

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 27, 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 at City Hall located at 101 E. Lampkin Street, commencing at 5:30 PM. Present were Commissioners Jason Barrett, Michael Fazio, Briar Jones, Maxine Hamilton, Joy Day Green and Tom Walker. Commissioner Cyndi Sullivan was absent. Attending the Commissioners were City Planner Ben Griffith and Assistant City Planner Pamela Daniel. Mr. David Preziosi of Mississippi Heritage Trust was also present.

AN ORDER APPROVING THE WRITTEN AGENDA

The Commission considered the matter of approval of the written agenda dated September 27, 2011. Commissioner Walker made a motion to add an item under "New Business" to include discussion of the process and efforts currently underway regarding the historical designation of downtown Starkville and Commissioner Hamilton seconded the motion. After discussion, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the written agenda as revised.

AN ORDER APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 23, 2011 MEETING MINUTES

The Commission considered the matter of approval of the minutes of the August 23, 2011 meeting. After discussion, Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Jones. The Commission then voted unanimously to approve said minutes, as presented.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Chairman Fazio asked if any member of the public cared to address the Commission and no citizen comments were received, although Ward 4 Alderman Richard Corey, Carey Hardin, Steve Langston and Larry Mullins were present.

DISCUSSION OF THE PROCESS AND EFFORTS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY REGARDING THE HISTORICAL DESIGNATION OF DOWNTOWN STARKVILLE

Chairman Fazio opened the discussion by explaining the three existing designated historic districts, Nash Street, Overstreet and Greensboro Street. He explained that buildings and sites could be designated as historic, even if they were not located within a historic district, such as the Waverly Mansion in West Point.

Commissioner Jones stated that the Commission is poised to create design guidelines for the three existing nationally-designated districts and that if all goes well with these three and a good track record maintained, the Commission could gain support to expand the existing districts or establish new ones.

Chairman Fazio explained that the survey of downtown properties for possible designation as a historic district began as a joint project of the Starkville Central Neighborhood Foundation and the Greater Starkville Development Partnership where David Preziosi was hired to conduct a survey of downtown properties to determine whether or not there were enough properties of significance to designate a historic district. He stated that the City's Historic Preservation Commission was not involved in the downtown district survey.

Commissioner Walker stated that he feels that the Commission should be involved and take a stronger role in that process, by building public support through education and outreach. He added that he had expressed his concerns to the Mayor and that he agreed that there should be a strong outreach program to directly involve the downtown property owners since they would be directly affected. He suggested that the Commission move its October 25th meeting to November 3rd to coincide with a presentation being provided by Todd Sanders of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) for the Starkville Main Street Association (SMSA).

Commissioner Walker stated that the Commission's role should be to discuss the matter of establishment of a downtown historic district in an open, public forum and provide information to the downtown property owners about the effects of designation, including such issues as tax credits and cell towers.

Chairman Fazio stated that Todd Sanders of MDAH is a recognized expert on historic tax credits and would be making a presentation on November 3rd to the SMSA and had agreed to provide another presentation to the Commissioners that evening.

Commissioner Jones asked Mr. Preziosi if the downtown survey had been completed and when Mr. Preziosi answered that it was almost completed, Commissioner Jones stated that the Commission should review it to see if it is worthy of designation.

Commissioner Walker stated that he was gravely concerned with a non-profit group, which for the most part, owned no property in the downtown district, yet it could hold a public hearing and receive national designation for a historic district, while 51% of the property owners in the affected area must, through extra effort, actively indicate their intent in writing, not to establish the district.

Chairman Fazio stated that it sounds as if things are being done secretly only because the Historic Preservation Commission had not been involved.

Commissioner Walker answered that he had brought the issue up previously at least four times and each time, Chairman Fazio responded back, saying that the Commission would deal with it later. He stated that the SMSA had not supported funding the design guidelines for historic districts and only supported the survey because it was thought that it would generate interest for visitors by providing a guide to historic buildings for walking tours and such.

Commissioner Walker then made a motion to move the regularly scheduled October 25th meeting to Thursday, November 3rd to coincide with the SMSA/MDAH tax credit presentation earlier that same day and Commissioner Hamilton seconded the motion.

Commissioner Jones stated that he would be out of town on November 3rd but that he would like to review the survey first before making any recommendation to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen.

Chairman Fazio then asked for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF DESIGN GUIDELINES CONTRACT TO THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN

Next there came before the Commission the consideration of recommending approval of the design guidelines contract of David Preziosi and Mississippi Heritage Trust to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen.

Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve the contract, which was seconded by Commissioner Jones.

Commissioner Barrett asked if a portion of the compensation came from the Starkville Central Neighborhood Foundation (SCNF).

Chairman Fazio explained that the funding for the design guidelines came from both the SCNF and MDAH, adding that no direct funding came from the City other than administration. Seeing no other questions, he asked for a vote and the Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval.

Mr. Griffith stated that the item would be placed onto the consent agenda of the October 4th Board of Aldermen.

DESIGN GUIDELINES WORK SESSION

Chairman Fazio began the discussion by stating that the design guidelines should be a clear, simple and concise document that anyone and everyone could use without too much architectural language. He then introduced David Preziosi and asked the Commissioners to pay particular attention to the photo examples which would be shown in the presentation.

Mr. David Preziosi of Mississippi Heritage Trust began his PowerPoint presentation by introducing himself and his organization and passing out handouts to the Commissioners. He asked the Commissioners to strongly consider the following issues which he had found to be “hot buttons” in other communities around the state:

- Roofing: metal/wood/asphalt shingles

- Awnings: fabric vs. metal
- Windows: storm windows/security bars
- Shutters: wood/other materials/operating vs. fake
- Exterior Doors: replacement doors/storm doors/security doors
- Commercial: rear areas/service areas/utility and mechanical/delivery and shipping areas

Commissioner Walker asked how the design guidelines would deal with commercial businesses, especially those with large service and shipping areas, adding that there should be some consideration of these necessities.

Mr. Steve Langston of Sullivan's Office Supply stated that some business owners in the downtown area, such as Sullivan's and Bell Building Supply receive regular shipments and make deliveries of their own with large trucks, which is very different than the types of deliveries made to a restaurant or dress shop.

Commissioner Walker stated that it is important that the design guidelines document and address these and other issues specific to the downtown commercial area because if the businesses cannot operate, then downtown would not be functional as a commercial area.

Chairman Fazio stated property owners should understand that Starkville is not Williamsburg, Virginia or Disney World, that there would be a lot of communication with the downtown business owners and that nothing would be done in private.

Steve Langston stated that it was hard for him and other downtown business owners to say anything until the survey is completed and provided to the property owners to see which properties qualify as historical or not.

Chairman Fazio stated that the national registry rules do not apply, but that the local rules will and that these and other issues could be specifically addressed in the design guidelines.

Mr. Preziosi concluded his presentation by asking the Commissioners to think of a name for the design guidelines which would be reflective of their intent, and not scare away any potential users. Some examples included:

- Starkville Historic Preservation Design Guidelines
- Starkville Architectural Preservation Guidelines
- Preservation Guidelines for Starkville
- Starkville Historic Design Guidelines
- Starkville Preservation Manual

PLANNER REPORT

No planner report was provided at this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Hamilton made a motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Barrett to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:55 PM. The next meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission will be Thursday, November 3, 2011 at 5:30 PM in the Courtroom at City Hall.

Michael Fazio, Chairman

Ben Griffith, AICP, City Planner