

## Historic Preservation Commission

### May 19, 2020 Meeting Minutes

#### SPECIAL NOTE:

Pursuant to the March 16, 2020 proclamation issued by Governor Abbott, this meeting will be held by videoconference in order to advance the public health goal of limiting face-to-face meetings (also called "social distancing") to slow the spread of COVID-19. Some Commissioners were present in the chamber while others attended the meeting via videoconferencing.

This meeting was able to be viewed live online at [www.roundrocktexas.gov/replay](http://www.roundrocktexas.gov/replay) or [www.roundrocktexas.gov/tv](http://www.roundrocktexas.gov/tv), or viewed on Spectrum Channel 10 and U-Verse Channel 99.

Members of the public that wish to speak during citizen communication or a public hearing were able to do so by registering ahead of time via the link provided in the calendar entry for this meeting.

#### A. Call to Order

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

#### B. Roll Call

**Present:** Chair Sharon Whitaker, Commissioner Shirley Marquardt, Commissioner Richard Parson and Commissioner Andrew Wolfe

**Absent:** Vice-Chair Pamela Anderson, Commissioner Patti Jordan, and Commissioner Adrian Neely.

**Staff present:** City Clerk Sara White, Principal Planner Joelle Jordan, and Planning Tech. Kerstin Harding.

#### C. Citizen Communication

There were no citizens wishing to speak during this agenda item.

#### D. Approval of Minutes

##### D.1 Consider approval of the minutes of the March 17, 2020 Historic Preservation Commission meeting.

**Motion:** by Commissioner Wolfe and Second by Commissioner Parson to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2020 HPC meeting as presented.

**Vote:** Aye: Chair Whitaker, Commissioner Marquardt, Commissioner Parson, and Commissioner Wolfe. Nay: none. The vote was 4-0.

#### E. Tax Exemptions

##### E.1 Consider action regarding applications for the 2020 partial tax exemption for historically significant sites.

Principal Planner Joelle Jordan gave an overview of the historic tax exemption program, the goal of which is to identify maintenance issues that if allowed to continue could result in the loss of the city's historic resources. Owners must apply to the Williamson County Appraisal District each year by April 30. The HPC then evaluates whether the condition of the property meets the maintenance criteria for the exemption and makes a recommendation to the City Council, and the Council passes an ordinance by July 15 granting the exemption to those properties that have met the requirements.

Ms. Jordan described changes that had been made to the 2020 inspection process in order to minimize Covid-19 exposure risk. Instead of assigning each Commissioner a set of properties to inspect, staff performed in-person inspections of all properties, all and all Commissioners reviewed the inspection reports for all the properties before the meeting. Also, staff completed all inspections as observed from the right-of-way and only applying properties were inspected. Owners of residential properties were emailed a few days before their properties were inspected. Since the Commissioners would not complete the on-site inspections, the training they would usually receive at the April HPC meeting was unnecessary, and the meeting was cancelled.

There are 60 properties eligible for the exemption in 2020, of which 48 applied. Staff assigned 19 of them a preliminary "Pass" rating, 28 received a preliminary "Needs Maintenance" rating, and one

was not assigned a preliminary rating as staff felt it required discussion. Commissioners were also asked to discuss any other properties if they thought the preliminary rating should be changed.

Planning Tech Kerstin Harding described the status of the property that had not received a preliminary rating, 802 E. Liberty Ave. The property had been deteriorating for several years, and in 2019 received an NM rating after the owner proposed a schedule for completing repairs. The owner contacted staff in October 2019 and January 2020 requesting assistance in finding contractors. Unfortunately, staff are not able to recommend private vendors, but did refer him to other historic property owners who had addressed similar issues.

The applicant also provided a progress statement noting that dead trees and brush had been cleared, items stored on the porch had been removed, cedar pickets replaced, and a gutter clog had been cleared. He reported that he had scheduled a contractor to repair the window, was waiting for an estimate from a restoration contractor to address the columns, soffits and fascia, and had found a painting contractor but that painting would have to wait until other repairs were completed.

The Commissioners expressed concern about the state of the property. The Commissioner who had inspected the property in 2019 believed that item 2 had not been satisfactorily completed and that a Code Enforcement issue should have been noted in item 16. She also felt that the disruptions caused by the pandemic justified an NM rating, allowing another year to complete the remaining repairs. Commissioners discussed setting a firm timeline for completion by April 2021 but acknowledged that the unknown length of pandemic restrictions made scheduling uncertain.

**Motion:** by Commissioner Marquardt and Second by Commissioner Wolfe to adopt all property inspection ratings as given in Exhibit A, except that:

- 802 E. Liberty Avenue is to be given the rating “Needs Maintenance.”
- On the inspection report for 802 E. Liberty Avenue, items 2 and 11 are to be changed from “Pass” to “Needs Maintenance.”

**Vote:** Aye: Chair Whitaker, Commissioner Marquardt, Commissioner Parson, and Commissioner Wolfe. Nay: none. The vote was 4-0.

**F. Planner Report**

**F.1 Consider an update on Historic Preservation Month activities.**

Ms. Jordan announced that because of Covid-19 many of the events usually done for Historic Preservation Month (May) had been cancelled, but the Mayor’s proclamation of Preservation Month, a news release and four social media posts on historic Round Rock landmarks had taken place. She noted that Local Legend Award nominations would be due May 29 and noted that the social media posts also encouraged residents to share their historic photos.

**F.2 Consider an update on the Round Rock 2030 comprehensive plan.**

Ms. Jordan announced that the final draft of *Round Rock 2030*, including the Preservation Plan that the HPC had recommended in November, had been completed. The online public comment period was extended since several of the in-person events had to be cancelled. The plan would be presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission for its recommendation on May 20, and finally an ordinance adopting the plan would be presented to the City Council the next month. Both the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council presentations would include public hearings.

**F.3 Consider an update on upcoming events and activities.**

Chair Whitaker announced that the Williamson Museum had sold its Round Rock branch location at 8 Chisholm Trail, and that the Georgetown location will have a soft re-opening May 20<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Marquardt announced that Round Rock Preservation would give first Lazarus Award to owner and contractor of 607 E. Main sometime in May.

**G. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
**Kerstin Harding**  
Planning Technician