

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Tuesday, February 9, 2021
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present:

Alan Mesecher.....Chairman
Robin Craig-Hunt..... Vice Chair
Susan Pennington.....Member
Kenneth Wheeler.....Member

Members Absent:

Robert Manning.....Member

Staff Present:

Kelvin Knauf, Director of Planning & Community Development
Wendy Lloyd, Planning Secretary
Hillary Gravett, Social Media Coordinator

City Council Members Present:

None

Chairman Mesecher called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Mesecher asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 12, 2021 meeting

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

Vote: 4 – 0

Motion Carries

CITIZEN COMMENTS

None

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Consider a Certificate of Appropriateness application from El Bethel Baptist Church to demolish a structure located at 1208 Cypress Avenue**

Mr. Knauf stated I think it used to be the parsonage for the church. It just decayed and decayed and there’s windows that are missing, part of the back wall is missing, it’s not secured, and they

have no interest in bringing it up to code and they actually came in and took out a demolition permit and because it is in the historic district, we cannot issue the permit unless you grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish it. It has no historical markers on it. It's in the historic district but not a primarily historic structure or anything. This is for your consideration as to whether to grant the Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the property.

Chairman Mesecher stated the building has been in bad shape.

Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated why do they let it get that bad. I just don't understand that. It would have had some value and they could've let someone live in it from the church. It could have been a darling little house.

Member Wheeler stated what is the plan for that lot once it's demolished and removed. Mr. Knauf stated as far as we know, just leave it vacant. I supposed with some time if they ever have the money to build a new parsonage or sell it.

Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated so it's linked to the land of the church. Mr. Knauf stated well it's a separate lot, but it's owned by the church.

Chairman Mesecher stated well 12/15 years ago, people lived there and after the hurricane, it got flooded and they just abandoned the house and the church decided to take it over. I think they were going to do some repairs one it about 5/6 years ago, but they couldn't get their money together. I think last week they tore down the 2 car garage. It was in bad shape. They had stored all their pews in there after the flood.

Member Wheeler stated out of curiosity, I know another church had the intention of doing the same thing to my current house and lot just to expand their parking lot. But they've got a huge parking lot. That was just a concern that I had. Mr. Knauf stated absolutely, we hate losing houses. Member Wheeler stated but no permits have been requested to do anything different. Mr. Knauf stated no.

Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated wasn't there something I read up on one time about the repurposing of the parts of some of these homes. Mr. Knauf stated there was a thought years ago if we could find someone that would go in and rescue the doorknobs or the doors or the little extras. I think that was discussed at an HPC meeting, but nobody ever came up with anybody who would do that. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated that would be fantastic if we could find somebody to do it.

Member Wheeler stated do we know the intent of the slab that they have. Are they going to remove it as well? Mr. Knauf stated I really don't know. We would prefer that they do because whenever we demolish a house, we take out the slab and everything. Member Wheeler stated right because we have several lots down there with empty slabs. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated is there anyway of them having to do that. Mr. Knauf stated we don't have any ordinance to

require them to do that.

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

Vote: 4 – 0

Motion Carries

- b. Consider a Certificate of Appropriateness application from Wilson Lewis to place a temporary tent and construct a deck at 84 Green Avenue**

Wilson Lewis – PO Box 123, Orange, Tx: Mr. Lewis stated the request for the tent is just to take advantage of crawfish season. We want to boil crawfish just to generate income. I have a couple things that I need to do to maintain the temporary CO that I have. We just want to boil crawfish temporarily until we figure out a permanent solution to cook. We plan on providing food and daiquiris all the time, but I've spoken to Marvin Benoit and he doesn't like the idea of me cooking inside the building just because it's so small. So, at this point we want to create a temporary tent that is screened in. I've spoken with James Scales and he said that everything was okay as long as I make sure that the city codes and regulations were met. I was just going to use it for crawfish season and then figure out a permanent solution to maybe a food truck, maybe something that's permanent with more of an aesthetic appeal. Also, we plan on building the 40 by 40 deck to have a seating area. I do have an on premise permit through TABC to serve daiquiris and mixed beverages. So, that is the seating area and that is pretty much how I want the deck to look. The deck will have 4 sides with 4 steps and roughly not so many tables and seating, but we would abide by the Covid regulations as far as people sitting down and eating. We already have permits for people to be there to sit down. I just wanted to make sure I come through you all and get the approval to build something that is to standard.

Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated how far off are you from doing this. Is it in plans? Mr. Lewis stated it's in plans but once you give me the okay, it probably would happen in the next 45 days. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated is this for that and the tent. Mr. Lewis stated yes.

Member Wheeler stated I like the deck. On the property, where is that going to sit. Mr. Lewis stated we actually have a corner that's adjacent to the building. If you were to drive by there, it's a grass patch. I've had it measured and had somebody give me a good estimate on it. It's about 55 yards of grass and the 40 by 40 would fit perfect. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated so when you drive thru, it's on the right-hand side. Mr. Lewis stated yes on the right side. It wouldn't extend past the drive thru; I wouldn't extend past the property line. I've had somebody walk it down already. I had a good estimate on the actual rendering of it and she recommended a guy, and he came out and basically told me to do what I have to do to make sure it's up to code and approved. I think that it would draw a lot of value and a lot of attention to that area. We are doing exceptionally well with business already. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated good. I saw that it got flattened to the ground. Tell us about that. Mr. Lewis stated well that was just part of God's plan. It was supposed to happen like that. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt

