

Shreveport Historic Preservation Commission

Minutes Special Call Meeting Thursday, August 1, 2019

Room 440, Metropolitan Planning Commission Conference Room
Government Plaza
505 Travis Street
Shreveport, Louisiana

Commissioners Present

Commissioner Gary Joiner, Chair
Commissioner Billy Wayne
Commissioner Lane Callaway, Secretary
Associate Commissioner Jazmin Jernigan

Ex-Officio

Adam Bailey

Metropolitan Planning Commission

Alan Clarke, Director of MPC
James Djamba, MPC Planner

Visitors

Councilwoman LeVette Fuller (District B)
Bill Wiener, architect
Kim Mitchell, architect
Home Builders Association
of Northwest Louisiana
Wesley Thomas, President
Benny Vaughan, Past President
Dixey Robertson, Executive Director
Teresa Edgerton-Scott

1. Special Call Meeting was called to order at 4:01pm by the Chair with a quorum present with original purpose was for Commissioners and Home Builders Association officials to meet as suggested by Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC). A Certificate of Appropriate (COA) request was added.
2. Opening Remarks: Chair read to all present, memorandum titled, *Identifying Procedures for Review of Applications*.
3. Review and comments on COA 19-319-HPC¹ – Installation of Second Prefab Classroom: 813 Erie Street, South Highlands Historic District

Background: An urgent and unique Certificate of Appropriate request was forwarded by the Principal Mary Harris of South Highlands for the installation of a temporary classroom on the historic campus within the historic district before the school year began. Office of Permits referred the request directly to the Commission on July 29, 2019. A supporting request to accommodate by City Councilman John C. Nickelson (District C) was received and Commissioner Joiner asked Principal Harris to submit formal COA application to MPC before the August 1 meeting. Also on July 29, Mr. Adam Bailey, MPC provided the COA application to Principal Harris who noted of forwarding to Mr. Steve White on staff of Caddo Parish Schools to provide the necessary supporting plans. Commissioner Callaway received permission to visit

¹ Note for record: Agenda reflected COA 19-318-HPC that had been assigned to an earlier submitted COA application.

the campus so to gain a full appreciation of what was the intent and scope of the installation with the visit conducted on July 29 hosted by Principal Harris.

MPC Staff Case Report: Caddo Parish Schools did not submit a COA application.

Public Comments: Mr. Bill Wiener and Mr. Kim Mitchell expressed concerns and opposition on the additional classroom.

Mr. Wiener expressed concerned that a “temporary” classroom would not be temporary per se; neighborhood school houses in the 1920s (like South Highlands School) were design for around 300 students; and very likely there has been no thought or planning for the increase in traffic due to an increase in students.

Mr. Mitchell was opposed noting the temporary prefab classroom would not be upholding the neighborhood architectural standards; decreases the value of the neighborhood; Caddo Parish Schools needed to conduct pre-planning to avoid having to use temporary classrooms; questioned if nearby residents had been notified of the installation of a temporary classroom; and could adversely impact on property values of residential dwellings adjacent to the campus.

HPC Discussion and Vote on Recommendation:

Commissioner Callaway visited the property on July 29 and described intent and scope. The proposed prefab classroom would be identical in mass, shape, materials, and orientation as an existing prefab classroom building. Both prefab classrooms would be adjacent to each other located within campus massed by a permanent brick campus building and shrubbery on the Line Avenue side of the campus. Both prefab classroom buildings would not physically touch the historic school house.

Commissioner Wayne noted traffic could increase around the campus during school hours and wondered if Caddo Parish Schools could adjust by using a suitable vacant and empty residential dwelling immediately adjacent to the campus for the classroom if that was available.

The Chair asked for a motion. Commissioner Wayne made the motion to recommend approval in concept. Commissioner Callaway requested a consideration of approval but with condition of Caddo Parish Schools defining what is meant by “temporary.”

Motion with condition was made by Commissioner Wayne, seconded by Commissioner Callaway. The Chair asked for a vote, which was unanimous.

