

APPROVED

**MINUTES OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING OF DECEMBER 19, 2011
THE CITY OF STARKVILLE, MISSISSIPPI**

The Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Starkville, Mississippi held its regularly scheduled meeting in the Building Department on the Second Floor of City Hall located at 101 E. Lampkin Street, commencing at 5:30 PM. Present were Commissioners Jason Barrett, Michael Fazio, Maxine Hamilton, Briar Jones, Cyndi Sullivan and Tom Walker. Commissioner Joy Day Greene was absent. Attending the Commissioners was City Planner Ben Griffith.

AN ORDER APPROVING THE WRITTEN AGENDA

The Commission considered the matter of approval of the written agenda dated December 19, 2011. Commissioner Jones made a motion to accept the written agenda as presented and Commissioner Sullivan seconded the motion. After discussion, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the written agenda as presented.

**AN ORDER APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 22, 2011
MEETING MINUTES**

The Commission considered the matter of approval of the minutes of the November 22, 2011 meeting. After discussion, Commissioner Hamilton made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Jones. The Commission then voted unanimously to approve said minutes, as revised.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Chairman Fazio asked if any member of the public cared to address the Commission and no citizen comments were received. Chairman Fazio announced that he had provided an amended Greensboro Street Historic District Nomination to the City Planner which included an annotated report and a CD with photographs for future use.

**UPDATES BY STARKVILLE MAIN STREET ASSOCIATION AND STARKVILLE CENTRAL
NEIGHBORHOOD FOUNDATION REGARDING PENDING DOWNTOWN HISTORIC
DISTRICT DESIGNATION**

Next there came before the Commission updates from the Starkville Main Street Association and the Starkville Central Neighborhood Foundation regarding pending downtown historic preservation designation. Kathleen Hamby of the Central Neighborhood Foundation and Michelle Jones of the Main Street Association addressed the Commissioners.

Ms. Hamby stated that the idea arose in 2010 with the intent to gather data for brochures to promote the City with historic walking tours and that the Foundation had donated funds to initiate the historic register designation.

Ms. Jones stated that the Foundation had been working with David Preziosi to survey the downtown properties and had recently completed the "Historic Resource Survey Report" which had been provided to the Commissioners. She also provided some handouts to the Commissioners explaining the National Register of Historic Places and a timeline for historic register designation. Ms. Jones added that Todd Sanders of MDAH gave a historic tax credit workshop on November 3rd for the Main Street Association members and for the Historic Preservation Commission.

Mr. Steve Langston, a downtown property owner, stated that the property owners needed to be informed, not just the business owners, and that many people did not read the paper or use the internet. He concluded by stating that there were still many questions to be answered.

Commissioner Walker stated that the Main Street Association was going to canvas the 144 property owners to see if they agreed or disagreed with the historic designation.

Steve Langston replied that the property owners needed more information and facts before considering a poll of the 144 downtown property owners.

Commissioner Walker stated that before the poll was taken, the property owners needed to have their facts and that the poll needed to be clear about whether they wanted to be designated or not because it was just as important if they wanted to join as it was if they did not want to join.

Commissioner Jones stated that perhaps it would be better to have a document to share with the public and bring them up to speed.

Commissioner Walker asked Ms. Hamby if she or anyone from the Foundation had talked with any of the downtown property owners.

Ms. Hamby replied that she had not spoken with any of the property owners and that nothing was being forced onto the property owners.

Commissioner Walker stated that it was being forced onto the property owners and that the property owners would need to actively campaign against inclusion of the historic district. He went on to say that he had a problem with a non-profit group starting a process which could affect property and business owners financially.

Ms. Jones stated that there were a little over 100 property owners for the 144 downtown parcels and asked Mr. Langston whether or not the Main Street Association had talked with the downtown business owners when preparing the application.

Mr. Langston replied that once the advantages and disadvantages could be determined, people could make an informed decision. He added that the City had a lot going on and that it was sometimes difficult to get accurate information and take it all in.

Ms. Hamby stated that the Foundation was looking for a way to document the history of Starkville and at that time, neither the Main Street Association nor the Historic Preservation Commission had been formed, and that the purpose of the Foundation was to help the community.

Commissioner Walker stated that this was all water under the bridge and that this situation should teach us all to present as much information up front and not after the fact, and that it was very common that once nationally designated, it would become a locally designated area as well.

Ms. Jones stated that there are three existing nationally registered historic districts in Starkville and that none of them had received local designation, adding that Louisville had rejected nomination, Water Valley has a local designation without a historic preservation commission and that Vicksburg was the oldest in the state.

