

HISOTRIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING APRIL 12, 2007

The Historic District Commission held its monthly meeting Thursday, April 12, 2007 at 5:30 P.M. in the District Court Room of the Municipal Complex. The following items were on the agenda:

1. Approval of minutes from previous meeting
2. Certificate of Appropriateness for signage at 719 Main Street
3. Public Hearing on a request for an amendment to the existing local Historic District Ordinance to expand the boundaries to include Fairview Cemetery.
4. Discussion about amending procedure to waive fees for City-owned property such as King Opera House, Van Buren Depot.
5. Any other business that comes before the Commission

PRESENT: Dwight Hopkins, Chairman
John Symonds, Co-Chairman
Cami Brown, Rec. Secretary
Vickie Davis
Paul Gibson

ABSENT: Jody Rhoads

OTHERS PRESENT: Verna Moore, Pres. Of Fairview Cemetery Board
Randy Smith, Liaison City of V.B./Fairview Cem.
Richard Hodo, property owner in VBHD
Don Jenkins, City Attorney
Christi Parker
Shirley Ritter
J.R. Rodriguez
Kristie Boncher

Dwight Hopkins called the meeting to order just after 5:30 P.M. First item of business was the approval of minutes from the last meeting. John Symonds made a motion to approve minutes as written, motion was seconded by Paul Gibson, and the motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Next item of business was consideration of Certificate of Appropriateness for signage at 719 Main Street by Christi Parker. Lettering will be Souvenir Medium, 8" high, color Brookside. Owner Richard Hodo commented that the columns and anything painted green on the building would be repainted Jonquil, and the red bricks on the outside of the building would be touched up and repainted with the same color, Cogswell Cedar. After some discussion, it was determined a picture of a server would be painted on the window, with the understanding that paint for this would have to be a flat matte finish, and the white in the painting would have to be replaced with an off-white or cream color. This picture will be approximately 12" in height. The colors from the HDC pallet for the paint used on the server will be Wild Oates and Chocolate. A motion to approve lettering was made by Paul Gibson, given a second by Vickie Davis, and motion carried with a unanimous vote. A motion to amend C of A to include picture of server being painted on the window with the colors Wild Oates and Chocolate approximately 12" high was made by Paul Gibson and given a second by John Symonds, and motion carried with a unanimous vote. A motion to amend C of A to include approval of replacing green paint on columns on front of building with Jonquil, and to repaint existing red with Cogswell Cedar was made by Vickie Davis, motion was given a second by Paul Gibson, and motion carried with a unanimous vote. A motion to approve this Certificate of Appropriateness was made by Paul Gibson, and motion was seconded by John Symonds. This motion carried with a unanimous vote.

At 5:48 P.M. Chairman Dwight Hopkins opened the Public Hearing on a request for an amendment to the existing local Historic District Ordinance to expand the boundaries to include Fairview Cemetery to order. At this time Randy Smith, liaison for the City of Van Buren and Fairview Cemetery, introduced President of the Fairview Cemetery Board Verna Moore. Mrs. Moore commented the Board is very happy to see this taking place, and that the Board is supportive of this action. Mrs. Moore also commented she hopes the Historic District Commission will be supportive of the Fairview Cemetery Board, as she thinks both groups have the same goals for Fairview Cemetery. Randy Smith commented he is supportive of this action as well. He also commented the Board is headed in the right direction as far as preservation of Fairview Cemetery, and with this annexation into Historic District, this action will simply cement this progress. Dwight Hopkins commented if all this goes forward the Historic District Commission plans to do all they can to assist the Board with restoration and preservation efforts in the cemetery, and this will begin with requesting grant funds, which is being done at this time. Chairman Hopkins commented this is what the Historic District can bring to the table in this endeavor. Dwight Hopkins commented the information from the Public Hearing would be taken to the City Attorney, Don Jenkins, and Jenkins will draft the legislation that will be the ordinance, and this will be sent out to the City Council members for review, and will be addressed at the May City Council meeting. With no other comments offered, Dwight Hopkins called this Public Hearing closed at 5:56 P.M.

The next item on the agenda was discussion about amending procedure to waive fees for City-owned property such as King Opera House, Van Buren Depot. Chairman Hopkins commented the agenda called for this discussion about city-owned property, but this needed to be amended to cover city and county owned property, with only the city

property being discussed tonight. Chairman commented that King Opera House and the Van Buren Depot both have a conservation easement that the State of Arkansas holds, and this gives the State a higher level of jurisdiction over these city-owned properties than the HDC. Mr. Hopkins went on to comment the HDC has never had in effect a policy for general maintenance of municipally owned structures within the Historic District of not having to go through the review process. Mr. Hopkins commented by general maintenance he was referring to the same maintenance any property owner in the Historic District would comply with, the such as the re-painting of a building back to the same approved color, or maintenance issues, such as guttering, weather-stripping, and things of that nature. Mr. Hopkins commented the HDC should have it on record these properties are not required to file a Certificate of Appropriateness. This process is a step toward what will be in place for all property owners in the Historic District if and when a maintenance ordinance can be put in place. Vickie Davis and John Symonds both commented if anyone changed a paint color, or any other major work, they would still be required to file C of A and be reviewed by the HDC, which Chairman Hopkins replied yes, they would have to file a C of A and come before the Commission. John Symonds commented this should be addressed in our guidelines, to which Chairman Hopkins replied general maintenance is addressed and doesn't require C of A, but this is not specific in the details of why exclusions, or who is excluded, so this does need to be addressed especially with a new C of A form being considered, and this form having different levels of approval, and different review levels included on this new form. Co-Chairman John Symonds commented this makes sense, and his suggestion is the HDC amend the guidelines to be more specific in this area. John Symonds also commented the HDC needs to hold an Executive Session on this matter. After some discussion the HDC determined an Executive Session would be held sometime in May, for this topic as well as the issue of Commissioners and terms that need to be addressed and recommended to City Council in May. John Symonds commented officers must be elected as well.

The last item for discussion was the announcement to the Commission that for the first time, the Van Buren Historic District Commission has its own budget. Chairman Hopkins informed the Commission the City picked up the salary for HDC Assistant/CLG Coordinator Cami Brown, which has been paid with grant funds since filling the position. This year when the grant was written, Mayor Bob Freeman met with Cami Brown and Dwight Hopkins, and the CLG grant submitted to the State CLG program included a \$10,000.00 match from the City of Van Buren. This was received well by the Commission. All Commission members feel this is one more positive action that shows progress is being made in the City of Van Buren, for preservation of our rich history.

With no other business before the Commission, this meeting was adjourned.

Dwight Hopkins, Chairman

Cami L. Brown, Rec. Sec.