

**RUSSELLVILLE**  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**  
**Council Chamber City Hall – Thursday, July 27, 2023**  
**5:00PM**

**Commissioners Present:**

Betsy McGuire, Chair  
Suzanne Alford  
Kelly Jones

Leo Cantu, Vice-Chair  
Polly Hardin  
Steve Newby

Judy Galloway, Secretary  
Beverly Hooten

**Commissioners Absent:**

Greg Barborek

**City Council Liaison Absent:**

Emily Young

**Staff Absent:**

Victoria Marchant - Historic Preservation Officer and Planner 1

**Advisors Present:**

Sara Jondahl - City Planner

**Liaisons Absent:**

Trey Smith - City Attorney, T. Kirt Sloan - Fire Chief, Richard Setian - Deputy Building Official, Danielle Housenick - MSR Director

**Call to Order, Roll Call & Welcome**

The July 27, 2023 meeting was called to order at 5:00pm, the role was called and a quorum was established.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Ms. McGuire asked if everyone had read the minutes of the April 27, 2023 meeting. Dr. Jones made the motion to accept the minutes as written and Ms. Hardin made the second. The minutes were approved by a voice vote.

**Agenda:**

The first item on the agenda was for review of a COA for a 19" X 33" X 6" sign with no lettering to be located over the transom window of the front door at 218 West B Street (The Bud White Building) requested by J.P. Leonard for his vintage clothing shop, Beatnik Angel. Staff report indicated that the sign met all of the applicable guidelines of Section 10.27 regarding signage (See Staff Report) and the recommendation was to approve the sign. Ms. Alford made the motion to approve and Dr. Jones made the second. The COA was approved by a voice vote.

The second agenda item was for a review of a COA for signage at 312 West 2nd Street (The Caudle Building) for Dog Ear Books and Retro Roasts requested by Emily Young. The signs are located above the two storefront windows and will include window signage. Staff reported that the signs on the building and the window signage met all of the applicable guidelines for signage in Section 10.27 (See Staff Report) and the recommendation was to approve the sign. Ms. Alford made the motion to approve and Ms. Hardin made the second. The COA was approved by a voice vote.

Item three concerned review of a COA submitted by Kurt Jones for a 4' diameter eclipse mural on the west side of his building at 308 West B Street commemorating next year's April total eclipse. The mural has been painted on the

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wall in an area known as the alley. Mr. Jones was unaware that a COA was required. This wall is stucco over brick and has been painted. Staff reported that the mural met two of the applicable guidelines in Section 10.20 Murals & Free Standing Public, Art Parts A and B, and recommended that the COA be approved. Mr. Cantu made the motion to approve and Mr. Newby made the second. The motion passed by a voice vote.

#### **Unfinished Business:**

Ms. Galloway asked if a provider had been selected to complete the nomination forms to the National Register to be sent to the National Park Service for approval of the Old Town Neighborhood Historic District. Ms. Jondahl said that Santez in Austin, Texas had been selected and the company has until August 15th to get the details of the contract determined and the contract signed. The City has a CLG grant of \$10,100.00 to spend for the project.

Ms. McGuire reported on phase 1b of the Latimore Tourist Home. This phase will include all of the exterior work needed to re-roof, repair all of the siding, porches and windows and make sure the building is water tight. This phase will require approximately \$280,000 dollars of which \$128,000 has been acquired through donations and grants. The Latimore Board plans a campaign to solicit funds from corporations and financial institutions for their next campaign but any and all donations are appreciated.

#### **New Business:**

Mr. William Richardson requested to address the commission about the possibility of designating Independence Avenue as an historic district or if historic markers might be a better option. Mr. Williams listed the historic properties, extinct and extant, that marked the area. These properties include: Central Christian Church (historically known as Edwards Chapel Christian Church established in 1868 as a biracial church), Listed on the Arkansas Register of Historic Places, Latimore Tourist Home listed on the National Register and the Lodge Hall at James Circle, and Independence Avenue, eligible for the Arkansas Register, were all present during the Jim Crow Era and are still standing. In the 3rd block of Independence were the Bud Russell Store and Dreamland Hall owned by Leonard Russell. These men were mulatto descendents of Dr. Thomas Russell, one of the city founders. Fourth Place and Independence was the location of James School, originally known as Russellville Colored School. These three properties have been demolished. Ms. McGuire explained to Mr. Williams that the Historic District Commission could help facilitate his efforts, but the neighborhood would have to initiate the effort to get designation.

In Ms. Marchant's absence, there was no information on staff approved COA's. There will be a report at the next meeting.

Next item was a discussion of separate emails for historic district business, as recommended by the attorney that spoke at the CAMP meeting in Fort Smith. Ms. Jondahl explained that only paid employees of the city were allowed to have city email addresses and suggested that the commissioners get a g-mail account for commission business. The concern of the attorney was that an FOIA request could open all of the commissioner's emails to subpoena if a lawsuit over a denied COA occurred. Separate emails were discussed, but no decision was made.

There was discussion by Ms. Galloway about the peeling "I Heart Russellville" mural on the side of the McKinnon Building at 312-316 W. Main Street. No weather-proof and vandalism-resistant coating had been applied and the mural is beginning to peel along the top edge and near the left side of the heart. The city needs to contact the responsible party and get the mural repaired and coated before the large crowd expected for the eclipse arrives next year. Maintenance is required for murals.

Ms. Galloway pointed out that the hangings on the side of the Jackalope Building (110-112 N. Commerce Avenue) had been up since March and there has been no COA. She did not consider these signs to be temporary since they have been there for five months. She asked the city to please contact the owner of the build and explain the

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situation and make sure to get a COA in place, if they intend to leave the signs in place, and make sure they have followed all of the guidelines for wall hanging attachment, etc.

Ms. McGuire encouraged all commissioners to sign up for the NAPC Summer Short Course on August 23rd and 24th. She suggested that we meet at a designated place and watch some of the segments together. Dr. Jones is going to see if the upstairs of The Old Bank might be available for a meeting place. It would have to be a night meeting since Tech will be in session at that time.

Jay (Tony) Jones, grandson of the Latimore's will be coming to Russellville Tuesday, September 5th and will depart on Thursday, September 7th. He wants to visit Reed Cemetery and see Latimore Tourist Home. FOTLTH will host a "Talk" in the City Hall Conference Room, like the one with Dr. Alice Hines and Ms. Berry, on the 6th of September. Save the date and anyone interested is invited to attend.

**Adjournment:**

Mr. Newby made the motion to adjourn at 6:10PM and Ms. Hooten made the second. The motion was approved by a voice vote.

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Betsy McGuire - Chair

Date