

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Tuesday, January 12, 2021
Special Call Meeting Minutes**

Members Present:

Alan Mesecher.....Chairman
Robin Craig-Hunt..... Vice Chair
Susan Pennington (arrived at 6:05 p.m.)Member
Robert Manning.....Member
Kenneth Wheeler.....Member

Members Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Kelvin Knauf, Director of Planning & Community Development
Wendy Lloyd, Planning Secretary

City Council Members Present:

None

Chairman Mesecher called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Mesecher asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 2, 2020 special call meeting

Vice Chair Craig-Hunt motioned to approve
Member Manning 2nd

Vote: 4 – 0

Motion Carries

Chairman Mesecher asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2020 special call meeting

Member Manning motioned to approve
Vice Chair Craig-Hunt 2nd

Vote: 4 – 0

Motion Carries

CITIZEN COMMENTS

None

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Consider a Certificate of Appropriateness application from John Schulze to construct a greenhouse at 712 N. 4th Street**

Greg Garrett – 712 N. 4th, Orange, TX: Mr. Garrett stated I am John's primary care giver and is POA. John bought the house and he's here and he likes growing plants. What I was thinking of doing was building something very simply that would just be built right to the back of the house and wouldn't really know it was there. That way when you drive past the front of the house and the side of the house from Orange Street or 4th Street, you're not going to really notice because it's behind the house. It's a big 2 story house and as you come down the back steps it has like a covered porch where they have the water heater, and someone suggested why don't you close that. Well, it would be hard for John to go in and out with his walker because he's on a walker all the time and so we need to have that open. What I'd thought we'd do is just install one door to go into the green house and somewhere between 12 and 20 feet across, about 12 feet tall and about maybe 10 feet deep so it's not really all that big. It's really more a tall space and I grow plants on poles. Believe it or not, I have these little hooks I put on poles and plants all sit like a tree. It's like a Christmas tree effect. So, I can utilize the height of the room. I drew up just a rough idea. Whatever the requirements are you know 3 foot between the studs or if you need me to do 4 by 4 or however you want it to be installed from the ground is fine with me. But I just sort of drew up something. So, using the corrugated fiberglass to keep the cold out and then inside that particular room I would have shade cloth and my plants and probably shelves. I just drew that up this morning with prism-colored pencils just to kind of give you a rough idea of what I was thinking. It's basically a box that will hold heat. I don't know the exact dimensions and I haven't got a bid. I have 2 people who have offered to build it but like I said I wanted to find out what I can do and if you can give me specs about it if it needs to be anchored to the ground. Can it be built to where it's attached to the house so to speak. So, I just wanted to do whatever you guys want me to do. I don't have the money unfortunately to build a 1920's Victorian style greenhouse with glass and lots of gingerbread. I can't do that. As much as I'd like to make it fit in with the Historic District, that's just not going to happen. If I could get this approved, it would really mean a lot to me. For about the past 30 years I've been collecting tropical plants. They're all sitting outside frozen and if I can resurrect them, then great but a lot of them may have bit the dust last night. I'm really heartbroken that I couldn't get on this project sooner, but I didn't realize I had hoops to jump through.

Member Manning stated I need to clarify; we have this whole packet of plans and proposals. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated yes, I don't understand what these are and then we have this. Mr. Garrett stated I had contracted with a company that has closed up for the winter and they were going to come like Monday of last week to build my greenhouse but when I told them they just said well call us when you get around to it. That's what I was going to build but I lost my deposit. I'm not getting the green house from East Texas Greenhouse. Now I'm stuck with just building something from scratch. I'm sorry about the confusion but that's what happened because we've been busy trying to get our house situated after the storm. We've got broken

windows. We didn't have water for 2 weeks. We didn't have electricity for 2 weeks. We basically were camping out of our house after Laura. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated well we all went through that. I still don't have my roof fixed. Mr. Garrett stated we can't find any contractors to help us either. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated yes, it's all the situation we are in. It's terrible. Mr. Garrett stated my reality is to build a simple yet cost effective building and maybe store our generator that we had to buy after the storm because it's just sitting there waiting for somebody to haul it off in their truck. I'd like to put a lock on the greenhouse door to protect my orchids, my bromeliads and my generator. That's kind of my plan to keep it out of the weather and protect my plants.

