

Historic Preservation Commission

February 19, 2019 Meeting Minutes

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Chair Pamela Sue Anderson, Vice-Chair Sharon Whitaker, Commissioner Paul Emerson, and Commissioner Patti Jordan. Alternate Commissioner Richard Parson was in the audience.

Absent: None

Staff present: Principal Planner Joelle Jordan and Planning Tech Kerstin Harding

C. Citizen Communication

There were no Citizen Communications.

D. Approval of Minutes

D.1 **Consider approval of the minutes of the January 15, 2019 Historic Preservation Commission meeting.**

Motion: by Commissioner Jordan and Second by Commissioner Emerson to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2019 HPC meeting as submitted.

Vote: Aye: Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Whitaker, Commissioner Emerson, and Commissioner Jordan. Nay: none. The vote was 4-0.

E. Certificate of Appropriateness

E.1 **Consider an action regarding a Certificate of Appropriateness application for alterations at 10 Chisholm Trail.**

Ms. Harding recounted that the owner had been making repairs noted on the 2018 tax exemption inspection, and the last remaining item was that the front door had been replaced without a Certificate of Appropriateness (CofA). The CofA request had been presented at the January 15, 2019 HPC meeting, when it was clarified that two front doors had been replaced, that an accessibility ramp had been installed sometime after the May 2018 inspection, and that railings and spandrels had been removed from the front porch sometime between 2013 and 2015, all without a CofA. The HPC had tabled the request and asked for more information about the alterations.

Ms. Harding reported that she had met with owner Douglas Scowden on January 18, 2019, who explained that the ramp had been installed by the tenant and the railings and spandrels had been removed because they were rotting. Staff had asked him for more information on the history of the building, since it had been moved to that location ca. 1966 and blended features from a number of midcentury styles. He believed that it had been a duplex for housing military families, and that the front porch had been added on later because it had a concrete slab foundation unlike the rest of the building. The previous front doors had been flat slabs, and the center door had a half-light. The Commission had noted that a screen door that had turned wood details like the porch columns and wanted to know whether it was significant; Mr. Scowden reported that he had purchased and installed it about ten years ago and removed it because it kept stretching out of square.

She noted that code-required features like accessibility ramps are usually reviewed administratively. Their appropriateness is judged by their impact of the building's overall historic character, and this ramp is quite unobtrusive, and its impact is minimal. Staff recommended approval of the ramp, noting that the approval applied only to historical appropriateness and does not consider other requirements such as building code (no building permit had been obtained for the ramp).

Staff recommended that the removal of the porch railing and spandrels be approved as presented, since they were not original features. The railing and spandrels did push the façade in an "old west" direction, but removing these features emphasized its mixed-midcentury aspects.

The two front doors had a clear contemporary-Craftsman appearance that pushed the façade in a third direction that was not consistent with either the mixed-midcentury or “old west” directions. The doors were identical and were painted the same color as the walls, so much of the emphasis on the center door as the primary entrance had been lost. Ms. Harding described two actions the HPC could take: approve the CofA and allow the new doors to remain as they are or deny the CofA and specify that they be replaced with less Craftsman, more midcentury-appropriate doors. If the CofA is approved, she recommended adding a condition explaining that the decision was specific to this property and its particular mix of features.

Vice-Chair Whitaker asked whether approving the CofA for the ramp would expose the City to liability issues. Principal Planner Jordan replied that that should be clarified in the motion. Chair Anderson noted that the preferred course would have been for the applicant to consult staff beforehand, who would have given more stylistic direction. Several commissioners questioned whether changing the doors would have much impact overall.

Motion: by Commissioner Jordan and Second by Vice-Chair Whitaker to accept the ramp, removal of the railing and addition of the new doors as-is, noting that compliance with safety and building codes for the ramp are not within the HPC’s jurisdiction, and to encourage the owner to remember to contact the HPC before making changes and use the established CofA process.

Commissioner Jordan amended her motion to add that accepting the doors is specific to this property and its particular mix of 1940s-1970s was not unacceptably impacted by the addition of the contemporary-Craftsman doors. The amendment was seconded by Vice-Chair Whitaker.

Vote: Aye: Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Whitaker, Commissioner Emerson, and Commissioner Jordan. Nay: none. The vote was 4-0.

F. Staff Report

F.1 Consider an update on the 2019 partial tax exemption program for historically significant properties.

Principal Planner Jordan summarized the exemption review schedule for the 2019 historic tax exemptions and noted that there will be a few changes this year. To reduce or eliminate conditional inspections, inspection ratings decided at the May 21 meeting will be final, with no grace period to make repairs before the HPC’s recommendation is presented to the City Council. Owners of properties that had maintenance items noted on their 2018 inspection reports have been sent postcards advising them to request a reinspection to ensue that the repairs are satisfactory before their properties are inspected for the 2019 exemptions. Commissioners may be asked to reinspect properties that they inspected in 2018 between now and April 30.

F.2 Consider an update on Preservation Month for May 2019.

Ms. Jordan announced a brief summary of events planned for National Preservation Month in May. She noted that the proclamation would be moved from May 9 to April 25 so that the proclamation is made before the month officially starts. Chair Anderson asked that the Commissioners make note of the date and consider participating if possible.

G. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kerstin Harding
Planning Technician