4. Discussion with Home Builders Association of Northwest Louisiana:

Commissioner Joiner welcomed the Home Builders Association of Northwest Louisiana (HBA) and asked Commissioner Callaway to start the discussion. Commissioner Callaway recognized Mr. Benny Vaughan.

Mr. Vaughan introduced the scope HBA as an organization and the HBA officials attending. Mr. Vaughan talked to the process and time of obtaining a permit from the City’s Permit Office when the property is under a historic designation. As well, he pointed out a time delay and the process per the flowchart for a COA application is onerous. Mr. Thomas, as current HBA President, indicated sensitivity to historic integrity and suggested a faster permitting process and public education. Delays could cause additional costs for the property owner.

Mr. Bailey provided overview of the original historic preservation ordinance, actions to implement, and the ordinance change that began to be implemented in February 2019. It was noted this recent change in ordinance provided for Associate Commissioners to provide

flexibility and that only in this recent May was the long vacant fifth regular Commissioners and two Associate Commissioners confirmed by the City Council. Mr. Adam mentioned in passing of irregular support by some City offices to HPC and the addition of Historic Preservation Overlay Zones. He also explained the roles of HPC recommendation and MPC decision on a COA / COD application and why there is a delay in days for granting permits to allow any appeals.

Commissioner Callaway noted within Shreveport the number of historic districts, explained contributing elements within a specifically named historic district, and historic properties individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The City's historic preservation ordinance is not an isolated entity but fitted into a corresponding preservation structure at the state and federal levels within the overview of the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of Interior. As well, Shreveport gained its Certified Local Government designation due to the historic preservation ordinance and commission so to overview and process local nominations to the National Register. He also noted from the COA / COD summary data base; the number of requests processed by specific action and that only one had been recommended disapproved to MPC. And that properties listed in a COA / COD is more often than not, visited beforehand by at least one Commissioner to better understand what is being requested. He explained that any actions – alteration, new construction, addition, demolition and relocation – on historic properties and contributing elements within historic districts are per the standards established by the U.S. Secretary of Interior for treatment of historic property. Normal repair and replace actions is an owner's responsibility and does not need a COA application. Commissioner Callaway also stated HPC had, since February as necessary, conducted on occasions several sessions within a single month. Concluding, Commissioner Callaway noted that historic preservation is part of economic development efforts and noted some historic properties qualify for state and federal tax credits.

Councilwoman LeVette Fuller noted that for the longest time, Shreveport was the largest city in Louisiana without a historic preservation ordinance and commission.

Mr. Bailey summarized possibilities on the white board in the conference room for future discussion. These possibilities included:

- Possible UDC / Chapter Ordinance amendments (not in any particular priority):
 - MPC Executive Director makes final decision, there would be no HPC recommendation. HPC would hear the case only if appealed. *(Would require amendments to UDC Article 21 and Chapter 36 Shreveport City Code.)*
 - Make COA request where only projects that are visible from the public rights-of-way would require HPC recommendation. Any project not seen from the public rights of way would be approved administratively by the MPC Executive Director. *(This would require amendments to UDC Code Text Amendment.)*
 - Set construction costs as an HPC recommendation trigger – meaning only construction costs which reach a defined amount – would require HPC recommendation. Any project whose construction costs don't reach said amount would be approved administratively by the MPC Executive Director. *(This would require amendments to UDC Article 21.)*
 - Require bi-monthly HPC meetings. *(This would require amendments to Chapter 36 Shreveport City Code.)*
- Possible items that could be done immediately (not in any particular priority):
 - Leverage *MyGovernmentOnline* to help expedite application process.
 - Provide COA / COD education for home builders associations and other stakeholders.

- Update, as needed, as online documents (i.e. COA / COD applications, flowcharts, frequently asked questions section, etc.) to improve public understanding, transparency, and education.
- Update, as needed, website for improved public understanding, transparency, and education.

Commissioner Joiner, as Chair thanked all for a frank and open discussion and requested for any additional remarks. There were none.

5. Public Comments: None.

6. Adjournment: Since there was no additional business or public comments, the Chair made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Wayne with resulting unanimous vote. The Chair adjourned the HPC Meeting at 5:45pm.