

# MINUTES

## Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission

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

**May 2, 2022 5:30 p.m.**

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Alex Alvarez  
Ms. Celine Gladwin  
Dr. Harry Hamm  
Ms. Laura Yale  
Mr. Tommy Crane

Ms. Sally Querin

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Sandie Burkett

### STAFF PRESENT

Mr. Jeff Brammer  
Ms. Lauren Hurley  
Mr. Matt Martin

### VISITORS PRESENT

Chris LaMontagne  
Michael Bourgoin  
Avery Walden  
Sara Evans  
Vickie Everitte

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

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman Alex Alvarez. It was determined that a quorum of members was present. Dr. Alvarez thanked everyone for coming and reminded audience members to sign the attendance register.

### II. Review and Approval of Minutes

The April 4, 2022, draft minutes were reviewed by the Board. Ms. Gladwin made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Crane seconded the motion, and it was called and carried unanimously (4-0 vote).

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

- A. HPC-2022-19 — 202 East Alden Avenue:** Mr. Brammer presented the case. The petitioner requests approval to replace a formerly existing front stoop porch with a new front stoop porch. This project was tabled last month and has been revised with a new porch design. The applicant also included a new driveway design to be reviewed. The property is a one-story, minimal traditional American Small House. New porch plans were provided to the commission. The scalloped trim detailing has been reincorporated. There is considerably less brick. The sides are open with lattice. The columns have also been reintroduced. There are 4 columns in the front. Two in the back, attached to structural brick, which is attached to the residence. The second element of the project is a new driveway. The applicant would like to install a wider, curvilinear driveway, which veers prominently into the center of the front yard. The materials are exposed aggregate concrete, brick band around the perimeter, and brick pavers in the apron and in front of the new porch.

Staff recommends approval of the redesigned front stoop porch. As for the driveway, staff recommends disapproval of the design as proposed. The curvilinear design through the middle of the front yard conflicts with the guidelines. Staff believes the design used on the neighboring property to the east could be a good template.

The applicant, Avery Walden, approached the lectern. He thanked staff for the recommendation for the porch. He stated that the driveway design is an attempt to add diversity in the appearance of the houses on the street. The neighboring property has a straight driveway, and it would look redundant.

He said that there are many curvilinear driveways in the neighborhood. He would also like to accommodate more parking. Ms. Gladwin asked if he is attempting to connect to the property next to this property. Mr. Walden stated that nothing would connect. Ms. Querin asked if the turning radius was adequate.

With no further questions for the applicant, the commission discussed. Ms. Gladwin stated that she agrees with the staff recommendation regarding the driveway as it reflects what was there before. She thanked Mr. Walden for providing a design that incorporates the historic qualities of the original porch. Mr. Walden stated that the driveway has a plan B that is identical to the property to the East. That would include a parking spot in front of the house. Ms. Querin suggested keeping a parking pad at the front of the house so that drivers do not have to back straight out of a straight driveway into E. Alden Avenue. Dr. Hamm asked if the driveway was to be twice as wide because it is leading up to a 2-car garage. Mr. Walden stated that it is not being made twice as wide, but that it will be widened at the carport behind the pine tree. Mr. Walden stated that the pine tree will have to be removed. Ms. Gladwin made the motion to approve the revised front stoop as presented and approve a revised driveway so that it is aligned with the straight driveway and allow an additional space for 1 car without obstructing the front of the house and maintain the current curb cut. Mr. Crane seconded the motion. The vote passed (5-0 vote).

- B. HPC-2022-20—113 Second Avenue:** Mr. Brammer presented the case. The petitioner requests approval to construct a new, one-story, four-bedroom house of 1,320 square feet. The specifics of the proposed construction include concrete slab foundation, frame construction, lapped fiber cement siding, architectural shingles on the roof, dual-pane vinyl windows, and a concrete driveway.

