

The following minutes are from the Historic Commission meeting on Tuesday, November 9, 2021 in the Abita Springs Town Hall. The meeting convened at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Blicht called the meeting to order, and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners in attendance included Ron Blicht, Paul Vogt, Thad Mancil, Otto Dinkelacker, and Andre Monnot. Kristin Tortorich and Mark Fancey were also present.

Review of the minutes for the October 20, 2021 meeting were deferred to later in the meeting.

#### **Certificate of Appropriateness 22184 Level Street**

The request is to construct a new fence. The fence would be located on the side yard along Live Oak Street and along the rear yard of the property. The fence would be constructed of 4-foot high cattle wire with wooden supports. Commissioner Blicht said the Commission has approved wire fences when the wire is colored green. The applicant said that he has not seen this type of fencing available with green coating. He said vines would be planted adjacent to the fence and would eventually cover the fence with greenery.

Commissioner Dinkelacker motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Mancil seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor. Commissioner Mancil is assigned for follow up.

#### **Certificate of Appropriateness 72269 Gordon Street**

The request is to construct a new residence. The Commission reviewed the new construction checklist. The applicant noted that the drawing of the shutters on the plans is not accurate, and the shutters will be widened to cover the windows.

The applicant would like to construct a concrete porch with a brick face. Commissioner Blicht offered suggestions regarding the railings for the front of the house.

Discussion ensued regarding the slab on fill foundation proposed.

Discussion ensued regarding the use of brick on the front of homes. The applicant asked if brick can be used for areas at the rear of the house that can't be seen.

The plans also include constructing a workshop with a design similar to the house.

The applicants referenced plans to construct a house on an adjacent flag lot that would face their proposed new home. The applicants would like to construct a privacy fence – a 7-foot high cinder block wall on the side property line. Commissioner Dinkelacker said the fence proposal may need to be considered under a separate application. Commissioner Mancil reviewed the side yard fence setback requirement for privacy fences.

Commissioner Blicht reviewed the requirement that house needs to appear raised to three (3) feet above grade. Discussion ensued about the raised slab on grade construction. Commissioner Mancil said the changes needed to meet requirements will not create a striking difference in the appearance of the house.

Discussion ensued regarding the interior court. Commissioner Blicht said that additional plans are needed showing that the area will be screened.

Commissioner Monnot motioned to grant preliminary approval for the request subject to submittal of revised drawings for the left and right side elevations and the screened enclosure to be reviewed at the December 14, 2021 meeting. Commissioner Dinkelacker seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor.

**Certificate of Appropriateness 22054 12<sup>th</sup> Street**

The request is to construct a new residence and carport. The Commission reviewed the new construction checklist. Discussion ensued regarding the porch, which extends less than the required 2/3 width of the house. Commissioner Mancil said the porch makes sense based on the house design.

Commissioner Mancil motioned to approve the request with the porch as shown because of what the applicant wants to achieve given the housing style. Commissioner Dinkelacker seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor. Commissioner Dinkelacker is assigned for follow up

**Certificate of Appropriateness 71606 Leveson Street**

The request is to construct a screened in back porch addition. The Commission had questions on the design regarding the roof slope and the posts used as supports. The applicant provided a photo example of the type of structure proposed.

Commissioner Dinkelacker motioned to approve the request provided construction is in line with the photo example provided by the applicant, the dimensions are in accordance with the drawings submitted, and the roof on the addition shall match the existing roof slope. Commissioner Vogt seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor.

**Certificate of Appropriateness 72056 Cypress Street**

The request is to construct a privacy fence along the rear yard. House colors for the residence were also submitted. The fence would be six (6) feet high and would be constructed of treated wood.

Commissioner Mancil motioned to approve the fence and the proposed house colors. Commissioner Monnot seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor.

**DISCUSSION**

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes from the October 20, 2021, meeting. Commissioner Mancil motioned to accept the minutes of the October 20, 2021 meeting with a corrected date. Commissioner Vogt seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor.

**Public Comment**

Stewart Eastman said he likes the design guidelines regarding porches. The standards make houses look old-fashioned; however, the effect is lost on new residences. In whatever way the porches are being measured, the effect is lost from the street view. Commissioner Blitch said that he didn't think there should be 8-foot high porches on very wide buildings, but the Guidelines don't say anything about that.

Commissioner Blitch said he didn't know where some of the standards in the guidelines come from. He said every time the commission tries to improve the Guidelines the Town Council shoots them down. He cited clarification that the Commission wanted regarding picket fence spacing and fences on corner lots as examples.

Commissioner Blitch said ideally the standards would be proportional guidelines for porches, with the width and number of columns varying based on proportional standards.

Commissioner Blitch referenced the earlier decision to approve a smaller porch on a bungalow style house. He said the porch did not meet the width standards, but was a better-looking house as designed. He said this was a case where the five minds of the Commission together make a mutual aesthetic choice with a better outcome than merely “box-checking”.

Commissioner Mancil said it’s hard to apply a set of standards when there are many types of historic homes. Commissioner Dinkelacker noted that many bungalow style homes wouldn’t meet the steep roof pitch requirements.

The Commission discussed historic precedent in relation to various buildings and the use of brick for local commercial buildings.

Stewart Eastman asked if the Commission could stop allowing large houses with different roof angles. He questioned if this look is historic. Commissioner Dinkelacker said that there is a wide variety of floor plans available to home buyers. He said sprawling floor plans are popular and generate the different roof angles. Commissioner Blitch responded that the Commission can’t control interior floor plans or housing features at the rear of a building that can’t be seen. He said he wished the Commission could require the rear of the building look the same as the front. Commissioner Dinkelacker said that historic homes have a much clearer, simpler shape and plan.

Commissioner Blitch said a special meeting could be held to discuss improvements to the Guidelines. He referenced the Louisiana Pattern Book as a source for information regarding housing types and design proportions. He said some of the information from the book is in the Historic Guidelines, but that other proportional standards such as the width of windows and doors in historic homes could be incorporated. Commissioner Mancil said he wished the Guidelines were viewed as an inspiration to build a historic home and just not as restrictions.

Commissioner Blitch thanked Stewart Eastman for his input.

Commissioner Monnot motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Dinkelacker seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

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Kristin M. Tortorich, Planning and Zoning

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Date