

MINUTES
CITY OF HOT SPRINGS, ARKANSAS
Historic District Commission

The regular meeting of the Historic District Commission was held on Thursday, February 16, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. in the Board Room of the Hot Springs Municipal Building, 133 Convention Boulevard, with Chairman Long Xua Xu presiding.

Roll Call

Present: Chairman Long Hua Xu, Vice-Chairman Michael Pettey, Commissioner James Gray & Commissioner Mary Francis Moore

Staff: Rick Stauder, Planning Manager
David Chunn, Planner

January 19, 2017 Minutes

Chairman Long Hua Xu called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. Chairman Long Hua Xu asked the commissioners if there were any corrections or additions that needed to be made to the previous minutes from the Thursday, January 19, 2017 meeting. Hearing none Chairman Long Hua Xu asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Chairman Xu made a motion to approve the Thursday, January 19, 2017 meeting minutes as printed with Commissioner Moore seconding. The motion carried with a unanimous vote 4-0.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Pour Some Sugar on Me
364 Central Avenue
Certificate of Appropriateness application request to add business identification signage to storefront windows; (HDC-17-0025)

Chairman Long Hua Xu asked staff to introduce the item. Stauder stated that new business, Pour Some Sugar on Me, was new to downtown and was seeking approval for business identification signage to be located on storefront and transom windows. Stauder stated that staff had recommended that the Applicant's request not be approved, based on the guidelines of the Central Avenue Historic District Design Guidelines, which recommends that businesses be allowed only one (1) major and two (2) minor signs and that signage be kept to a minimum in order to reduce visual clutter.

Stauder reminded the commissioners that the decision was ultimately up to the Commission and that should they feel inclined to approve the Applicant's request that they do so in the form of a finding, which would be by stating why they felt this particular situation was unique and why it would warrant deviating from the provision of the Central Avenue Historic District Design Guidelines. Stauder then invited the Applicant to step forward.

Applicant McKenzie Simon – 364 Central Avenue – stated to the Commission that the submitted proposed renderings of confectionary sweets would be located in the middle of the windows. Chairman Xu asked Simon how long her family’s business interests had been located downtown, to which Simon replied eleven (11) years. Chairman Xu then asked if Simon understood that her request was a deviation from the Central Avenue Historic District Design Guidelines, to which Simon responded that she understood and that it was her belief that covering up the small transom windows with signage would not have a negative impact on aesthetics, as only the interior ceiling can be seen through the transom windows from street level. Simon also stated that her proposal was nearly identical to what was currently existing at Fat Bottomed Girls Cupcake Shoppe (120 Central Avenue) and it was her belief that transom window signage boosted business significantly. Simon further stated that she felt the additional signage was necessary in order to promote a new business that was unknown to the public.

Stauder asked if Simon intended for her storefront window signage to replicate, in terms of space occupied, the signage found on neighboring business Bathhouse Soapery (366 Central Avenue), to which Simon responded that her proposed signage would occupy half of the window space. Gray inquired if proposed signage would occupy the windows directly adjacent to the door on both sides, which Simon replied in the affirmative. Simon commented that property owner Ken Wheatley had suggested that Simon, a lessee of 364 Central Avenue, could occupy the upper transom windows with signage, as those spaces were seen as being more viewable from automobile traffic on Central Avenue. Gray inquired if those upper transom windows were false windows, to which Simon responded that they were. Pettey commented that his own building, 336 Central Avenue, had window signage that occupied the transom windows and that it could be seen as a positive example of transom window signage along Central Avenue.

Gray commented that approval of this request might set a precedent, to which Stauder agreed that it was possible but that there were previous incidences where the requests were granted that were not exactly compliant with the Central Avenue Historic District Design Guidelines. Stauder reminded the commissioners that, in the event of approval, that they should be prepared to state exactly why they felt the situation was unique enough to warrant an exception.

Moore asked Simon if she felt that a denial of the transom window signage would take away from her ability to successfully market the business, to which Simon replied that transom window signage was critical to her ability to successfully market her new business and would differentiate the business from Fat Bottomed Girl Cupcake Shoppe. Moore further inquired if Simon felt that she would be able to find a way to market the business but with less signage, to which Simon responded that were her proposal denied by the Commission, she would simply mount the signage from the interior, thereby forgoing the Historic District Commission entirely.