stated okay. I said a little prayer for you when I saw that. I happened to drive by, and my heart just sunk. Mr. Lewis stated I appreciate that. We needed it. I actually spoke with Kelvin about the stuff that we are supposed to do like the window boxes and the awnings. Everything was on backorder when we put the building up. It was just much more expensive because of the wood and everything. We plan on finishing out the driveway with the asphalt. I think he gave us a 90 day deadline. Then, the window boxes we are going to put on Sunday. We open from 2 to 6 on Sunday so I think we are going to try and get the window boxes put on before that time. We are going to do everything that we are supposed to do and whatever codes we have to meet with the historic committee, we are going to make sure that they are met but we planned on cooking crawfish from the beginning. We are just at that stage now to where we have generated enough income to get the crawfish going. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated can I make a suggestion. I don't have a problem with any of it. The only thing that I would say is if maybe there was a deadline for how long you could have the tent so that tent doesn't somehow become permanent. But I think it's great and I'm so happy you are doing well. Mr. Lewis stated thank you and I appreciate you letting me have this opportunity.

Chairman Mesecher stated what are your bathroom facilities. Mr. Lewis stated I have to get with Mello Plumbing because the issue would be not so much the water line but the drain line. Right now, the drain line sits directly under the building. I have to get with them to see the best solution of actually putting facilities or maybe a building that is a little smaller with restrooms. If you can go back to the picture, I can show you where I plan on putting it just in this area right here because the deck is going to extend so I plan on maybe putting some restroom facilities right here. I know that it is mandatory for TABC to have restroom facilities with the on premises permit. I planned on coming to you all first. The next meeting Kelvin said would be in March and I didn't want to take that long because crawfish season will be in the middle of that. Before I build the deck, I actually plan on boiling crawfish to help me get the income to build the deck. If you all approve the tent, then that would allow me to go to talk to Mello Plumbing and just see what kind of solution we can come up with as far as the drain for the restroom.

Member Wheeler stated how big of a tent is this going to be. Mr. Lewis stated I think it is a 10 by 14 tent. Member Wheeler stated fire retardant. Mr. Lewis stated yes fire retardant tent. It's going to have a screened-in enclosed area. As long as I put it on a slab, James Scales said it was okay. I couldn't put it on the grass. I talked to Marvin and Marvin wanted me to put a tote tank to where I can dump the water in it instead of me obviously dumping it on the grass which would attract flies and bugs. Then, just have a vacuum truck come and suck it out weekly. Member Wheeler stated is this the first time you're serving food or have you served food before. Mr. Lewis stated no this is the first time and we didn't have to have the health inspection come because we were only doing alcohol, so I have everything in there to pass the health inspection but literally didn't need it to start. James is okay with me putting that tent next to the window where it can just be a transfer of the crawfish. He mentioned something about the crawfish being a certain temperature but I'm not going to touch the crawfish, so he didn't have a lot of regulations but just make sure to go through the city and if the tent is okay with the city, then I'm okay with it and I'll come by and inspect it. Member Wheeler stated out

of curiosity, who owns that property. Mr. Lewis stated Chuck Peterson. Member Wheeler stated and he's okay with what you are doing. Mr. Lewis stated yes.

Mr. Knauf stated so if you go ahead and approve it and this time next year Wilson hasn't made any kind of permanent improvements, do you want him to come back to the HPC next year to do the same thing. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated I would want to see what his permanent solution is. Mr. Knauf stated so it's just for this year or this crawfish season. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated yes. Member Wheeler stated I'm okay with the deck. Mr. Knauf stated yes the deck can be permanent, but the tent will be just for the crawfish season. Mr. Lewis stated yes that is fine. Crawfish season will be over by the end of May. Actually, the permanent solution, I'm more of a food truck type person.

Vice Chair Craig-Hunt motioned to approve the temporary tent and permanent deck
Member Wheeler 2nd

Vote: 4 – 0

Motion Carries

c. Consider activities promoting and benefitting the historic districts

Mr. Knauf stated we have Hillary Gravett who is the city's social media coordinator here. She does our Facebook and Twitter and prepares flyers and designs t-shirts and all kinds of stuff. We use her for our graphics person, social media, publicity and all that kind of stuff. Maybe, just talk briefly about the kind of stuff you've done and do and then we can get into ideas as far as what we would like Hillary to do.

Ms. Gravett stated like Kelvin said I do social media and our website. One key thing is we will actually have a new website for the city as a whole coming before the end of the year. It will take about 8 months and we are working on that right now. So, we have started the process with a company called Civic Plus to update all of our websites. So, I kind of take care of that and I take care of all of our social media pages. We do Facebook and Twitter for the city as a whole and then for the Convention and Visitor's Bureau we do Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Instagram has a great feature that we are going to start using called Reels with videos and things like that. I have design programs that I work with too that I am able to make videos with. I can make all sorts of graphics. I can remove backgrounds. I can change the background on images. I can make flyers and if I don't have an answer for something on how to do it, I can certainly find the answer and absolutely figure it out. I've worked with the city for almost 5 years now so plenty of things have been thrown at me and you figure it out and it helps out with other day to day activities. Also, I work with the Convention and Visitor's Bureau in hosting events throughout the city.

Discussion on ideas:

- Promoting Yardi-Gras (flyers, social media, news)

- More promotion on Historic District and old downtown after Yardi-Gras
- Historical markers feature, map
- Approaching homeowners willing to do open homes for tours – decide on time of year
- Pictures of then/now feature
- Promote preservation to public/homeowners
- Historic churches – history on them
- Interviews – videos on social media featuring HPC board members
- Share previous news interviews
- Create Historic Districts flyer
- Christmas lights, parade, décor, tour, concert

Vice Chair Craig-Hunt motioned to adjourn

Member Pennington 2nd

Chairman Mesecher adjourned the meeting at 6:23 p.m.