

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING
NOVEMBER 19, 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brad Gamblin, Chairman
Martha Bireda, Sushila Cherian,
Donna Peterman, Julie Price,
Michael Wooster

MEMBERS ABSENT: Valerie Colbert

OTHERS PRESENT: Mitchell Austin, Chief Planner

CALL TO ORDER/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mr. Gamblin called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
- A. Roll Call
- B. Next Scheduled Meeting
- 1. December 15, 2020

CITIZENS COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

- None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. October 22, 2020
- Ms. Peterman MOVED, Mr. Wooster SECONDED approval of the October 22, 2020, minutes. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. CA-29-2020 - 362 Berry Street - Certificate of Appropriateness - Information Only - New Home
- Mr. Mitchell Austin, Chief Planner, briefly reviewed the information for CA-29-2020, as delineated in the agenda material, noting the subject property was the former site of a historic structure demolished earlier this year. He confirmed staff approved the request administratively, adding the property owner had attempted to rehabilitate the structure; however, same was internally damaged beyond repair.
- B. CA-30-2020 - 509 West Olympia Avenue - Certificate of Appropriateness - Information Only - Carport
- Mr. Austin briefly reviewed the information for CA-30-2020, concluding staff approved same administratively.
- C. CA-31-2020 - 212 West Virginia Avenue Unit 112 - Certificate of Appropriateness - Action Required - Signage
- Mr. Austin briefly reviewed the CA-13-2020 application, noting the structure was not listed on the Florida Master Site File; however, same was located within the boundaries

of the National Register Historic District. He stated the signage complied with size and location requirements, concluding staff recommended approval of the request.

- Ms. Cherian verified “Books, Cards, Gifts” would be the only verbiage on the sign and the building would be the new location for Copperfish Books.
- Mr. Austin opined the signage was most effective for the business given the size of the unit for same.
- Discussion ensued regarding the sign’s verbiage, with some members expressing confusion regarding the vagueness of same, particularly since the business was well known.
- Mr. Austin explained sign companies typically recommended businesses state what they offer unless they had a major marketing campaign.
- Ms. Bireda commented on the good relationship Copperfish Books had with the City, suggesting the request be approved if same had been recommended by staff.
- Ms. Cherian inquired whether an attempt was made to fit the business name on the signage.
- Mr. Austin explained the City could not regulate the sign’s content, noting the lettering was consistent with existing lettering on the building.
- Ms. Price MOVED, Ms. Bireda SECONDED to approve CA-31-2020.
- Ms. Cherian questioned if she could abstain from voting, noting she preferred to speak with the business owners regarding the anonymity of the proposed sign.
- Mr. Austin replied she could speak with them and did not need to abstain from voting.
- MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- Ms. Peterman requested the minutes reflect members were confused regarding the content of the signage.
- Ms. Cherian verified she should contact Mr. Austin if she received additional information from the business owner.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. County Centennial

1. Subcommittee Reports

- Ms. Price provided a detailed review of the information discussed at Charlotte County’s (County) Centennial Celebration meeting on October 28, 2020, noting the proclamation for same was scheduled on December 8, 2020. She stated the County was moving forward with some physical events which included travelling exhibits throughout the County, suggesting one be held at Laishley Park Community Room. She then stated the County was moving forward with street sign toppers, questioning whether Mr. Austin had been involved in same.