Chairman Fazio stated that some communities around the state have local designation without national designation and that some had national designation without local designation, such as Sardis, and that each community goes forward as it sees fit.

Ms. Jones stated that Starkville may decide to designate some districts and not others, depending on recommendations by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Commissioner Walker stated repeated his statements about getting the information out to the property owners at the front end of the process instead of at the end, and that by doing so, a lot of trouble could have been avoided due to misunderstandings.

Ms. Jones stated that she understood, but that without a survey of property owners, it was impossible to move forward with the designation process.

Ms. Hamby stated that she didn't know how it would turn out and that she had asked MDAH to visit to see if it would qualify or be eligible for national designation by the May 17th meeting.

Commissioner Walker asked Ms. Hamby at what point was she going to talk to or inform the property owners?

Ms. Jones answered that letters were sent out on October 16th about the "Lunch and Learn" with MDAH on November 3rd and that was the first time.

Commissioner Walker stated that for whatever reason, lots of people did not receive any letters.

Ms. Hamby asked who had not received a letter.

Mr. Langston replied that he had not received a letter and that he owned seven properties in the proposed district.

Ms. Hamby replied that the Starkville Central Neighborhood Foundation would do their best and ask the Main Street Association to help get them out.

Chairman Fazio stated that MDAH and US Dept of Interior protocols for national register designation had been followed and nothing has been done any different than any others, and although it could have been done differently, local historic designation would be a different process.

Commissioner Sullivan asked who decides to designate a local historic district.

Ms. Jones answered that the local ordinance spells out the process for the Historic Preservation Commission to recommend local designation to the Board of Aldermen, through a series of public hearings.

Mr. Langston stated that he had still not seen a survey or a list of properties or a map of the proposed downtown historic district.

Commissioner Walker asked if individual property owners have a say whether they want to be included or not.

Ms. Jones replied that the survey is a tool to help determine whether designation is appropriate or not and open for public input.

Commissioner Walker asked if it wouldn't be productive for property owners to determine whether or not they want to participate.

Ms. Jones responded that it was not the typical process and that it was not the desire to hide the survey, but that it is a large document that was difficult to reproduce.

Mr. Langston asked if it was available on the Starkville Central Neighborhood Foundation's website.

Commissioner Barrett asked if the Commission was being asked to support a recommendation to support national designation.

Commissioner Walker stated that two issues brought about the item at tonight's meeting. The first was the review of the historic resource survey and the second was whether the Main Street Association will be able to canvas the property owners of the 144 parcels. He went on to say that the building owners should have the final say and it should have been done up front, concluding that it would be a railroad job to assume that it would pass automatically.

Commissioner Hamilton asked if this was how the MDAH carries out their nomination process.

Chairman Fazio stated that there was not a perception of a railroad job and that process was written in law.

Commissioner Walker asked why everyone is so afraid to ask the property owners.

Commissioner Hamilton asked if the property owners were notified.

Commissioner Walker replied that the property owners were notified but we've seen how many have been showing up, adding that if you think it's difficult getting 73 property owners to respond to the resource survey, it would've been impossible to have them send a letter to MDAH opposing the creation of a downtown historic district; if they do nothing and it goes through, they won't find out until two or three years time when something comes up and then it's too late.

Commissioner Jones stated that it was extremely commendable that a local group raised funds to perform a survey and are now being called to task on it.

Chairman Fazio then called for a motion.

DISCUSSION OF HPC RECOMMENDATION TO BOARD OF ALDERMEN REGARDING PENDING DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION

Commissioner Barrett made a motion that the Historic Preservation Commission supports the recommendation of a downtown district for national historic designation and commends the Starkville Central Neighborhood Foundation for its work in getting the nomination to this point.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sullivan and received unanimous approval from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Walker made another motion that as part of the national historic designation process, the Starkville Main Street Association is commended for assuming the task of notifying the property owners and obtaining their opinions to meet the legal requirements of the nomination process.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hamilton and received unanimous approval from the Commissioners.

Mr. Langston stated that he was confused, that the Main Street program wants property owners to be informed and encourage redevelopment, but the Starkville Central Neighborhood Foundation is making the nomination and not the property owners.

Commissioner Walker responded that the foundation was going forward and at the end, there would be a public hearing where the property owners would have a say in what's happening.

Mr. Langston asked if the Main Street Association polls the property owners and then forwards the results to the Starkville Central Neighborhood Foundation.

Commissioner Walker replied that the results would go to MDAH.

