

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Tuesday, August 9, 2022
Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

Alan Mesecher.....Chairman
Robin Craig-Hunt..... Vice Chair
Susan Pennington..... Member
Robert Manning.....Member
Kenneth Wheeler (arrived at 6:02 p.m.)Member

Members Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Kelvin Knauf, Director of Planning & Community Development
Wendy Lloyd, Planning Secretary
Marvin Benoit, Building Official

City Council Members Present:

None

Chairman Mesecher called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Mesecher asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the July 12, 2022, regular meeting

Vice Chair Craig-Hunt motioned
Member Manning 2nd

Vote: 4 – 0

Motion Carries

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Dorsey Robinson – 1827 W. Maple, Orange, TX: Mr. Robinson stated it’s by where we are working on this property at. The city sidewalk is damaged and torn and broken up, I guess from years of being there and I want to put that down for consideration to be redone because it takes away from the look of it.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

Consider an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness from Dorsey Robinson to make alterations to a structure located at 811 John Avenue

Mr. Knauf stated Jerry, do you want to explain.

Jerry Jones – Orange, TX: Mr. Jones stated as I said when I came in the last time when I was before you all, the half of it is actually what we are trying to do. These are my drawings that I have. This section right here is the actual building. The front of the actual building that is there now prior to the demo. This is what it would look like minus the shutters that we would add around the windows. The door would actually have to be changed due to the elevation of it. The original door that is there is a glass door but we are going to have to change it because of the elevation. This window right here we will have to change because it was a bay window but due to the elevation, the window will have to be changed in order to meet the requirements as far as the fire code. As you can see for the elevation we will have to use block cement to actually be able to build and weatherize that so that the elevation will meet the elevation of the existing structure. This is the rear of the actual 2nd half that we demo' d the building from. It will also have to be built to elevation. We will be doing a chain wall on that so the foundation will be more durable and sturdy.

Member Pennington stated so you are going to use the front half of the building and then add on to the back half. Mr. Jones stated yes the original, this is the front half here and this is what it's going to look like and this will be the 2nd half which is a duplex on the back that we will have to add to it and then will have to meet the elevation to make them come together. Member Pennington stated so the back half is going to be new construction. Mr. Jones stated yes new construction. I know it doesn't look like much now but this is the end result provided you all allow me to do that. We have to bring the elevation up so I will have to put cement blocks inside this unit to get it to the actual elevation and then back here I will do a chain wall to bring the frame together and actually have the structures together. The back part is going to be like the front part.

Member Wheeler stated what kind of parking are you going to have for the back half. Mr. Jones stated the parking as you can see has already been slabbed out. I think it's 2 parking spots per door. So, we need 8 parking spots because it's a 4-plex.

Mr. Knauf stated so the addition will come out this wall. Will this be squared off? Mr. Jones stated yes once I get my elevation, everything will meet up. If I try to change this existing part of it, so we will bring it out to meet with this because it still has to have that historical part.

Member Wheeler stated I'm looking at this drawing, so what kind of siding. It looks like brick. Mr. Jones stated the front part of that has some brick but then it has some T111 and some type of siding and then on the other side there is brick too. We can't change the look of that so I was trying to get it to as close to the original as possible. Member Manning stated so the brickwork is going to match this as close as you can get. Mr. Jones stated yes I'm going to try. Member Manning stated that's kind of from the 1960's. I know it's a lot but the main changes will be the windows, the actual siding that we have to use and due to the color scheme we will use gray and white trim. Also, on the peak I want to put a design like a Texas star or something like that.

Chairman Mesecher stated how many apartments and how big are the apartments. Mr. Jones stated they're 4 one bedroom apartments. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated is this sitting on commercial. Mr. Knauf stated yes it's zoned commercial and apartments are allowed in that zoning district. Member Wheeler stated on the front are you taking down that cinder block and replacing it. Mr. Jones stated right there on the front, I have to elevate

