

# MINUTES

## Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission

Valdosta City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room  
300 North Lee Street, Valdosta, Georgia

May 3, 2021 5:30 p.m.

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Alex Alvarez  
Ms. Sandie Burkett  
Mr. Tommy Crane

Ms. Sally Querin  
Dr. Harry Hamm  
Ms. Laura Yale

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Celine Gladwin

### STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Lauren Hurley  
Mr. Matt Martin

### VISITORS PRESENT

Greg Moore  
Steve Miller  
Vickie Bush  
Ellen Hill  
Melani Parlor  
Valerie Ford

Gwen Sommers  
Alfred Willis  
Vickie Everitte  
Shawn Williams  
Willencia Greene

### I. Call to Order and Determination of Quorum

After troubleshooting some technology issues by staff, the meeting was called to order at 5:53 pm by Chairman Alvarez. It was determined that a quorum of members was present. Chairman Alvarez thanked everyone for coming and reminded the audience members to please sign the attendance register.

### II. Review and Approval of Minutes

The April 5, 2021 draft minutes were reviewed by the Board and there were 3 minor corrections noted. Mr. Crane made a motion to approve the minutes, with the corrections as stipulated. Ms. Yale seconded the motion and it was called and carried unanimously (5-0 vote).

### III. Consideration of Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Applications

Chairman Alvarez stated there were no Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications scheduled for public hearing this month.

### IV. Consent Agenda

Board members reviewed the Administrative Reviews for the month of April.

### V. Other Business

- (A) **HPC-2018-60-** McKey building "cornice" replacement- Matt Martin presented a refresher on the 2018 case when the issue of the cornice was first presented to HPC. The church had multiple options to repair or replace the damaged cornice on the building. Because of the size and location of the large feature, the process has taken until now due to the great expense of the project and finding a feasible alternative as well as efforts to raise funds. The church found a viable option that will provide a slightly different design with lighter weight material that is more cost efficient. Pictures of the cornice and architecture of the building were presented to HPC highlighting the pattern of the old cornice and dimensions. The photos showed the damage from the pigeons and when there were parts of the cornice remaining. There were also photos depicting the building without the cornice to show the difference in appearance of the building. The proposed cornice is the exact same design just slightly smaller in dimensions. The church has found a manufacturer (The Foam Factory) that produces 3 dimensional structures out of synthetic

material. Pictures and CAD drawings are presented to HPC for approval of the vendor and material to reproduce the cornice. Greg Moore presented a sample of the proposed cornice and explained the process of putting the cornice up in 8 to 10 foot sections that could be erected as soon as May 12 and take 4 days to install. Greg then explained that the church was pursuing having the cornice paid for through insurance but were turned down. Storms came through and loosened up the existing cornice. 2 years ago, a 12 foot long section had to be removed by the fire department. Later the church pulled a permit to take down the cornice when they realized that the estimated cost of removal was \$25,000 and no one was available to do it "meaning no one wanted to do it". Greg Moore took it down with 2 other gentlemen and a 100 foot lift. They filled 4 green roll-off dumpsters of guano with the cornice. Guano is acidic and ate through the metal which was replaced with sheet metal over the years. A buyer has presented for the building and the main contingency on the sale is that the church complete the cornice before the sale is finalized. The proposed product has a lifetime of 40 to 60 years. The approval would be specifically to replace instead of repair of the original cornice. Dr. Hamm and other board members thanked the church members for looking into the project and coming up with a strong solution. The recommendation by staff is to approve the replacement of the cornice with the proposed materials. Dr. Hamm motioned to approve the proposed cornice with the modified design. Sandie Burkett seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (6-0 vote).

**(B) Middle Street Redevelopment-** proposed modular home, future "Tiny House" Village- Matt Martin presented on what Middle Street looks like today. Middle Street runs parallel between Magnolia and JL Lomax and is between York and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. It consists of a 30 foot paved alley. It can be accessed by York and the street is an isolated one way street. There used to be many small houses but they have all vanished over the years. The majority of the area is zoned single-family R-6 with small lot patterns. All lots are nonconforming on Middle and are less than 6000 square feet. Aerial imagery from 2007 versus more recent aerial imagery shows that the houses are gone. It has been reported that these houses were practice burn sites for the fire department. Mr. Martin presented pictures of houses that remain on 3<sup>rd</sup> avenue that are examples of small houses similar to what would have been there in the past. The floor plan that Vicki Bush has shared is similar to the homes that existed on Middle Street in the past with differences in materials. Vicki Bush is the owner of the property on Middle Street and presents her ideas to HPC. The proposed house will be lifted up off of the ground with masonry around the bottom. It will not include a garage but is planned for the future. She wants the houses on Middle Street to look like a smaller version of River Street. The exterior wood walls will be vertical panels approved to last 50 years. Structurally, the modular buildings are built just like regular homes except that they do not have the windows that are big enough for fire codes and safety in the case of an emergency. The proposed houses would be 900 heated square feet. Mrs. Bush wants to provide small housing for elderly citizens. Mrs. Bush envisions a manicured neighborhood for people who need a small living space. Mr. Martin points out that Mrs. Bush is looking for feedback on the first property so that she can then proceed with HPC approval for the rest of the street. The first home will be a starter home and lead as an example for the future projects on Middle Street. Mr. Crane asked about wheelchair ramps for the homes if they are purported to be used by elderly individuals. Mrs. Bush stated that there would be availability or ramps on the sides of the homes. The homes will be made at a factory and then be brought in and set on piers. These homes are not built the same as mobile homes. Mrs. Bush owns the one lot on Middle Street but is reaching out to the neighboring property owners to purchase the adjacent properties. Mrs. Bush would like to enforce a Home Owners Association for the neighborhood. Mrs. Querin suggested that Mrs. Bush secure the land before she starts her planned development. Mrs. Bush stated that she wants to start with the first home and then branch out. Mrs. Bush stated that she is leaning towards a floor plan that is 800 square feet for the other homes in her future development. Dr. Hamm pointed out the difference in the sketches of the home presented to HPC and the photo of the modular home and stated that the drawing looks like a home and the photo looks like a shed. It would not take a lot to make the shed photo to look like the small home. Dr. Hamm pointed out as well that there are other tiny house plans being discussed around the Salvation Army and that he is concerned about giving permission for 1 person housing in the Historic areas in the city. Mrs. Bush explained the difference between transient housing and the permanent housing that she wants to provide to the community. Mrs. Bush stated that she would like to rent or sell the homes based on the needs of the residents. Mr. Martin stated that Mrs.

