

Shreveport Historic Preservation Commission

Minutes June 16, 2020

Meeting under COVID-10 Social Distancing and Face Mask Guidelines
Room 440, Government Plaza
505 Travis Street
Shreveport, Louisiana

Commissioners

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

Visitors

Mr. Russell Delaney, COA 20-11-HPC
City Architect, SPAR, City of Shreveport
Ms. Wendy Bencoter, COA 20-11-HPC
Ms. Liz Swaine, DDA, COA 20-11-HPC

Ex-Officio

Mr. Adam Bailey, Shreveport-Caddo Metropolitan Planning Commission

Legal Advisor

Gernine Mailhes, Office of City Attorney City of Shreveport

Shreveport-Caddo Metropolitan Planning Commission

Mr. James Djamba, Planner, Community Development Department

1. Meeting called to order by Chair at 4:05pm with a quorum present.
2. Opening Remarks: The Chair read memorandum titled, *Identifying Procedures for Review of Application* to all present.
3. Approval of HPC Minutes for May 26, 2020: The Chair asked for questions or discussion on the Minutes for May. Having no discussion or questions, the Chair made the motion to approve. Motion to approve was seconded by Commissioner Jernigan; unanimously passed.
4. New Business: there was only one request on the agenda.
Certificate of Appropriateness – COA 20-11-HPC: 802 Common Street, Vacant Lot within Shreveport Commercial Historic District – new construction of a parking area.

MPC Staff Case Report: Mr. Djamba presented the application submitted by Shreveport Public Assembly and Recreation request containing a map, design proposal for the parking area, three photos of the current property, and seven photos used as examples to reinforce MPC's conditions. Mr. Djamba noted the location of the proposed new parking area is at a major entry point into downtown. MPC's written analysis noted proposed new construction to create an organized parking area is not in compliance with all provisions of the UDC and therefore MPC recommended two conditions. These conditions deal with landscaping and to include "features and elements" so to "reflect the character of the HPOD." MPC is recommending Approval with two conditions.

Public Comments: Mr. Delaney noted this has been a City project for some time but delayed by COVID situation. Notwithstanding, a contractor is ready to begin the primary work of removing old concrete (i.e. foundation of former commercial building on lot) and preparing the ground. Ms. Swaine noted that surrounding neighbor organizations like the Scottish Rites Temple across Common Street from the lot are thrilled about the improvement. Ms. Bencoter stated that Providence House and the Temple would use the parking area as well. Mr. Delaney indicated that SPAR Director Ragle would decide and take into consideration MPC's examples but this will take some time. Notwithstanding, Mr. Delaney reemphasized the active contract, held up by the COVID situation, and need begin since the project is under active contract.

HPC Discussion and Vote on Recommendation: The Chair began the discussion with suggestion to Mr. Delaney that a thorough historical survey underneath the lot be done since the site had a large residence on it for many decades. Commissioner Joiner expressed concerned about the MPC condition of having public art in terms of sculpture(s). He reason a sculpture implies a time consuming effort, open to multiple interpretations, and who would select.

The Chair asked for comments and questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Callaway asked what is meant by a "controlled parking area" (per the description) and who controls the lot. (Per Ms. Swaine; City owns the property but has not decided yet who would control it.) Commissioner Callaway asked if the leadership of Providence House has been kept involved on the parking area since a majority of the parking area affronts the street directly across from Providence House's front door. (Per Mr. Delaney, Director Howard of Providence House has been in meetings where the project been discussed.)

Commissioner Callaway reinforced the Chair's concern. At a major entry point into downtown and the historic district, a sculpture might not be the best. As an example, he noted at the Dallas Fairgrounds of a massive and tall cowboy to welcome visitors. Good for Dallas fairgrounds but not such a good fit for a downtown entry point within view of nearby I-20. Commissioner Callaway concluded his comments expressing support for the MPC conditions and their rationale. He suggested that once the Director of SPAR made selection of features and elements to satisfy MPC's conditions; that HPC be shown graphic representation of the specific item(s) and by a design map shown the exact location where each recommended feature and element is to be found within the parking area.

Commissioner Callaway asked Mr. Delaney how long would it take for SPAR to comply with the conditions. (Mr. Delaney would discuss with Director SPAR but sense no less than 30 days.)

The Chair thanked all for a good discussion. The Chair made a motion to approve the COA to allow the contractor to begin preliminary ground work but with the two HPC's conditions – to be shown graphic representation of specific features / items proposed and diagram of exact location of each within the parking area. The Chair requested for a second and vote. Commissioner Jernigan seconded the motion with conditions; vote was unanimous.

5. Historic Preservation Updates:

5a. Update on Advising: St Rest Baptist Church (Allendale Neighborhood) – Louisiana Historical Marker – Commissioner Callaway provided update on one minor change made by the State of Louisiana tourism bureau to the wording on the Marker during the preliminary review phase by the State.

5b. Update: Uneeda Biscuit Building; Contributing Element, Shreveport Commercial Historic District. Ms. Swaine noted the State Legislature was to vote soon on historic tax credits renewal and requested public comments supporting the renewal be forwarded to legislators to support. She noted the percentage of credit might be reduced and that tax credits had been applied for by the owners of Uneeda Biscuit.

Commissioner Joiner noted the very visible vintage and historic sign painted at the western facing upper level of the exterior wall on the side of this historic building has been there for decades and needed to be preserved and not disturbed by any rehabilitation efforts.

Commissioner Callaway noted a joint email from the State Historic Preservation Officer and State's Tax Credit Manager. The email summarized the rehabilitation conditions to satisfy granting of tax credits during on-site visit to the Uneeda Building by the State's team. Commissioner Callaway read the State's conditions which clearly included the preservation of the vintage signage and nixed the owner's proposed new window opening that would destroy about half of this historic signage.

6. Public Comments: There were no additional comments or questions from the attending public.

7. Adjournment: Having no addition business to conduct, the Chair requested a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Jernigan made the motion and seconded by Commissioner Callaway; with resulting unanimous vote. Chair adjourned the Meeting at 4:50pm.