that so these windows have to be moved and these doors have to be moved. But I have to elevate it and that's why I'm using the brick inside this building to get my actual elevation. Member Manning stated so like on this picture here from that left hand corner. So, you keep talking about the elevation, is that like a foot and a half, 2 feet higher back there on the back side. Mr. Benoit stated no, this property is located in a special flood hazard. So, it was originally built a long time ago and the floor is too low. So, before he begins new construction and the alteration on this existing building, he's going to have to raise the floor 19.2 inches. Mr. Jones stated I thought the same thing that it would be grandfathered in but we have to bring it up. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated so the front part that has to go up too. Mr. Benoit stated yes all of it. Mr. Jones stated so what I'm going to do is put a false bottom. Mr. Knauf stated and from the exterior you won't notice anything. Inside you will have short rooms, the ceiling is going to appear short on the inside. Mr. Benoit stated yes the front apartments the ceiling will only be 92 inches but you only have to have 84 inches to meet the code. On the back part, they'll make that the regular height. Mr. Jones stated and that's why the bay window and the door has to go. Member Manning stated I know you hear this from me just about every single time but taking something like that and improving it any is certainly good for the neighborhood. I think it's a great endeavor to turn that into something that is livable and attractive. Mr. Jones stated really from that monstrous stuff that was back behind, it looks a lot better.

Mr. Knauf stated but just to clarify the front brick, you're going to try to match as closely to that as possible, Jerry and this you're going to pressure wash and clean it up. Mr. Jones stated yes I have to do some more general repairs and have to meet the color scheme of gray and white. Member Manning stated the back of that is the street front, right. Mr. Knauf stated that is the 7th Street front. Mr. Benoit stated that fronts on 8th Street. Now the flat ceiling that's on there now, that flat roof is going to be gone because he'll come back and he'll actually build a gable with a 5/12 pitch roof. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated and you're with the city. Mr. Knauf stated right. He's our building official. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated ok so really once we approve this, then all the interior, the exterior, everything that then goes to the city to be inspected and everything. Mr. Benoit stated right if you approve the design and all then they come to us to get permits and start the work. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated ok then you're following through with making sure the windows and all. Mr. Benoit stated yes.

Member Wheeler stated one last question. What's going to happen with the chimney? Are you going to raise that? I don't see it on any of your drawings. Mr. Jones stated I didn't know it was a chimney. I thought it was just for looks. Mr. Robinson stated that's not a chimney. It just looks like one. It's brick like that on the inside. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated at one time it must have been a fireplace. So, you're just taking it out. Mr. Jones stated yes because I have to redo the roof and stuff too. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated what if he can't match that brick. He doesn't have to come back to us right. I would hate for him to get slowed down. So, he can choose a different brick if he wants to. Mr. Knauf stated do you want to put some restrictions on what kind of brick. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated no, I think it would be easier for you to replace it versus trying to match that. I don't know how that is in your budget though if you allowed for that but we'll do is we'll put an amendment in there so that you can replace all the brick. You don't have to even match that and that will make it easier for you. Mr. Jones stated yes put that in there. Mr. Knauf stated so they can tear that out. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated they can tear that out and replace it with new brick. Mr. Jones it will be like the brick plates. They are sections, they aren't actual brick. It's the aesthetic look. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated yes. Member Pennington stated my question is the siding is wood. Mr. Jones stated the front part is actually a mixture of brick, wood,

Hardie board. Member Pennington stated I just want to know that it's not vinyl siding. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated these look to be all brick. Is that how you plan on doing it? Mr. Jones stated it's not actually brick. It's the aesthetic brick. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated right it's like a faux brick. Color-wise that will be what? Mr. Jones stated I would go back with the actual scheme of grays and white. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated ok. Chairman Mesecher stated and the gable is going to be filled in with what. Mr. Jones stated batten board. Mr. Knauf stated so on the faux brick, what color was that going to be. Mr. Jones stated I hadn't really look. The white is the trim. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated I think the grays or charcoals will be fine. Mr. Knauf stated but you're good with that. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated yes.

Member Manning motioned to approve with the amendment of faux brick

Vice Chair Craig-Hunt 2nd

Vote: 5 – 0

Motion Carries

Consider an application from C.W. Crawford for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the primary structure at 502 John Avenue

Rev. C.W. Crawford – 512 W. John, Orange, TX: Mr. Crawford stated we had great plans for that building. I'm hoping I can preserve some of that wood.

Chairman Mesecher asked for any discussion. None was made.

