

The following minutes are from the Historic Commission meeting on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 in the Abita Springs Town Hall at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Blitch called the meeting to order and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners in attendance included Ron Blitch, Otto Dinkelacker, Thad Mancil, and Andre Monnot. Commissioner Andrew Vaughan was not present. Kristin Tortorich, Jane Dufrene, and Mark Fancey were also present.

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes from the March 10, 2020 meeting. Commissioner Mancil noted that his name was misspelled. Commissioner Mancil motioned to accept the minutes of the March 10, 2020 meeting with the correction as noted. Commissioner Dinkelacker seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor.

Commissioner Blitch said that public comments or questions could be submitted online to the Town website during the first 30 minutes of the meeting and would then be received by the Commission.

71180 Minkler Street Gordon Avenue.

The request is to construct a 4-foot high wooden fence across the front of the property with an automated gate across the driveway. Commissioner Monnot motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Mancil seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor.

Discussion:

Approvals Granted During COVID-19

Commissioner Blitch said that several approvals were granted due to the extraordinary circumstances resulting from COVID-19 that prevented the commission from holding an April meeting. Approval was granted for a new sign for Pabst on Highway 59 that met the Historic Guidelines. Approval was granted for Moore for a pavilion behind a house located on Palmer Street. Approval was granted for Beck for a fence and shed on Fuller Street. The fence would be a 4-foot high wooden fence that met the Historic Guidelines.

New Application Form for Structures: Houses, Carports, Sheds

The Commission reviewed the draft application form including the checklist of required documents. The revised application includes samples of building elevations and required Google maps. Commissioner Blitch noted that the application specifies that in order to be added to the Historic Commission agenda, applications need to be submitted at least 10 days before the meeting date. He said that an administrative application fee has been reinstated. The new Certificate of Appropriateness form was attached. Commissioner Blitch noted that the form requires seven (7) days notice before final approval of construction. He said that the historic checklist has been updated, noting, for example, that that zoning information is no longer required as that is the not the purview of the Historic Commission. Commissioner Monnot commented that the sample elevation drawings in the draft form should be revised to reflect appropriate designs.

New Application Form for Non-Structural Additions: Fences and Signs

The Commission reviewed the updated form. Commissioner Blitch said that conformance with setbacks for various fence heights should be included on the form.

Historic Certificate of Appropriateness Application Fee Schedule

Commissioner Blitch said that the reinstated fee for the Certificate of Appropriateness is \$50. He noted that this is less than fees in neighboring communities. Regarding the fee schedule, Commissioner Mancil asked if

the fees are allocated for the Historic Commission. Town Clerk Janet Dufrene said that the fees currently go the General Fund, but that she would check to see if they could be allocated to the Historic Commission. She said that currently there is no specific budget item for the Historic Commission.

Corner Lot Fences

Commissioner Blitch said that fence heights are a maximum of four (4) feet in front yards extending at least 1/3 of the depth of the structure in side yards. In other side and rear yards, the maximum fence height is seven (7) feet or six (6) feet with a two (2) foot lattice at the top. Currently, there is no direction or distinction for fences on corner lots. His proposal is that for corner lots that the 1/3 building depth setback apply to fences on both street frontages. The purpose for the proposal is that the taller fences permitted in side and rear yards should not be located along street frontages.

Commissioners Monnot and Mancil endorse the change but expressed concern regarding corner lots with rear yards on Highway 59. Commissioner Blitch suggested identifying how many lots have rear yards on major streets such as highway 59.

Janet Dufrene said she would prepare the revision for review at the next Commission meeting and would identify the process to amend the regulation.

Historic Guidelines

Commission Blitch said that the Historic Guidelines require a maximum depth for porches of seven (7) feet and porches must extend across 2/3 of the width of the building facade. He said that the seven (7) foot standard is not efficient due the standard 8-foot length for lumber and hard to manage for tables, chairs, etc.. He recommends that an 8-foot standard be adopted.

Commissioner Dinkelacker asked how the front yard is determined. Commission Blitch said that the Town attorney has determined that the front yard is measured from the front building wall, not the porch. Commissioner Dinkelacker asked if the front porch is used to determine the 1/3 building depth setback for fences. Commissioner Blitch said that an interpretation is needed from the Town attorney regarding how the setback is measured.

Commissioner Mancil said that it needs to be specified that the 7-foot requirement is a maximum and that smaller porches are allowed. He said the requirement that porches extend 2/3 of the way across the building facade is good housekeeping, but historic precedent needs to be open for consideration. He said that some smaller box-like homes wind up with a disproportionately large porch. Commissioner Blitch noted that the larger depth could be encouraged. He noted the importance of looking at the proportion between column bays to maintain a vertical appearance.

Commissioner Blitch asked if any online public comments had been received during the meeting. No comments were received.

Commissioner Dinkelacker motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mancil seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Janet N. Dufrene, Town Clerk

Date