

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting November 16, 2020

Board members present Curtis Hodges, Marvin Owens, Joanna Mahood, Lianne Bennett (chair) Terri Bledsoe, and Angie Barretta-Hermann. Member absent: Anna Marie O'Mara.

Four items were on the agenda.

Request for demolition, 309 Downing Street. (second request) Because the original petition was unanimously denied, the applicant requested a 120-day delay as provided for in Code of Ordinances Chapter 50. Efforts were to be made to find an alternative to demolition. The offer to sell or move was made, however it was only listed in the PennySaver free newspaper. The property has not been listed with a local realtor. Commissioners questioned the 'good faith' effort as only minimal efforts were made. Section 50-12 states that "the commission SHALL approve the demolition' if the conditions under the 120-day delay provision were complied with or risk a legal challenge.' The only option for the HPC was to set the following conditions:

- ✓ have an archaeological study done
- ✓ make sure there will be salvage of materials
- ✓ have a replacement design guideline
- ✓ demolition to take place within 90 days of permitting.

Although the Commission followed the ordinance in granting the demo, they directed the City to move quickly to rewrite this section of the code to preclude this section being used in the future to further erode our historic housing stock. They recommended a complete revision to the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 50 in light of the new City Charter Article VI -Sustainability and the urgency to protect our historic legacy before it is too late.

Motion to approve the demolition request was 4-2 with Owens and Bennett voting, NO.

Retention of the historic Southern Paint and Wallpaper pole sign at 605 South Dixie Freeway and designation as a Vintage Sign. Currently the City Land Development Regulation Section 604.12.H requires that all commercial private pole signs must be removed within ten (10) years. Ordinance number 108-11 was adopted November 29, 2011. The applicant has requested that his pole sign be deemed a vintage sign by the Commission, so it would not have to be removed by November 29, 2021. The Commission urged a landmark application be prepared as part of efforts to acknowledge historic landmarks in our city especially since this sign is noted in several publications on historic signs.

Motion to approve the Coronado Paint Sign as a Vintage Sign was unanimous.

Archeological Update for 114 Florida Avenue. The Report: Smyrna Archeological Research Institute Archeological Brief No. 1" prepared by Rebecca L. Harris, RPA summarizes current research on the shell middens south and north of the North Causeway. The City acknowledged the absence of regulations to protect the middens on private property. Efforts continue to encourage the property owners to allow archeological study on this property.

Confirmation of Local Historic Districts. Bob Mathen, staff member for the HPC, reviewed the necessity of obtaining property owners confirmation of existing historical districts. Designation of historic districts is a two-step process: National and Local. In 1997, confirmation was received from property owners for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, but confirmation of property owners for local districts (which permits oversight through city code of ordinances) was not obtained at that time. Because the legality of city governing ordinances is being challenged, confirmation from property owners is being sought with letters to go out November 16, 2020. The Commission pledged to work to garner critical support for the confirmation of the local historic districts.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2021, at the Brannon Center.