such requests.