- Mr. Austin replied appropriate locations for same were being explored; however, there might be limitations for space due to the Historic District sign toppers.
 - Ms. Price noted additional information regarding proposed events for the County Centennial Celebration was available online. She then stated Mr. James Abraham had intended to attend the meeting this date to discuss a book regarding historic information on county residents which he was developing with Copperfish Books.
 - Ms. Cherian confirmed she could discuss same with the business owner of Copperfish Books when meeting with them.
 - Ms. Peterman suggested the Historic County Courthouse be considered for the travelling exhibit, opining the building was appropriate since it was property of the County.
 - Ms. Cherian noted she contacted the Charlotte High School's Theater Department to propose a performance which portrayed the progression of history over the past century. She indicated the department appeared to be in favor of the idea, inquiring whether she should continue to pursue same.
 - Mr. Austin stated a play from 2009 which commemorated the City's founding might be available.
 - Ms. Price noted there had been plays in front of the Historic County Courthouse.
 - Ms. Cherian added the plays would be based on specific history of the City and not based on certain trends of an era, concluding she would return with information after discussing options with the high school.
2. Historical Markers – Fishermen's Village Harborwalk
- Mr. Austin announced staff met with Ms. Patti Allen from Fishermen's Village (FV) to discuss the potential addition of six to seven locations for further proposed historic markers, noting more information would eventually be available as FV desired assistance with the content for same.
 - Ms. Peterman verified the proposed historic markers were on FV's private property. She then stated verbiage for the Ponce de Leon bust donated to the City was being revised, questioning whether same would come before the Board.
 - Mr. Austin replied affirmatively, noting inventory needed to be assessed and then members could begin to discuss what would be appropriate for the bust. He explained the donors verbally committed to assisting the City with developing appropriate text, adding the challenge was funding for same.

STAFF COMMENTS

- Mr. Austin announced staff was developing a proposal for a permit program for residential parking on the western side of the Historic District which would be presented for City Council's consideration. He then reported the update to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan would be presented to the Planning Commission at their November 2020 meeting and to City Council at their December 2020 meeting, noting the City's website contained links to view and comment on the document.
- A brief discussion ensued regarding some of the specifications and reasons for the proposed permit program.

COMMITTEE/BOARD COMMENTS

- Mr. Wooster inquired as to the decision process for approving the design of four houses developed on one lot near Trabue Avenue, particularly due to parking limitations at that location.
- Mr. Austin replied on-site parking was not required for development in the current Land Development Regulations (LDRs) for neighborhood residential zoning classifications.
- Ms. Peterman explained same was the reason the LDRs were being addressed in the City's Comprehensive and Master Plan. She then stated the Historic Punta Gorda Civic Association (HPGCA) was recently developed and would be meeting on December 2, 2020, to further discuss the LDRs.
- A brief discussion ensued regarding the details of the HPGCA.
- Mr. Gamblin then pointed out the structure at 509 Gill Street had been demolished, expressing concern regarding property owners purchasing lots and removing historic structures after claiming same was irreparable.
- Mr. Austin noted the property owners of 509 Gill Street had desired to save the structure; however, they were prepared to demolish same if required. He verified the subject location was outside the designated Historic District, confirming the demolition could be postponed for 45 days at most.
- Ms. Price confirmed the inside of the structure was deteriorated beyond repair after she had taken a tour of same.
- Ms. Cherian emphasized the Board was responsible for preserving history, noting she had a personal connection with the structure as same had a long history with the City.
- Discussion ensued regarding possible solutions for preserving historic structures, which included working with the property owner to prevent the demolitions and possible revisions to the Board bylaws to allow more authority.
- Ms. Bireda expressed desire for historic homes to be relocated to neighborhoods which had lost homes.

- Mr. Austin explained the costs and liabilities associated with same were significant.
- Ms. Cherian questioned whether the Board was helpless in preserving historic structures.
- Mr. Austin replied affirmatively from a regulatory perspective; however, members could attempt to influence the community on the importance of historic preservation. He advised members could research possible solutions for restoring structures so that same could be inhabited once again.
- Ms. Bireda inquired whether there was any assistance available for property owners.
- Mr. Austin replied in the negative, noting members could recommend same be established.
- Ms. Peterman recommended introducing Mr. Dan Sutphin, Punta Gorda Sun, to discuss and inform the public of the challenges of historic preservation.
- Mr. Gamblin agreed, verifying he would contact Mr. Sutphin regarding same.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

- None.

ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting Adjourned: 10:10 a.m.

Brad Gamblin, Chairman

Leah Pues, Recording Secretary