Member Manning stated so simple question, the request is for X and we have that. Mr. Knauf stated they are withdrawing that one. Mr. Garrett stated we can't do anything because the company closed down and we can't get in touch with them until next year sometime. Member Manning stated I'm asking a simple question of what we are being asked to approve. Mr. Garrett stated I'm asking could you just approve a bare bones. Member Manning stated ok with that said, would this application suffice. Can we approve what's being asked based on the fact we don't have an official application for this. I'm fine either way. Mr. Knauf stated well in your packet, I described what the historic district requirements for accessory buildings. They must be compatible with scale, shape, roof form, materials, detailing and color and the main building must have a pitched roof which this doesn't have. Mr. Garrett stated that's one thing I want is that I want it to slope down so that the water drains off. Member Manning stated and that's my point. We have a stand-alone building and now we are talking about building on an addition to the back of the house. Mr. Knauf stated well would it be a stand-alone or would it be added on. Mr. Garrett stated it would be a separate building but built right up next to the house. Mr. Knauf stated it has to be detached from, adjacent to but detached from the main. Mr. Garrett stated it's a separate unit but where the water comes off is where my generator sits so I just had a piece of plexi glass over the generator. I don't want to do something against what you want to do. My liking would be to use the white lattice work stuff that they have at Home Depot and Lowes to make it look more finished. I don't want it to be a wooden box. I wanted it to look like we are trying to make it look nice. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated so here's a situation that we've run into in the past too. It's hard for us to approve something when this is what we are given and I'm going to be honest with you, I don't think that this withholds to the historic value. I think you would agree. Mr. Garrett stated that's just the structure. It doesn't show the white lattice. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated I know but this is what has been our problem. We end up trying to be nice but legally this is what we have so if you don't put lattice. Mr. Garrett stated I've already got the lattice. Member Craig-Hunt stated it doesn't matter.

Member Wheeler stated let me ask you this. Have you seen this criteria that you have to go by? It needs to fit that description. That's the first thing. We can't approve and I appreciate your efforts a hundred percent, but I don't think we can go forward with this right now as it's written. Mr. Garrett stated as I said this is only the structural part. I've already put the lattice up on poles because I hang plants on poles and what I thought is I'll wrap it in plastic and be done with it. But if you build a structure and put the pitch on the roof to run the water off and

you seal it up because it's got a door. Member Wheeler stated you really need to review this. Mr. Garrett stated I never got a copy of it. Mr. Knauf stated when you get an application that is attached to it. Mr. Garrett stated I only got 2 pieces of paper. Mr. Knauf stated ok well we will get you a copy of it. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated we would love to see you have a structure and I love plants. I'm a gardener wannabe and I applaud any of that but what we're trying to do is really build up the historic district and keep it like it is. That's why it's as nice as it is. I mean you go to other communities and it's not anywhere near as nice as what we have here. That's our goal and it's not to tell people no we hate it. You have no idea how horrible it is. Mr. Garrett the point is I was trying to make an illustration but whatever your criteria is. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated maybe you could read those, and I don't know are you a carpenter or do you have enough skills or are the one that is going to be building it? Mr. Garrett stated no I'm disabled. We have to pay somebody to do it. I paid a company \$400.00 deposit to come and build a 12x24 that is in the pictures. They bowed out because I couldn't get it cleared in time for them to shut down for winter. So, my plants are all frozen and I'm really not happy about that, but I really realize that it's one of those things when we bought a house, we didn't know we were buying into a home owner's association or someplace that would prevent us from doing whatever you want to do on your property. I understand that. I'm not looking to put dancing frogs or anything else on my property. What I'd like to do is be able to accommodate a place to grow plants. We will come up with something that is agreeable to you guys and bend over backwards and jump through all the hoops and bells and whistles if that's what it takes because I really want to protect my investment. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated I appreciate that you said that because I hope that you can appreciate that we are trying to protect the investments of everybody in the historic district and we put a lot of money in these old homes. Mr. Garrett stated I have too and now if you won't let me build my greenhouse then I'm going to lose \$50,000 worth of plants. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated well I would think if you had \$50,000 worth of plants you would have already had a plan. That's a lot of money. Mr. Garrett stated no my partner died and next thing I knew we had to get out of that house. We had a reverse mortgage. We don't own the house; it's mostly owned by the bank and I told John it's up to us now and it was just the 2 of us and we better figure this out. So, I've spent all my money to bring him them here and now they're sitting there frozen and that's why I have a little bit of a dilemma with the greenhouse and I have to hire someone to build it and it should have been done last week. Now I have to come back next time to show you what my other plans will be. At least I have a little bit more information to go on. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated yes, and we look forward to seeing what you come up with. Mr. Knauf stated and staff will be glad to work with you. Mr. Shulze stated but we didn't know it got so cold here. We heard 39 to 91 is average temperature.

Vice Chair Craig-Hunt motioned to table
Member Wheeler 2nd

Vote: 4 – 0

Motion Carries

WORKSHOP

a. Conduct a workshop to discuss historic district regulations, policies and programs

Mr. Knauf stated this is informal just to kind of get your ideas on the historic district on how you see it just how rigid or strictly to the letter of the law you want to be or not or give a little latitude. Really what I need tonight is just how you envision the historic district. What would you like to see in the historic district as far as it developing or changing or staying the same? Just get your thoughts about the historic districts generally if we could do better or change or whatever.

Discussion:

- maintain preservation
- no metal carport, ratty greenhouses, tents, junk cars
- get residences to clean up – help people
- connect with realtors - workshops for CE hours to inform/teach, host social coffee meetings,
- money, fundraising, grants
- signs showing restricted community – temporary go in and out
- heavy code enforcement – tickets, more training for code enforcement
- needs movement – community to decide beneficial for change– incentivize desire
- block parties, house tours, more events, synergy
- social media, website, news, promotion, submit ideas
- groups to help clean up
- education – remove fear of increased taxes for improving property

Vice Chair Craig-Hunt motioned to adjourn

Member Manning 2nd

Chairman Mesecher adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.