Member Pennington motioned to approve COA

Member Manning 2nd

Vote: 5 – 0

Motion Carries

Ramona Muhammad – Beaumont, TX: Ms. Muhammad stated I'm member of Rev. Crawford's church. I actually just recently joined the church. I'm an educator and also pursuing a law degree. As a member of this church, I'm proud to be a part of a historically black church and where it is located so close to where Dannarriah Finley lived. She actually lived across the street. I was reading in your budget plans, there was 13 million dollars that was going out and possibly 5 million that would be given out to help if we had some recommendations for funding. What we would like to see is, I have a vision here. It's the Dannarriah Finley Life Center or Family Life Center as a part of the church. The vision statement is to invest in the future of Orange, Texas, by placing our youth on our shoulders to help them attain higher goals. Our mission statement is to introduce measures for better safety and encourage engagement in activities that promote emotional, physical, social, and mental health in our community. Our core values are right actions, responsibility, and accountability. We want to offer some service programs like recreational opportunities, community gardening, boys and girls training in life skills and safety, home schooling assistance, early entrepreneurship development, and financial management. Considering wear, it is and the history behind the first school and I've notice there's people walking back and forth in the neighborhood and just want to reach out to those people and kind of go back to normal where you saw kids playing in the street and have the church available as a resource as well as have a potential building. Community is an extended family with diverse skills, talents, hopes, dreams, and of various faiths, including the

election of self-reliance with no religious affiliation. Regardless the dynamics, everyone in the community needs something only a neighbor can provide – peace, safety, and productivity. It is never the choice of a community to be victimized and be surrounded by unsafe activities and practices. The elderly would love to enjoy the sanctuary of their homes without their homes becoming a prison. Parents of youth would love to see their children be children without becoming victims of intentional and unintentional violence. Services in the community should be available to residents through developing the entrepreneurial spirit of our youth – first through volunteering. So basically, being able to coordinate volunteers to give us some of their time. We have people that are eager and willing. I just wanted to put that out into the atmosphere and let you all breathe it in and pray about it. But considering it's been a long time for Dannarriah and so many others I'm sure. Just in honor of her and the fact that she was from right across the street. If the kids have nothing else, if we could get this building possibly and we can go back to educating. There's also room for gardening. We can have everything they need where they can be self-sufficient. Take a person, teach them to fish and they learn to eat. But if you bring them the fish they just eat the fish. So, we just want to grow with the kids, take them on our shoulders. Like I said, I'm an educator myself and I see the need. As I get familiar with Orange, I look forward to whatever we can do in that community. I hope you can take that in to consideration. I know you can't comment on it.

Mr. Crawford stated not only are we doing the demolition but we are also looking for construction especially for our young people of the future. I'm determined that the United States is a great place. Thank you all so much.

Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated Kelvin, is there a way to get her the information on the process to try to bring that forward her vision. What does she need to do with her vision now to go to the next step? Mr. Knauf stated we will find out and let you know what that next step to. We have Rev. Crawford's email and we will find out. I'm not familiar with that. I know the 13 million, the city is planning on using that for water and sewer improvements. Ms. Muhammad stated the 5 million was towards the flooded area. Mr. Knauf stated yes that doesn't come through us. We will try to find out and get back with you. That's all handled over at city hall.

Member Wheeler stated I appreciate as I live in the historic district having a good neighbor.

Receive an update on solar panels in the historic districts

Mr. Knauf stated the council meeting a few weeks ago, we talked about and the city attorney looked at it and in his opinion the city doesn't have the authority to deny a certificate of appropriateness for solar panels in the historic districts because of the state legislation. What we are going to do is just see if that can be corrected in the next legislature starting January 1st. The legislature just loves meddling in local affairs and they mess it up. At the last legislature even, some city officials were testifying on a bill and the legislatures looked at them and asked what are you even doing here. That's just the attitude of the legislature towards cities now.

Member Wheeler stated is there a municipal league or group that can actually help with this or lobby for this. Mr. Knauf stated well the Texas Municipal League which we are a member, they will monitor the legislation and testify. Member Wheeler stated I would certainly like to speak with some of the other historical districts in different municipalities and find out maybe jointly lobbying for this. Vice Chair Craig-Hunt stated is it ok for us to contact other cities and just get information. Mr. Knauf stated yes that's ok.

Member Pennington motioned to adjourn
Member Wheeler 2nd
Chairman Mesecher adjourned the meeting at 6:41 p.m.