Staff acknowledges that the project largely complies with district design guidelines. The Placement, Scale & Proportion, and Design of the new residence meet many compatibility considerations for the district. Some materials comply, some don't. e.g., vinyl windows, uncovered foundation, and the front yard driveway. But staff acknowledges the similarities between this and previously approved similar projects. Staff recommends approval as proposed.

Chris LaMontagne, from Habitat for Humanity, spoke in support of the application. He reiterated basic details of the project. Dr. Hamm asked him if the existing fence would remain. Mr. LaMontagne stated that the wooden fence is on the adjacent property. Michael Bourgoin, also with Habitat for Humanity, stated that he had spoken with the neighbor, and they are willing to fix up the fence and are aware that it is outside of their property boundaries. Ms. Gladwin asked if adding the fourth bedroom affects the front of the house. Mr. LaMontagne stated that it makes the front porch 2 feet shallower, from 8 feet deep to 6 feet deep. Dr. Hamm asked how the cost of materials has impacted the costs of building a Habitat house. Mr. LaMontagne stated that the costs have gone up substantially.

There was no one else in support or opposition. Dr. Hamm made a motion to approve the application as presented. Ms. Gladwin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0 vote). Ms. Querin asked if Habitat works with the Land Bank. Mr. LaMontagne stated that he has been to several meetings with the Land Bank Authority, and that they are in between directors and restructuring their funding source. He stated that he is involved, and it is in Habitat's best interest that he is.

#### **IV. Consideration of Administrative Review and Approvals**

Board members reviewed the Administrative Reviews for the month of April with no questions.

#### **V. Other Business**

- (A) 2022 Valdosta Preservation Awards Certification** — Mr. Brammer stated that due to a lack of complete or eligible applications, the 2022 awards have been cancelled.

**(B) Local Historic District Survey Update (Phase II)** – Mr. Brammer stated that the comments have been sent in and JMT has responded and would take everything under advisement. They recognized that the photography is not up to standards and promised that they would select different images and Photoshop others. Mr. Brammer stated that the second draft should address those issues. Ms. Yale asked if JMT has considered retaking the photos, as Photoshop can only do so much. Mr. Brammer stated that JMT gave no response to his inquiry about retaking the photos. Mr. Brammer stated that if that if the photos are still bad, then he could supply them with photos, but that he would have to go out and retake the photos himself. The commission agreed that he should not have to do that. Mr. Brammer stated that years from now, we would rather have good photos than not. He said JMT staff seemed inexperienced when they met with City staff. When the staff from JMT came down to do the survey, Mr. Brammer and Matt Martin told them that staff is willing to help in any way, but never heard from them again until staff received the first version of the survey.

Ms. Gladwin asked if the state provided comments on the survey. Mr. Brammer said that the state has not replied to any of the recent correspondence. Mr. Brammer stated that he would assume that he is the only person who has submitted comments. Dr. Alvarez asked how much of JMT has been paid out so far. Mr. Brammer stated that JMT has received half of the payment so far. Dr. Alvarez suggested leveraging final payment until the desired final survey is complete. Ms. Querin stated that the commission are stewards of the taxpayers' dollars, and it is unacceptable for this to be the type of work submitted by a professional firm. She suggested the commission write a letter to the company expressing their disappointment. Ms. Gladwin stated that the company received the comments with clear guidelines about the City's expectations. She suggested not doing more until receiving the second draft. Mr. Brammer said that he would forward the 400 or so comments and the letter that he submitted to JMT so that the commission is aware.

**(C) Training/Workshop Update** – Mr. Brammer reported that 3 commissioners came on Wednesday for the HPD training sessions. Mr. Brammer has requested certificates for the training and the PowerPoints with the recordings for the other commissioners to complete. Ms. Querin stated she has already received the link. Mr. Crane said he has, too. Dr. Hamm thanked Mr. Brammer for setting up the training. The other commissioners can complete the training on their own at any time.

**(D) Follow-Up Discussion — HPC-2022-21 (200-202 East College Street)** — Dr. Alvarez asked to get feedback from the commission and share details that may not have been shared last meeting as he was out of town. He reminded the commission of the requested demolition last year and what was recommended at that time, which was renovating the fraternity house and adding a residence to 202 E. College. He stated that they have considered making the structure on 202 E. College into a storage space or possibly a living space with a garage underneath, but what still needs to be determined is how to treat this structure. He exhibited photos of the structure inside and out, depicting damage and providing information on how the space functioned. He stated that the roof is the first situation that needs to be addressed. He said everything in the house is sagging. He detailed the damage to the commission. He stated that he and Daniel Schert took on this property because Daniel's in-laws live next door and the Delta Ki house has been a blight to the block. He stated that once they started work on the properties between 200, 202 and 204 E. College Street, he hoped these projects would be a catalyst for neighborhood change.

Dr. Alvarez then started to describe the project at 200 E. College Street. Ms. Gladwin stated that as 200 E. College Street has already been voted on, it should not be discussed further by the commission. Dr. Alvarez stated that he would like to explain the decision of the placement of the garage doors. Ms. Gladwin stated that as it has already been voted on and the decision has been made, following procedures being crucial for fair hearings. She also stated that anything that he presents is a workable solution. She asked what type of feedback he would like to move forward. She feels that it is inappropriate to discuss 200 E. College Street. Dr. Hamm agreed. Dr. Alvarez stated that the reason that he brought up 200 E. College Street again is because the vote that was made on the property when it was presented is not a workable solution for the project because of the size of the structure. Ms.

Gladwin stated that she believes the conversation needs to stop regarding 200 E. College Street and go through the procedures to be heard again as the commission already voted. Ms. Gladwin suggested that the case can be appealed or come back before the commission after sufficient time has passed.

Dr. Alvarez stated that 202 E. College is what he mainly wanted feedback on because as renovations begin because how or what the structure will be used for will determines future plans for the property. Dr. Hamm stated that he thought that it was established that the structure was the formal home on the property, and that it should remain a dwelling unit. Dr. Alvarez referred to April 2021 to the suggestions given during the original public hearing for this case, where the commission stated that it could become storage or a guest house and build something in front of it as well. Ms. Gladwin stated that there is validity to either option. She stated Dr. Alvarez is doing commendable work to rehabilitate the structure. Dr. Alvarez stated the options as 1) the building being rehabilitated into a residence or 2) becoming an accessory structure or garage. Mr. Brammer stated that the commission can review what was discussed in April 2021, as nothing was formally voted on.

Mr. Martin researched and quoted the ordinance stating that if an application was approved with conditions and the applicant would like to make alterations to that decision, the applicant can resubmit an application to the commission at any time since it was not denied outright in the vote.

#### **VII. New Business**

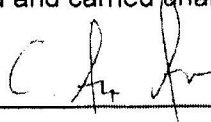
**(A) New Business on the Floor** – Ms. Yale spoke about May as Historic Preservation Month. She discussed doing an educational event as public outreach regarding the guidelines and what HPC's purpose is to the community. Ms. Querin stated that she thinks it would be a good idea to invite realtors, as they may be the first point of contact for a property. Ms. Yale agreed and added that the historical society should also be involved. Dr. Alvarez stated that Brooks County has a tour of homes to educate the public about historic preservation. Ms. Yale said a driving or walking tour would be a great idea. She said that engaging with the tourism department would also be an asset.

Ms. Querin stated that it would be important to highlight the south side of town and make sure that it is included. Ms. Yale discussed more ideas and stated that all these ideas would be for next year's Historic Preservation Month. Mr. Martin suggested, as a consolation, perhaps planning some of those events for October, which is Community Planning Month. He said that each year is a different theme. Ms. Yale said that her goal is that HPD trainings and meetings will be held in Valdosta because there is such a strong commission here, which has been recognized for years.

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Crane made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Querin seconded the motion. It was called and carried unanimously (5-0 vote). The meeting adjourned at 6:44 pm.

HPC Chairman



Date

6-8-22