

**RUSSELLVILLE
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – Thursday, January 7, 2016

City Hall – Council Chambers

6:00PM

Training – 4:00PM

Commissioners Present

Greg Barborek – Acting Chair
Suzanne Alford-Hodges – Vice Chair
Judy Galloway
Steve Newby

Linda Carnahan
Kathy Keenan-Price
Gerald Hook

Staff Present

Kurt Jones, City Engineer/ HPO

Advisors Present

John Cochran – Fire Chief; Betsy McGuire – Director Main Street Russellville; Catherine Barrier – Arkansas CLG Coordinator were present at training. Present at the regular meeting were Trey Smith – City Attorney and Mayor – Randall Horton

Advisors Absent

Brian Holstein – Director of Development who was ill.

Training @ 4:00PM:

Katherine Barrier presented training for Historic District Commissioners and training on Certified Local Governments (CLG).

Call to Order & Welcome @ 6:00PM:

Acting Chair, Greg Barborek, called the January 7, 2016 meeting of the Russellville Historic District Commission to order at 6:00PM and a quorum was established. Visiting Arkansas CLG Director Katherine Barrier was welcomed.

Approval of Minutes from Thursday, December 3, 2015 RHDC Meeting and Special Meeting Wednesday January 16, 2015:

Mr. Barborek asked if everyone had read the minutes of the two previously noted meetings. Gerald Hook made the motion to accept the December 3rd minutes as written. Kathy Price seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously by a voice vote. Suzanne Alford-Hodges made the motion to accept the December 16th minutes as written and Judy Galloway seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously approved by a voice vote.

Staff Report:

There was no report.

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The first item of business was discussion for a COA for the window rehab at 309 West B Street by R.D. Walker. Mr. Walker applied for and received a \$9,999.00 Downtown Revitalization Grant from the Arkansas Preservation Program, an Agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage, to restore six windows in the property. The original windows were removed in the 1980's and filled with brick. The original windows are stored in the building and will be rebuilt, the frames painted, brick removed and windows replaced.

After a brief discussion, Ms. Alford- Hodges made the motion to approve the COA for 309 W. B Street based on design guideline Pg. 53, Section 10.34 (C). Ms. Price seconded the motion and it was approved by a voice vote.

The second item on the agenda was review of a COA submitted by Van Christensen for the façade rehab of property at 301 W. Main Street. Mr. Christensen's COA approved on June 15, 2015 was rendered void and a

Stop Work Order was issued after he changed the scope of work for the property and did not resubmit the plan for approval by the Historic District Commission. (See minutes of Thursday, December 3, 2015 for detail.)

Background: A special meeting was held on Wednesday, December 16th, to explain to Mr. Christensen what was required of him in order to receive approval of his design. A third informal on site meeting was held Friday, December 18th to further clarify to Mr. Christensen what was being asked of him. At that time, Mr. Barborek offered to make some sketches to clarify the discussion. Subsequently, Mr. Christensen said that he would just do what he wanted and sue the Commission. At that point, Mr. Barborek decided it would be a good idea not to get involved and perhaps be held accountable for dictating design to Mr. Christensen.

The COA presented by Mr. Christensen included design drawings titled "Design in Progress 12-21-15" with three options for the East elevation window. The North elevation showed the transom area above the front doors filled in with brick which had never appeared on any previous drawings. There were no material notations on the drawings. Mr. Christensen was not present and Mrs. Christensen was unable to answer any questions.

There was a motion made by Ms. Galloway to deny the COA based on design guideline Pg. 53, Section 10.34 (A) maintain historically significant storefront openings, size and shape are important and (B) retain original shape of transom glass. The plans contain no specifics as to materials. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hook and approved by voice vote of all commissioners.

HPO Jones suggested Mr. Barborek will write a letter to Mr. Christensen explaining in detail exactly what is required of him in order to have his COA approved. Sketches and notes were made on the submitted drawings and given to the Christensen family to guide their architect and clearly communicate the recommendations of the commission.

Mayor Horton inquired about our resolution to appoint a commission member as a liaison to all Historic District projects. We explained that we had decided to appoint someone after the COA was approved. The Mayor was upset that it was taking so long for Mr. Christensen to obtain a COA and said that he thought it was bad for the City. Commissioners explained that Mr. Christensen had an approved COA, he violated the conditions and it was revoked along with his building permit. The Commission has made every effort to assist Mr. Christensen but without much success.

Ms. McGuire also suggested that the Christensen's meet with Mason Toms, Exterior Design Consultant for Main Street Arkansas, for assistance. She offered to set up this meeting along with Mr. Hiegel, their architect, to

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facilitate approval process. The City Atty. Smith was asked the notification time required for special meetings and it is two hour notification to the press. The Commission plans a special meeting as soon as drawings are completed so that Mr. Christensen can continue working on his property.

The next item of business was discussion of the doors installed without a COA on the Shinn Building at 317 – 319 W. Main Street and the buildings at 110 – 114 S. Commerce Avenue. Our CLG Director, Ms. Barrier, indicated that we needed to get the owners to fill out a COA for approval by the Commission. Staff will contact the owners and let them know the procedure that needs to be followed.

Follow-up on the HDC Logo by Mr. Newby was tabled until the next meeting.

Additional Business or items for discussion

Ms. Alford–Hodges reported that she is almost finished with the letter to property owners reminding them of the requirements of the HDC for any exterior work outside of normal maintenance on their buildings in the Downtown Historic District.

Mayor Horton asked about disclosure to potential property owners in the District. Ms. Price, a realtor with River Valley Realty, explained that disclosures are always made to prospective buyers.

Ms. McGuire explained to Mayor Horton how extremely important the Downtown Historic District and Historic District Commission are to redevelopment. If Russellville loses its Downtown Historic District designation, then incentives like the 20% Federal Tax Credit and 25% State Credit that allow owners to benefit monetarily by improving their property will be lost. Tax deductions work by lowering taxable income, tax credits are a direct reduction in the tax due.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 7:03PM.



Greg Barborek, Acting RHDC Chair



Date