

The following minutes are from the Historic Commission meeting on Tuesday, July 9, 2024, in the Abita Springs Town Hall. The meeting convened at 6:00 P.M.

Commission Vice Chairman Andre Monnot called the meeting to order. Commissioner Blitch led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioners Paul Vogt, Ron Blitch, Andre Monnot, and Alissa Whitney were present. Commissioner Otto Dinkelacker was absent. Kristin Tortorich and Heather Hockman were also present.

AGENDA MODIFICATION

Commissioner Blitch motioned to add a discussion item for the enforcement of the additional structures on properties that should have Historic Commission approval. Commissioner Vogt seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously approved.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

The Commissioners were provided with the minutes from the June 11, 2024, meeting.

Commissioner Blitch motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Commissioner Whitney seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

CONSIDER CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS 22107 Hwy 36, Suite B, Runaway Cajun Trading Post

The application is for a sign change for a new business. The sign will have a similar shape and size as the existing sign. The applicant stated the sign will have vinyl laminate and the lighting will remain the same, 2 spotlights with LED bulbs. Commissioner Blitch said the sign meets the guidelines.

Commissioner Blitch motioned to approve the application as submitted. Commissioner Whitney seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

CONSIDER CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS 22099 Hwy 36, BesTeas

The application is to use the existing sign but redo the graphics for the new business. Commissioner Blitch asked about lighting. The applicant stated there would be none. Commissioner Monnot noted the same black background as the existing sign. Commissioner Blitch said the original sign met all the guidelines.

Commissioner Blitch motioned to approve the application as submitted. Commissioner Whitney seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

A photo update was provided for the following address:

71350 St. Charles Street

The new roof was shown.

DISCUSSION

22338 Level Street- Addition

Lovelle Blitch, realtor for potential buyers of the property, represented the applicants. Ms. Blitch explained the buyers propose a modification of the left side of the house. She explained the screened porch would be extended and enclosed to create an en suite bedroom and bathroom for the mother. Ms. Blitch said the front porch would be extended across the front of the addition and that the contract is contingent on preliminary approval of the Historic Commission.

Commission Vice Chairman Monnot asked staff if there is an option for a conditional approval. Kristin Tortorich said there isn't an option for conditional approval. Commission Vice Chairman Monnot stated they could discuss the guidelines and potential compliance, but a preliminary approval could not be granted.

Lovelle Blitch said she understood the applicants would need to get sketches made with more details to present at the next Historic Commission meeting, after the closing, and they have already selected a contractor who is knowledgeable about the building process in Abita Springs. Ms. Blitch then asked for the Commission to discuss and see if there are any issues with the plan as presented at this point.

Kristin Tortorich explained the plan that was submitted extended the width of the house, making the front porch no longer in compliance with the two-thirds porch requirement, so the plan was modified to extend the front porch to be compliant. Both plans were shown.

Commissioner Blitch then said the screen porch would be internal space converted to a room and expanded toward the back of the house and come to the front to line up with the face of the porch wall and the porch would be continued across and the high roof would continue across the same. Commissioner Blitch then said it is as though the side porch is being taken down and the house is being extended to the left with more porch and more roof, and those are the drawing they would need to see.

Kristin Tortorich agreed that was her understanding as well.

Lovelle Blitch said the second stairwell that goes to the screened porch would be eliminated so it would not be misleading as to providing the appearance of a multi-family residence, but they would like to have a door off of the porch instead of a window.

Commissioner Blitch asked if there is a zoning issue with a suite within a suite. Kristin Tortorich said it would be considered single-family as long as there was only one kitchen and that two master suites are allowed. Ms. Tortorich said the kitchenette mentioned on the application is no longer valid due to only the single kitchen being allowed. Kristin Tortorich reminded the Commission the item is only for discussion to see if there are any potential issues with it as it is presented.

Commissioner Monnot said the back may be tricky but clarified it isn't a Historic compliance issue, rather a framing issue. Commissioner Blitch mentioned it kicks back and would be a different slope due to the way it extends. Kristin Tortorich confirmed with Ms. Blitch that architectural drawings will be submitted when the Certificate of Appropriateness application is submitted.

Commissioner Blitch mentioned the house is fairly new and asked if the Planning & Zoning office would have a copy of the building plans. Kristin Tortorich said they are likely on file, and if so, suggested the buyers work with the same architect so they weren't starting from scratch.

Commissioner Blitch stated the next step would be to complete the application by presenting drawings of the elevations.

Signs in the Historic District

Commissioner Blitch said there is a process to approve temporary signs for 45 days at a time and that signs and banners are not discouraged, but there is a process that needs to be followed. Commissioner Blitch said the banners at Abita Full Serve have been up for longer than the allowed time and were not approved. Commissioner Blitch wanted to make a motion on the issue. Commission Vice Chair Monnot asked staff about the procedure for such an item. Kristin Tortorich said it would be a statement of the Commission that she would forward to the administration.

Commissioner Blitch motioned the following: The Historic Commission requests the Town enforce the ordinance related to temporary signs and that the owners go through the approval process. Commissioner Whitney seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Temporary Structures in the Historic District

Commissioner Blitch said there are many temporary structures in the Historic District, such as aluminum and canvas car canopies, that are not allowed and there has not been enforcement. Commissioner Blitch said he thought another motion should be made to ask the Town to enforce the guidelines. Kristin Tortorich presented a form on the website that is available to report Historic Guideline violations. Ms. Tortorich said it is important that reports are made through this form to allow a written record of the date of the first notification of the violation, and it gets the report directly to the Marshal and her to notify the Town of the issue. The form can be found at <https://www.townofabitasprings.com/historiccommission>.

Commissioner Blitch motioned the following: The Historic Commission requests the Town enforce the ordinance related to temporary structures in the Historic District. Commissioner Whitney seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

OPEN COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no public comments or announcements.

Commissioner Blitch motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Whitney seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:22 P.M.

Kristin Tortorich, Planning & Zoning Director

Date