Mr. Langston then asked for clarification that it was not the Historic Preservation Commission or the Board of Aldermen, but the Starkville Central Neighborhood Foundation that takes the results of the property owner poll to MDAH.

Commissioner Walker responded that if the results were favorable, the property owners would need to do nothing, but if the results were negative, they would need to know and document it.

Mr. Langston stated that he would get the property owners' opinions.

Commissioner Walker asked if the City would have the ability to go to MDAH and the Dept of Interior.

Ms. Jones answered that the City can do so through the CLG to make its intentions known.

Commissioner Walker stated that the City could make a statement regarding whether it was eligible or not, but the property owners may not want to do it.

Commissioner Barrett asked why the Starkville Central Neighborhood Foundation was doing this and not the Main Street Association. He then asked Jon Maynard if he minded polling the property owners.

Mr. Jon Maynard, President of the Greater Starkville Development Partnership, answered that he was willing to head off any potential headaches and that the Partnership and Main Street Association were working to keep the property and business owners informed, because if not, they would be in his office complaining and then at City Hall, so he was trying to avoid those headaches.

Commissioner Walker stated that the property owners needed to have a say and should be fully informed.

PLANNER REPORT

City Planner Ben Griffith asked if any of the members didn't already have a copy of the Historic Resource Survey Report, that he had a black and white copy for them. He also stated that he had placed a copy of the 2012 meeting schedule at everyone's seats. Mr. Griffith reported that the next milestone on David Preziosi's

design guidelines timeline is to submit a draft of the “Quick Start” section for the January 24th meeting with comments to be returned to him by January 30th. He also reminded the Commissioners to be mindful of all *ex parte* communications and to not hesitate in contacting the Planning Office with any questions regarding any items on upcoming agendas.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Hamilton made a motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Sullivan to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:35 PM. The next meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission will be Tuesday, January 24, 2012 at 5:30 PM in the City Hall Courtroom.

Michael Fazio, Chairman

Ben Griffith, AICP, City Planner

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register of Historic Places is a program designed to identify, recognize, and to some degree, protect significant historic resources. Listing on the National Register does not restrict the rights of property owners, nor does it prevent destruction of historic properties, but there are benefits to both the private owner and the general public.

THE NATIONAL REGISTER DOES:

- ◆ Identify and evaluate significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts according to the established National Register criteria.
- ◆ Make the public aware of historic resources by documenting their importance.
- ◆ Provide information about historic resources that can be used as a planning tool for federal, state, local, and private agencies.
- ◆ Expedite the review of federal undertakings that could affect historic resources and attempt to mitigate adverse effects on identified historic properties.
- ◆ Make owners of historic properties eligible for federal grants for preservation projects, when such funds are available.
- ◆ Enable income-producing depreciable historic properties to use tax incentives when rehabilitated according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
- ◆ List properties only if they meet the National Register criteria and the owner, or a majority owners, agree to the listing.

THE NATIONAL REGISTER DOES NOT:

- ◆ Limit or restrict the rights of Property owners to use, develop, or sell their historic properties; require that historic properties be maintained, repaired, or restored; or require that historic properties be open to the public.
- ◆ Provide markers or plaques for listed properties. Owners may purchase plaques and markers if desired.
- ◆ Automatically facilitate local landmark designation or local district zoning. Nor does it require the review of state, local, or privately funded projects that could affect historic properties.
- ◆ Automatically stop federal undertakings that could affect historic resources.
- ◆ Assure that owners of historic properties will receive grants when funds are available.
- ◆ Automatically provide state or local tax benefits or low-interest loans to owners.
- ◆ List historic properties according to local criteria or if the owner of majority of owners object to the listing.

- Thursday, February 2 Any non-staff member submitting a draft nomination for preliminary review with the intention of placing the nomination on the agenda for the May 2012 Review Board meeting must submit the draft by this date (fifteen weeks before the Review Board meeting)
- Thursday, February 23 Complete nominations for presentation at the May 2012 Review Board meeting are due from non-staff member. This includes all necessary photographs, maps, floor plans and site drawings
- Friday, February 24 SCNF will provide nomination to Starkville HPC and the Chief Elected Official
- Between March 17 and April 17, MDAH will hold a public hearing regarding the Downtown Starkville NR Nomination. It is requested that this public hearing be at the regular HPC meeting on March 27.
- Tuesday, March 27 SCNF will request letter of support of the National Register eligibility of the district
- Tuesday, April 3 SCNF will request letter of support of the National Register eligibility of the district
- Thursday, May 17 Review Board Meeting