

The following minutes are from the Historic Commission meeting on Tuesday, February 14, 2023, in the Abita Springs Town Hall. The meeting convened at 6:01 p.m.

Commission Chairman Mancil called the meeting to order. Commissioner Blitch led the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners in attendance included Andre Monnot, Ron Blitch, Thad Mancil, and Paul Vogt. Otto Dinkelacker was absent. Kristin Tortorich and Heather Hockman were also present.

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes from the January 10, 2023, meeting. Commissioner Blitch motioned to accept the minutes of the January 10, 2023, meeting as submitted. Commissioner Monnot seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor.

Certificate of Appropriateness 22109 Level Street

The application is for Citizens Bank and Trust to replace and repaint porch railings and a ramp. The current railings are cross railings. The application proposes a picket railing like that of the Ochsner building and the pavilion at the park. The Commissioners stated that the building has been in existence for approximately 40 years and has a very specific design element that would be eliminated if allowed to switch to the vertical railings. Commission Chairman Mancil said it would be a rare rejection, but the applicants would be allowed an appeal if they so choose. Commissioner Blitch stated the railings could be replaced in kind since they are not required by code or could even be removed.

Stewart Eastman stated the Historic Commission should follow the guidelines and not make decisions solely off their opinions. He said he felt both the existing and the proposed railings were appropriate.

Commissioner Monnot motioned to allow replacement of the railings in kind or to allow for removal of the porch railings. Commissioner Blitch seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Assigned to Commissioner Mancil.

Certificate of Appropriateness 22255 Main Street

The application is for a request for an addition to a bedroom on the back left corner of the house.

Commissioner Blitch said he felt the addition was consistent with the character of the house and motioned for approval of the application as submitted. Commissioner Monnot seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Assigned to Commissioner Blitch.

Certificate of Appropriateness 22014 2nd Street

The application is for enclosing the back porch and adding metal handrails for the rear and side entry.

Commissioner Mancil said this house has been reviewed and approved before, and it is already assigned to him. Kristin Tortorich stated the previous application was to remove the porch, while this application is now to enclose the porch. Commissioner Blitch said the application is in character with the historic house, is the way they like to see porches enclosed because you can still see the structure, and the roof rafter tails are the same. **Commissioner Blitch motioned to approve the application with the note to submit the missing handrails for separate approval. Commissioner Monnot seconded the motion. All voted in favor. This application is remaining assigned to Commissioner Mancil.**

Certificate of Appropriateness 22444 Hwy 435

The application is for a roof replacement for the existing metal roof at the Post Office. Commission Chair Mancil said the roof doesn't appear to be an in-kind replacement. Commissioner Blitch stated generally it is appropriate, but because the application doesn't include manufacturer specs it is hard to tell. The Commission will need more information.

Commissioner Vogt motioned to approve the application with additional information. Commissioner Blitch seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Assigned to Commissioner Blitch.

Discussion

Possible changes to Historic Guidelines regarding lattice for fencing

Commission Chairman Mancil said lattice on top of fencing was discussed at the last meeting. He said the standard cross pattern lattice isn't preferable and doesn't have historical precedence. The Commission reviewed a proposed draft of new guidelines and entertained ideas for wording to address the options for the 2' section above the 6' height on an 8' tall fence. Discussion ensued on opacity versus openness or airflow. It was stated that the fencing was meant to be broken up to keep it from being a solid 8' wall, but simply turning the boards in the top 2' horizontally wasn't acceptable either. The Commission ultimately came to a conclusion that board placement in the top section must allow for airflow, no matter which direction the boards are turned.

Kristin Tortorich said that she would work on the language and the Commission could review the edited draft at the next meeting. If they approve the draft, then a Public Hearing would be scheduled.

Commissioner Blitch recommended the picket fences, columns, and porch railings sections of the guidelines also be addressed.

Commissioner Monnot stated he thought the draft should read "Lattice Examples" instead of "Lattice Options" to leave it more open, rather than suggesting applicants need to pick from the list provided in the guidelines.

Public Comment

Stewart Eastman said he feels very strongly that the Historic Commission is supposed to be looking at Historic items, not just making decisions for the way they like things. He also said he researched fencing examples, and he doesn't believe the combination fence dates back before 1912.

Announcements

Commissioner Monnot motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Blitch seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

Kristin M. Tortorich, Planning and Zoning

Date