Bush is presenting to HPC because this is her starting point and she will be doing a new construction in a local historic district so she will be needing the approval of the HPC members. She would like feedback on what is possible or recommendations for a tiny house community in a Historic setting. The small and isolated street would be suitable for tiny houses but the discussion around tiny homes in the historic district that follow the design guidelines has never been breached before. Mrs. Yale encouraged Mrs. Bush to follow her own appropriate guidelines based on zoning setbacks for how she would like the homes to appear because HPC is not persuading anyone to build a new construction to replicate historic homes that would have been there. Mrs. Bush would like all of the houses to have a porch and match the older homes in the area. Discussions of the pitch of the roof, materials for the exterior walls and shape of the home are all considered during the meeting. Dr. Hamm pointed out that some of the material being used in the photos are plywood type materials that are not approved for sheds based the Historic Preservation guidelines. Dr. Hamm stated that standards are there and wanted to make sure that Mrs. Bush understands the standards of HPC and Permits and Inspections. Mrs. Yale encouraged Mrs. Bush to keep going with her project and provide HPC with proof of the quality of her home to then proceed with the planned development portion once the one house is completed. Mrs. Querin suggested to Mrs. Bush that she look into the Land Bank in the case that the properties are tied up with multiple owners. Mr. Martin then put out the idea about what the utility infrastructure looks like for the future plans. HPC wished Mrs. Bush good luck and thanked her for presenting her idea to the group.

**(C) Expansion of Local Historic District Boundaries:** continued from last month-Mrs. Gwen Summers-Redwine spoke as the representative for the Valdosta Black Heritage Group to take steps toward including the South historic district side of Valdosta included in the local historic district. Mrs. Redwine's group met the previous Saturday to agree on what is considered historic and contributing. Dr. Al Willis is leading the group through with technical information with notes collecting data from the tour that the group took together around the south side of town. Dr. Willis introduced himself to HPC as an architectural historian and a consultant in architectural history. He stated that he is honored to be working with the Valdosta Black Heritage Group on their project of including the south side of town included into the local historic district. Dr. Willis stated that parts of the south side of town that were overlooked from a historic standpoint should be taken into consideration now. His observations include points regarding diversity of the types of homes and architecture in the south side of town. He states that the guidelines used by Historic Preservation Committee are not in line with the historic relevance of the south side of town because of visual incoherence which can be understood by looking at the complicated historical mechanisms that result in what is there now. He commented that there are significant and remarkable contributing structures that should be considered by the community. He listed notable architects who were prominent in Valdosta and stated that their works are located in the South side of town as well. He remarked that there is an example of a Freedman shanty that still exists on the South side of town. He stated the although the National Registry District categorizes the south side of town as the epitome of African American culture in Valdosta, it is certainly not the only part of town that is significant to the African American culture. He said "It should not be ghettoized in terms of Historic Preservation." He stated that currently it is an example of extreme diversity which has happened over the past century and a half. Mrs. Redwine stated that partnering with Dr. Willis and surveying the area is the first step in including the West side of town and also the Black Commercial District. The group is starting with the South side. Dr. Hamm stated that Harold Bennett was the City Councilman who started HPC and he had no support from the community, when the rules came into effect regarding guidelines for historic preservation, citizens were upset because they did not want to have restrictions on what could or could not be done to their property. His intentions were to warn the public in the room regarding what is acceptable and not acceptable when making changes to one's property. He said, "There are going to be battles from here on because of the diversity in the area." Dr. Willis elaborated on the extent of historical significance of decisions made leading to the stark difference in the appearance of the various sides of town. He reinforced the idea of educating the public about historic preservation.

**(D) Other Business: Updates-**

**A) Demolition by neglect properties-** No updates

- B) **Re-Survey of Local Historic District (grant application status)**- still waiting on State for a couple of months
- C) **Historic Preservation Planner**- Recruitment Status- Hired Jeff Brammer
- D) **James Horton recognition**- Laura is to plan a dinner at 306 North and Celine will arrange the gift for James

VI. New Business

(A) New business from the floor.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Chairman Alvarez called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Yale then made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Crane seconded the motion and it was called and carried unanimously (6-0 vote). The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 pm.

HPC Chairman C. Alvarez

Date 7/14/21