



City of Auburn
Home of Auburn University

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION AGENDA
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BUILDING - PLANNING CONFERENCE ROOM
171 N. ROSS ST.
TUESDAY, November 13, 2012 @ 4:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER. Richard Meinert, Chair.
 - a. Approval of Minutes - October 9, 2012
2. UPDATE ON THE NORTH COLLEGE HISTORIC MARKER
3. DISCUSSION OF SOUTH GAY STREET LETTER
4. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR
5. OTHER BUSINESS
6. CITIZENS' COMMUNICATIONS
7. ADJOURNMENT

**CITY OF AUBURN
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

MEETING SUMMARY: OCTOBER 9, 2012
DSB CONFERENCE ROOM
4:00 PM

ATTENDING MEMBERS: Richard Meinert, Joel Tremaine, Ann Pearson, Charles Hendrix, Susan Konstant and Peter Weiss

MEMBERS ABSENT: Thomas Sparrow

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: Matt Mosley, Senior Planner;

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: None

SUMMARY OF MEETING

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting started at 4:04 p.m. Commissioner Richard Meinert, Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed all of the guests present. He also welcomed the new member Susan Konstant to the Commission and thanked her for his service.

Chair Meinert asked if everyone had read the August minutes and if anyone would like to make a motion.

Commissioner Peter Weiss made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Joel Tremaine seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

ITEM 2: DISCUSSION OF NORTH COLLEGE STREET HISTORIC MARKER

Chair Meinert stated that the next item was discussion on the North College St. historic marker. He asked Mr. Mosley to provide some background information on the marker for the new commissioners.

Mr. Mosley stated that the Historical Chattahoochee Commission (HCC) required the location be selected before the marker is reviewed. He stated that he had contacted various property owners in the district to discuss the possibility of placing the marker in front of their property. He noted that the location the Commission discussed at the last meeting had some right-of-way constraints and the Public Works Department thought the sign may not work in front of Liberty Properties building at the corner of Mitcham Avenue and North College Street. He noted that there was greater right-of-way in some other locations. Mr. Mosley stated that he discussed the issue with property owners at 319 North College and 425 North College and both were amenable to having the sign at their location. He noted that some of the more visible locations such as the church at 440 North College Street was not a contributing building. He noted that some other locations did not have sidewalks or good visibility.

Commissioner Peter Weiss stated that they might look at the southern end of the district near the Spur Station. He noted it may not be the most aesthetically pleasing, but it was close to the

Depot and would be in good position if it were to redevelop. He noted that the property 318 North College Street was a little cluttered already with poles and signs.

Commissioner Charles Hendrix asked if any thought had been put into the northern end of the district. He stated that it would be a trek from downtown, but the landscaping was very nice.

Mr. Mosley stated that one of the issues with this location was the lack of sidewalks, but he would be happy to discuss it with the property owner.

Chairman Meinert asked if the Commission wanted to focus on a particular area first. He asked the Commission preferred north side, south side or the mid-block. He asked if the Commission had an issue with the sign being in front of non-contributing structure.

The Commissioners answered that they felt it needed to be located in front of a contributing structure.

Commissioner Weiss stated that he liked the south side, particularly near the Depot at the start of the district.

Chairman Meinert agreed and stated he had never thought of this location because of the gas station.

Commissioner Ann Pearson stated that she had concerns about the aesthetics of the gas station.

The Commission examined the street views of the district to see if there was a location they preferred.

Commissioner Weiss stated that he liked the area where the City puts a directional game-day sign.

Commissioner Joel Tremaine stated that it needed to be in a location that was accessible by pedestrians since the sign took a while to read.

Mr. Mosley stated that there was no sidewalk in this location, but people had created a small trail through the area.

Commissioner Weiss what the long-term prognosis of the gas station was.

Mr. Mosley stated that in most redevelopment plans the gas station is removed. He did note that the station was the only income producing part of the property and it was difficult to determine its long-term viability.

Commissioner Weiss stated that he felt the sign would be a good marker for the start of the district.

Commissioner Pearson stated they just needed to go ahead and make a decision.

Commissioner Hendrix asked if the City could do anything to make it look better around this area.

Mr. Mosley stated that he would be happy to discuss increasing the aesthetic with the City Arborist and right-of-way experts.

Commissioner Weiss made the motion to place the marker just north of the railroad tracks and south of the Spur Station entrance on the east side of the street. Commissioner Pearson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Pearson stated that the application needed to be made to the HCC. She also asked about getting the funds together for the marker.

Mr. Mosley stated that he would get try to get the funding together from the City. He noted that he would also contact the Auburn Heritage Association for the funding that they promised.

Commissioner Pearson stated that she would send the text into the HCC.

ITEM 3: PRESERVATION METHODS

Mr. Mosley stated that at the last meeting he was asked to look at methods for preserving historic resources. He passed out the toolbox that was created earlier as some potential methods. He noted that there were various methods for preservation. Mr. Mosley stated that the most common method was to go through the process of creating a historic district. He noted that some methods were more restrictive and some utilized incentives. He noted that the City of Auburn had made some of the regulatory processes were eased since the toolbox was created. He stated the Planning Commission modified the Zoning Ordinance to allow zoning nonconformities on historically contributing structures to only go through the HPC instead of the Board of Zoning Adjustment as well. He also noted that parking requirements were removed from historically contributing properties. He stated this was done to prevent zoning requirements from harming historic properties. Mr. Mosley also stated that the City would examine upgrading sidewalks, signage and lighting in designated districts.

Commissioner Tremaine asked what the definition of historic properties was. He stated that he thought the only criterion was that the structure was older than 50 years old.

