

COMMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

January 26, 2017

Members Present

Jeffrey Bond
Robert Stowe
Robert Weir
Michael Nicholas
Robin Crews

Members Absent

Susan Stilwell
Sean Davis

Staff

Renee Burton
Anna Levi
Tracie Lancaster
Clarke Whitfield

Mr. Nicholas called the meeting to order at 3pm.

ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS

Mr. Nicholas turned the meeting over to Mr. Whitfield for the Election of Officers.

Mr. Whitfield called for nominations for Chairman.

Mrs. Crews nominated Mr. Nicholas for Chairman. The nominations were approved by a 4-0 vote (Mr. Nicholas abstained from the vote).

Mr. Whitfield called for nominations for Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Stowe nominated Mrs. Crews for Vice-Chairman. The nominations were approved by a 4-0 vote (Mrs. Crews abstained from the vote).

Mr. Whitfield called for nominations for Secretary.

Mrs. Crews nominated Mr. Weir for Secretary. The nominations were approved by a 4-0 vote (Mr. Weir abstained from the vote).

ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING

- 1. Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness, PLCAR2017000008, filed by Hope for Tomorrow Counseling to install a new projecting sign on the north side of the building. The sign is metal, 21.25" x 24", and advertises "Hope for Tomorrow Counseling"*

Mr. Nicholas opened the Public Hearing.

Present to speak on behalf of this request was Ms. Sandra Lewandowski. Ms. Lewandowski stated I am the office manager for Hope for Tomorrow Counseling. We have opened our office; it is down the walkway behind the sign. We recognized that you

had historical significance in that area. We saw the requirements for hanging the sign on the directory and didn't see anything for hanging the sign where we have it now. So we made it in the same likeness as the one on the directory. I'm sorry I did not bring a picture of the existing directory.

Mr. Nicholas stated is that the sign you are proposing or the sign that is already up?

Ms. Lewandowski stated it is already up. I apologize for that.

Mrs. Burton stated you can see a picture of it here.

Mr. Nicholas closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Weir made a motion to approve the application as it does meet the guidelines. Mrs. Crews seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

APPROVAL OF THE MINTUES

Mr. Weir made a motion to approve the December 8, 2016 minutes. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Crews stated I do want to submit to the committee that I have some upcoming dates this year that will be conflicting with our schedule for something that I am doing for my employment. But I don't anticipate missing more meetings than is appropriate.

Mr. Nicholas stated thank you very much, if you would just let Renee know those dates.

Mrs. Crews stated she has them.

Mrs. Burton stated I have them.

Mr. Nicholas stated I will say it is helpful if you know you can't make a meeting to let Renee know. If we ever have four people that say that can't make the meeting, I can just cancel the meeting. Then we have enough time to give public notice and reschedule the meeting.

Mrs. Burton stated I have just a couple of things. One that we are currently working on amendments to the current sign code and it is kind of a long process. But you will see that coming out in a couple of months. It will not affect you a great deal with what you guys would be looking at as far as the commercial side; since we don't have a lot of commercial in the Old West End. But in the long term it will affect some of the signage within the residential uses such as yard signs. So those items we will bring before you and we may want to adjust the guidelines based on what the Zoning Code changes are. So just to let you know that is in the works. If you have something that you see another

locality doing or any ideas please feel free to send me an email and we will include that as we have our discussions. Also, I just wanted to have a discussion on the nasty demolition word to kind of talk about it a little and see how you all feel about it. We have a couple of houses now that we are getting to the point where some of them are just not marketable. You can fix them up, but they are still crammed within three feet on each side of another property or there is not very much yard. The style or the interior is not marketable after you were to spend the money to rehab. So I wanted to kind of put that out there and see how you feel about it. It would still have to come before you for review and we would bring all of the facts to you. We have a couple that are in that situation now. While they are not necessarily unmarketable at this point; but maybe if they were to be moved or demolished it would help a property next to it. To give it space because it is more marketable or certainly more profitable.

Mr. Nicholas stated what efforts have been made by whoever is supposed to make them to determine marketability? In others words, is this because someone drove by and said man that house looks terrible. It's probably not marketable versus market research and trying to put it out there. By contacting people that like to rehab homes and flip them that type of thing. What if any effort has been made?

Mr. Bond stated what effort was made prior to the purchase?

Mrs. Burton stated at this point we do not have a lot of research on the ones I am referring to. We have started that so we are still working on it. We do have one that we did an appraisal on and it came back as a negative value. To me that tells me we have got an issue, things like that are starting to pop up. As far as due diligence, a lot of times the houses that are obtained by the Housing Authority are so that something will be done with them. So they won't just continue to be in a dilapidated state and not all of them are bought some are gifts. So there is not any financial buy in at that point. It is a part of the Housing Authority taking control so that something can be done and hopefully something positive instead of the house just sitting there. We still have a lot of research to do we just wanted to have a conversation about it.

Mr. Nicholas stated my initial thought is that when I remember us approving or being asked to demolition it comes with a bevy of that type of research. We held it for twenty years and we have tried to sell it and the most we can get for it is 60 percent of what we would need. It is usually laid out pretty clearly that we have tried everything and this truly is the last resort to demolish it. I would personally speak for me; I would like to see that leg work before we are asked to approve a demolition. That should be the last resort. That is my opinion.

Mrs. Crews stated I would like to see the cost of the relocation of the home versus demolition that would be associated with both. As a potential buyer that would be of interest to me.

Mrs. Burton stated most cases are generic discussions of if this lot becomes vacant what would we do. You have the possibility of infill which we have not had infill come before the Commission since my tenure here, so that would be something new. Also, the option of this lot is vacant can we move a house, completely using streets at random no one get worried, from Green Street to Pine or whatever the situation maybe and still maintain that house.

Mr. Nicholas stated if not that what about architectural elements of one house being taken to restore another house. So maybe one of the houses that have a tin roof that are in complete disrepair and you can salvage some of that and put it on another house that is somewhat dilapidated but not completely and save money there. We should cannibalize if we get to that last resort stage. I would hate to see us just demolish everything lets send someone in there and retrieve what we can retrieve and put it to use in a different property.

Mrs. Burton stated we have started doing that a little bit now. We are kind of at that point in our rehab strategy where things are missing and where do you find that original type work. We have a house on North Main that was already in the demolition line and we were able to salvage some of the material to use over on Pine Street. So as long as we can get into the houses safely and it is something that is owned by the Housing Authority we are able to do that. If it is something that is a private demolition we have no control or no way to take possession of any of that property.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

Approved