

## Historic Preservation Commission

### November 13, 2018 Meeting Minutes

#### A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

#### B. Roll Call

**Present:** Vice-Chair Sharon Whitaker, Commissioner Blane Conklin, and Commissioner Patti Jordan. Alternate Commissioner Richard Parson was in the audience.

**Absent:** Chair Pamela Sue Anderson and Commissioner Paul Emerson.

**Staff present:** Principal Planner Joelle Jordan

**Also Present:** Architect Brent Baker from Studio 16:19 and Transportation Assistant Director Brian Kuhn.

#### C. Citizen Communication

There were no Citizen Communications.

#### D. Approval of Minutes

##### D.1 **Consider approval of the minutes of the October 15, 2018 Historic Preservation Commission meeting.**

**Motion:** by Commissioner Conklin and Second by Commissioner Jordan to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2018 HPC meeting as submitted.

**Vote:** Aye: Vice-Chair Whitaker, Commissioner Conklin, and Commissioner Jordan. Nay: none. The vote was 3-0.

#### E. Certificate of Appropriateness

##### E.1 **Consider an action regarding a Certificate of Appropriateness application for parklets in the Downtown Historic District.**

Principal Planner Joelle Jordan gave an overview of the City's downtown parklet project, which aims to create shade and outdoor seating in the downtown historic district. The district (including the street) was zoned historic by the City in 1982 and became a National Register Historic District in 1983. There are two Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHLs) in the district; the Broom Factory and the Nelson Hardware Building. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) reviewed the proposal and determined that the two RTHLs would not be negatively impacted so long as the trees are properly maintained.

Staff reviewed the proposal's impact on the district as a whole and had concerns about trees blocking the view of the historic buildings, particularly the two-story ones. These concerns were based on the THC's *Streetscape Guidelines for Historic Commercial Districts*, which cautions against obscuring historic facades since they are what gives the district its character.

Staff recommended approving the proposal as presented, with the condition that any materials or fixtures not included in the proposal must be approved by staff. They also recommended the use of trees with a high canopy and/or deciduous trees that lose their leaves completely in winter.

Architect Brent Baker from Studio 16:19 presented on behalf of the City's project. He said this is a temporary project before investing the millions in streetscape improvements and underground utilities that are outlined in the Downtown Improvement Plan. The project will replace some of the street parking spaces with six temporary "parklets" consisting of seating areas shaded by trees. There will also be improvements to North Lampasas and S. Sheppard to improve pedestrian safety and connectivity from the north and south. The project does not propose any changes to traffic patterns.

This is meant to be a "trial project" and test case. Eventually the decking will be replaced with pavers as a permanent street enhancement, but the temporary parklet project will allow the trees to get established in their permanent locations before then. The trees will be of a variety of species to avoid a monoculture in which all the trees look the same and subject to the same diseases. They will be

semi-evergreen and deciduous with a high canopy and will be trees that will do well in an urban streetscape setting. The project is still in the design development phase, so tree selections are not 100% complete.

Commissioner Jordan asked about the sidewalk improvements on Lampasas and Sheppard. The sidewalks on these streets are currently elevated about 3 feet above the street and are not accessible to those with disabilities. Some of the angled parking will be replaced with parallel parking to allow room for street-level sidewalks next to the elevated sidewalks, which will remain in place.

Commissioner Whitaker asked how temporary the project is, and Mr. Baker replied 5-15 years, depending on when the City decides to proceed with the permanent streetscape and utility improvements described in the Downtown Improvement Plan.

Commissioner Conklin said that he saw the biggest challenge in preserving the view of the two-story RTHL structures. Having trees with a canopy above the one-story buildings will work for most areas, but the illustrations provided show that the trees will obscure the two-story buildings much like the crepe myrtles currently in front of the Nelson Building and recently removed from in front of the Broom Factory. Mr. Baker noted that the trees will be spaced a little further apart than the current crepe myrtles.

**Motion:** by Commissioner Conklin and Second by Commissioner Jordan to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness as presented with the condition that any changes or new selections are to be approved by staff, and with a recommendation to select deciduous trees with a relatively high canopy.

**Vote:** Aye: Vice-Chair Whitaker, Commissioner Conklin, and Commissioner Jordan. Nay: none. The vote was 3-0.

**F.     Presentation/Discussion**

**F.1     Consider discussion and possible action regarding the Preservation Plan.**

Ms. Jordan gave a brief recap of the Preservation Plan in context, explaining that it is a ten-year plan expected to be adopted in 2020 as part of the Comprehensive Plan. She had asked the Commissioners for ideas on Preservation Plan content that could be discussed at public meetings in early 2019. The following suggestions were noted:

- Education:
- Keep up with technology as it pertains to tourism and education/outreach;
  - Produce and maintain a history of the community that is more accessible, cohesive and inclusive so it doesn't get lost;
- Preservation:
- Preserve buildings: revisit the idea of a downtown residential historic district, and inventory midcentury buildings that will become eligible for designation in the next ten years;
  - Survey properties that were annexed after the previous survey; consider establishing a procedure for identifying properties with potential historic value as part of annexation process;
  - Improve public education regarding the tax exemption program; evaluate the program to see what is and isn't working, and how procedures might be improved;
- Partnerships:
- Better, more productive partnerships with Round Rock Preservation, the Williamson Museum, and other groups;
  - Create a Stagecoach Inn partnership with the Williamson Museum;
- Funding:
- Investigate funding for additional preservation staff;
  - Secure funding for specialized maintenance of City-owned historic properties.

**G.     Planner Report**

**G.1     Consider an update on the 2018-2019 Historic Preservation Commission goals.**

Ms. Jordan called attention to the 2018-19 HPC goals that were adopted at the October 15 meeting. Copies with the final edits were included in the meeting packets for Commissioners to add to their binders.

**G.2 Consider an update on the Historic Preservation Commission 2019 meeting schedule.**

Ms. Jordan called the Commissioners' attention to the 2019 HPC meeting calendar that was included in the packets.

**I. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,**



**Kerstin Harding**  
**Planning Technician**