Pettey stated his opinion that he felt Simon’s proposal would be attractive. Stauder suggested alternatives regarding the transom windows, including adding the images to the

upper row of transoms. Additional discussion followed between the Commission and Mrs. Simon, largely consisting of the commissioners stating their personal opinions on the appropriateness of the graphics or citing other examples of properties in the Central Avenue Historic District that utilize transom window signage. Gray inquired of Simon if she knew the dimensions of the proposed graphics or of the transom windows, to which Simon replied that she did not.

Petty suggested to Simon that the Commission would consider approving her proposed signage with the exception of the transom windows, to which she would return at the next Commission hearing to submit the dimensions of both the transom windows and the signage to be located therein. Simon replied that the proposed transom signage would be centered in to the middle of the pane. Gray calculated that the transom windows were roughly 3 (three) feet wide and “not quite that as tall”.Petty suggested that he thought the Applicant’s proposal would be acceptable as is, to which Simon replied that she had no intention of putting up signage that could be construed as being “tacky”.

Stauder asked if there was a consensus among the Commission members that the signage should be centered on each pane and located on the lower row of transom windows, to which the commissioners voiced agreement. Stauder asked if there were any other members of the public present that would like to voice their concerns or support, to which there were none. Stauder then invited the Commission to enter a motion to approve or deny.

With no further questions from the Commissioners, Commissioner Gray made a motion to approve the request as presented, conditioned on the terms discussed and agreed upon by the Commission with Simon, that the large storefront signage would be placed in window panes adjacent to the door and that transom signage would occupy the lower row of transom windows and be centered, using the Ohio Club as an example. A further condition was that the Commission would view the proposal for transom window signage as one piece of signage, rather than 5 separate pieces of signage. The motion to approve as submitted with conditions was seconded by Petty. The motion to approve as submitted with conditions carried with a unanimous vote.

(For- 4, Against- 0, Absent-0, Abstain-0)

2. The Election of Officers for the Historic District Commission

Stauder began discussion with the Commission in regards to future posts of the Commission and how the current arrangement would exist in the future. Stauder then opened the floor to the commissioners to make nominations for the Chairman position.

Moore suggested if a motion could be made to maintain the arrangement as it currently existed, so long as those present were all in agreement. Moore made a motion to vote on whether or not the current commissioners would like to keep their positions as they currently stood. Petty revealed to the Commission that he had recently applied for a


position with the Hot Springs Advertising & Promotion Commission, and that the status of his application was expected to be announced at the next meeting of the A & P Commission, February 27, 2017. Stauder replied that should Pettey accept an invitation to join the A & P Commission, he would vacate his current position with the Hot Springs Historic District Commission and that elections would need to be held to replace him. Pettey responded that should his bid to join the A & P Commission fail, that he would retain his current position with the Hot Springs Historic District Commission.

Moore's motion to vote on maintaining the commissioner positions with the Hot Springs Historic District Commission as it was currently configured moved to the floor. The motion to re-elect Long Hua Xu as Chairman and re-elect Michael Pettey as Vice-Chairman carried with a unanimous vote.
(For- 4, Against- 0, Absent-0, Abstain-0)

Report: Stauder informed the commission that efforts by the Aristocrat Hotel, 240 Central Avenue, to be individually listed on the National Historic Register were successful. Another current effort underway to gain historic preservation status was the Hot Springs Armory, 210 Woodbine. Its application was currently being reviewed by the State Review Board of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

Stauder then introduced the Commission to on-going efforts by staff to expend remaining grant money by way of commissioning a resurvey of the Central Avenue Historic District, a practice that is recommended be undertaken every decade. A consultant had been selected and staff were awaiting the finalizing of contract documents and that the consultant was expect to be in town next month for a meeting with staff.

Adjourn: Commissioner Pettey made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Commissioner Gray. The motion carried with a unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 am.
(For-4, Against-0, Absent-0, Abstain-0)



Chairman Long Hua Xu 