Mr. Mosley stated that the 50 year requirement was a basic rule of thumb used by the Department of Interior. He noted that the City Code provided the definition for what is considered historic. He noted that something could be historic completely from a local perspective.

Commissioner Tremaine stated that it would be almost impossible to incentivize a large district like previously proposed Gay Street – Payne Street area.

Mr. Mosley stated that most places that preserve properties use historic districts first. He noted that incentives were nice, but most preservation was based on increased regulation.

Commissioner Tremaine stated that he felt the City of Auburn should identify those very few actual historic properties and provide large financial incentives to preserve them. Mr. Tremaine stated that the City of Auburn had lost quite a few older, possibly historic, homes recently with the Auburn Bank drive-thru and may lose some more on South Gay Street. He noted that the HPC did nothing. Commissioner Tremaine stated that large districts only made people angry and put extra regulations on people when their property may not be historic.

Chairman Meinert asked if there was a way to preserve individual properties.

Mr. Mosley stated that single lot districts often did not withstand court challenges.

Commissioner Tremaine stated that the City needed to use incentives to make it financially beneficial for property owners to preserve buildings.

The Commission discussed other options including waiving fees for permits, revolving loans, and other incentives. The Commission also discussed the process to create a district.

ITEM 4: OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Mosley stated that he sent out an article on the process for applications in the historic district. He thought it showed how staff typically tried to help residents. He also noted that there were two possible training sessions coming up. Mr. Mosley also stated that the house at 319 North College had just finished repairing and replacing windows with more accurate wood windows and shutters.

Commissioner Tremaine asked if the Commission wanted to make a resolution try to help save the two homes on South Gay Street at the Heart of Auburn hotel. He stated that a resolution would have no impact or enforcement.

Chairman Meinert asked how they would go about this process.

Mr. Mosley stated that he would be happy to work on a resolution for them.

Commissioner Weiss asked if they should send a letter to CVS. He stated it would be good appeal to their better sense.

Mr. Mosley stated he would craft a letter and resolution for the Commission to review and approve at their next meeting.

ITEM 6: CITIZENS COMMUNICATIONS

There was no citizens communication.

ITEM 7: ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Tremaine moved to adjourn at 5:28 p.m. Commissioner Hendrix seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous 6-0.



City of Auburn
Home of Auburn University

November 1, 2012

Orange Development, Inc.
Attn: Don Fizer
1200 Corporate Drive
Suite G-50
Birmingham, AL 35242

Dear Mr. Fizer:

The City of Auburn Historic Preservation Commission recently became aware of your development plans for property that currently houses the Heart of Auburn hotel. While we applaud your interest and investment into this property and the City of Auburn; we wanted to take a moment to make sure you were aware of the valuable historic resources that are located on the South Gay Street side of the property.

This area of South Gay Street is rich in historical structures that represent the growth of Auburn from the 1880's to present. The area, as you may be aware, is tied to the growth of Auburn University, with many of the homes having been used by both students and staff of the university. The area still houses many representative styles from the late 19th and early 20th Centuries including bungalows, Tudor and Colonial Revival cottages, and minimal traditional houses. The two homes on your development site provide both representative examples of the area and history and unique features in their design.

The structure at 326 South Gay Street is known as the Lowery House and was built around 1933. The home was built in a Colonial Revival style. The most defining characteristics of this residence are the fieldstone material used to clad the structure and the archway leading to the front stoop. The building withstood a fire in 1996 which destroyed much of the interior, but has since been repaired.

The structure at 328 South Gay Street is known as the Plyant-Ingalls House. This residence was built by Ray Plyant in 1895. Mr. Plyant was a local builder who, along with his home at this location, also built many structures in the area. One of his most noteworthy buildings is Trinity Methodist Church in neighboring Opelika, Alabama. His residence here was built in a Queen Anne cottage style. This structure features beautiful and intricate gingerbread work on the gables and decorative brackets and frieze with spindlework on the front porch.

Both buildings are pieces of Auburn's history and represent the architectural history from the late 19th Century to the post-Depression era. While these homes are not locally designated historic structures, they are historic resources of the city, nonetheless. As the Commission tasked with preserving and promoting Auburn's historic structures, we would be remiss not to

point this out and ask you to help us preserve these historic treasures. It is evident that you understand the prominence and importance of this area of town by increased effort and quality design you have put into the site. The strength of this section of the city is its historic ties and proximity to Auburn University. We, as a Commission, ask that you help us preserve these structures and protect the City of Auburn's heritage.

If we can be of any assistance please contact Matt Mosley with the City of Auburn Planning Department at (334) 501-3037. We would greatly appreciate discussing how we can help you preserve these structures and Auburn's history while accomplishing your development goals.

Sincerely,

Richard Meinert, Chair
Historic Preservation Commission
City of Auburn

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the City of Auburn Historic Preservation Commission was created to preserve and protect buildings, structures, and sites of historic and architectural value in the City of Auburn, and;

WHEREAS, the structures at 326 South Gay Street, known as the Lowery House circa 1933, and 328 South Gay Street, known as the Pylant-Ingalls House circa 1895, are historic structures representative of the area and Auburn history, and;

WHEREAS, these structures are also unique in their design and building materials, and;

WHEREAS redevelopment of the Heart of Auburn hotel and surrounding property threatens the future of these structures, and;

WHEREAS the City of Auburn Historic Preservation Commission feels that the loss of these structures will be detrimental to the character of this area;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Auburn Historic Preservation Commission is hereby forwarding a request to the City Council of the City of Auburn, Alabama, to intercede in any manner possible to prevent the destruction of these historic structures.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED by the City Council of the City of Auburn, Alabama, this the 13th day of November 2012.

Chair

ATTEST:
