

# MINUTES

## Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission

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

April 3, 2023 5:30 p.m.

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Ms. Celine Gladwin  
Dr. Harry Hamm  
Dr. Alex Alvarez  
Ms. Sally Querin  
Mr. Tommy Crane  
Ms. Laura Yale  
Ms. Sandie Burkett

### MEMBERS ABSENT

### STAFF PRESENT

Mr. Jeff Brammer

### VISITORS PRESENT

Jessica Ganas  
Sonia Velez-Hoy  
Steven Walker  
Brandie Dame  
Taylor Shaw  
Daniel Bayman

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

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by Chairman 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 March 6, 2023, draft minutes were reviewed by the Commission. Mr. Crane motioned to approve the minutes. Ms. Burkett seconded the motion. It was called and carried 4-0.

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

- A. HPC-2023-28 — 136 North Patterson Street:** Mr. Brammer presents. The petitioner requests approval to paint a public art wall mural on the exterior of the building. The final design and dimensions of the mural are still to be determined. The mural is to be located on the north facing elevation of the building, facing West Central Avenue. The project has been commissioned by the Public Art Advisory Committee.

Staff noted the district design guidelines as they pertain to painting brick exteriors. Basically, painted bricks are to remain painted. Unpainted bricks are to remain unpainted. Staff displayed several historic photographs showing that this wall elevation had previously contained painted advertising. The painted advertising has changed over time, but on several occasions, paint covered large portions of the wall.

Staff noted that the advertising is now gone, and the paint was removed several years ago. Staff noted that it appeared that the wall had suffered damage due to abrasive cleaning and/or grinding. The wall also contains unsympathetic alterations, as former doors and windows have been enclosed. The color, style, and bonding of the in-fill brick does not match the historic brickwork. Finally, staff displayed some examples of the proposed artist's (Taylor Shaw) work.

Staff acknowledged local design guidelines contain nothing specific about murals. Staff stated the question for Commissioners was whether the location was appropriate. Staff also stated the Commission could consider whether painting the brick would cause further decay from failure to allow a naturally porous surface adequate ability to breathe. Staff recommended approval of the project as proposed.

Ms. Jessica Ganas, applicant, spoke on behalf of the application. Ms. Ganas said public art can be a powerful tool to attract more business and visitors downtown. She said public art can show the community and visitors alike that the City offers a vibrant and creative culture through the City Center Arts District. Ms. Ganas said the proposed mural would include scenes of nature, rivers, flowers, as well as historical and cultural imagery.

Ms. Ganas said the City is fortunate to have artist and university professor Taylor Shaw available to paint the mural. She said the mural concept has the support of the building's owner, Sonia Velez-Hoy, as well as the Public Art Advisory Committee, and Valdosta Main Street. Ms. Ganas identified members of the audience also in support of the project, including PAAC president Steven Walker and Main Street director Brandie Dame.

Ms. Gladwin asked about the proposed length of the mural. She noted that historic images showed the entire length of the wall had been previously painted. Ms. Ganas said that the shorter design was a first draft. She said she was initially worried that the mural may have to be under a certain size. Ms. Ganas said the applicants would prefer to have a larger mural. Ms. Gladwin reiterated that the entire wall had been painted, and that that length should be the goal.

Mr. Crane noted that he works with Mr. Shaw at Valdosta State University. Mr. Crane asked whether that was reason to recuse himself from voting. Several Commissioners said no, unless, of course, he had an interest (e.g., financial or administrative) in the project. Mr. Crane said he was not involved with the mural project. A few Commissioners offered personal feedback concerning their individual design preferences.

Ms. Yale noted that the actual design of the artwork was not in the purview of the Commission. She said as the location was appropriate, the only question for the Commission was that of scale. She said given the historical images, the entire length of the wall would be an appropriate scale.

Ms. Querin asked who would approve the final design. Mr. Walker said PAAC would approve the final design. He said PAAC would consider public feedback, including that heard from HPC members.

There being no one else speaking either in favor or opposition, the Commission discussed. Ms. Gladwin made a motion to approve the project as proposed, with one condition: Reconsider the overall size of the mural to be the entire length of the wall to the extent possible and consider the height to follow the dimensions of the historic postcard image (approx. 17') — adjustable as needed to suit current needs. Mr. Crane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (6-0 vote).

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

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

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

- (A) Historic Preservation Town Hall** – Staff stated they had reserved the multi-purpose room 11 a.m-6 p.m., on Wednesday, April 12 for a preservation open house. The purpose of the town hall was to provide the public an opportunity to get information about the Local Historic District and ongoing preservation efforts. Staff said the town hall would consist of hand-out materials and two, short PowerPoint presentations. One presentation would be scheduled for the lunch hour. The second presentation would be scheduled for the dinner hour.

Mr. Brammer said he planned to be in the multi-purpose room throughout the day. He said he would like Commissioners to consider covering different shifts to help speak with visitors. In addition to the presentations, staff plans to have large display maps and preservation literature.

Ms. Querin asked about publicity for the meeting. She said staff should consider postponing the town hall pending a larger public outreach campaign. Some other Commissioners suggested moving the meeting to some time in May, which is Historic Preservation Month. Mr. Brammer said that would be fine with staff.

**(B) Preservation Awards** – Mr. Brammer said the application period was open for the 2023 Preservation Awards. Applications are due Friday, April 21. Mr. Brammer said he has not yet received any complete applications, but he has spoken with some people who had expressed interest in nominations. Mr. Brammer said he would be in touch with Commissioners shortly to establish a committee to review nominations and select winners.

**(C) Preservation Month Event** – Mr. Brammer said preparations are ongoing for a Historic Preservation Month observance event on Friday, May 12. The event is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. at the Roberts House (206 Wells Street). Mr. Brammer said he received confirmation the Mayor would attend and present a proclamation. Mr. Brammer also said he confirmed the event has been placed on the calendar with various City department heads and City Council. Mr. Brammer said he would keep Commissioners updated with ongoing planning.

**VII. New Business**

**VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business, Ms. Gladwin made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Crane seconded the motion. It was called and carried unanimously (6-0 vote). The meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

HPC Chairman 

Date 5-3-23