

Minutes of the meeting of the
Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)
City of Belton
333 Water Street

Thursday, March 14, 2013

The Historic Preservation Commission met at 5:30 P.M. in the Wright Room at the Harris Community Center. The following members were present: Larry Guess, Randy Stumberg, Nelson Hutchinson, Dan Kirkley and Sheila Donahue. The following Staff Members were present: Erin Newcomer, Planning Director and Laura Arevalo Valle, Planning Clerk.

Pledge of Allegiance- Nelson Hutchinson led all present.

Invocation- Dan Kirkley gave the Invocation.

1. Call To Order.

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 P.M.

2. Minutes from the previous meetings.

Mr. Hutchinson made a motion to approve the minutes as written. They were approved unanimously, 5-0.

3. H-13-06 Consider a request to construct an addition at 903 North Penelope Street, located in the North Central Belton Historic District, south of East 10th Avenue and north of East 9th Avenue.

Ms. Newcomer presented the staff report. Ms. Newcomer noted that the fence and the hitching post/carriage step were removed after she visited with the applicant and the staff report was written. She immediately called the applicant and inquired if any work had been done to the property. The applicant, Dorothy Coppin, stated that they have not started working on the new addition; however, they did remove the fence and hitching post/carriage step. Ms. Newcomer stated that the applicant informed her that the front fence and carriage step/hitching post are both still intact. Ms. Newcomer originally recommended that the carriage step/hitching post remain on the property, as it is one of the only two historical items on the lot. Since it was removed without approval from the Historical Preservation Commission or Historic Preservation Officer, it is in violation of the Ordinance; however, Ms. Newcomer stated that it may have been a miscommunication with the applicant, as they did not identify and fully discuss these items, focusing primarily on the building addition. Ms. Newcomer stated that for future applicants, she will make a point to inform them that it is the entire property that will require approval before any changes can be made. Ms. Newcomer stated that since the hitching post/carriage step and fence were removed illegally, the HPC shall decide what the property owner shall do with these items. Ms. Newcomer gave the Historic Preservation Commission examples of what they can recommend the applicant do with the fence and hitching post/carriage step:

- Ask the applicant to put the hitching post/carriage step and fence back in its original place on the property;
- Request that the applicant donates the items to charity; or
- Give the items back to the previous homeowner, Larry Wilkins.

Ms. Newcomer stated that if the hitching post/carriage step is removed from its original location, she would recommend a plaque placed on it to state where it was originally located and the date it was moved. Mr. Stumberg asked if the current location of the hitching post is its original location. Ms. Newcomer stated that she believes it was original to the property, but she was unable to locate any photos of the original house. The only historic elements of the property are the fence and the hitching post/carriage step. According to the applicant, the existing house was built in 1952; however, there was a house built on this property prior to 1952 that may have contained the fence and carriage step/hitching post. Ms. Newcomer stated that she tried to find the original photos of the house that was previously on the property but was unable to locate any at the Bell County Museum. Ms. Donahue stated that in the past when a house was demolished in that neighborhood, they would keep some of the original historical elements, like the stairs.

Ms. Newcomer invited the applicant, Dorothy Coppin, 518 Shine Street, to speak and answer any remaining questions. Mr. Kirkley asked Ms. Coppin what her preference was for replacing the hitching post/carriage step. Ms. Coppin stated that she would like to give it to the previous homeowner because his father built the current house in 1952. She stated that she personally does not want them because they are hard to mow around and she has almost hit them with the door of her truck. She stated that the reason they took the fence down was because there were many tree trunk stumps in the fence. She stated that she would also be open to donating the fence to a charity. Mr. Hutchinson noted that there are not many carriage steps within the City of Belton; therefore, increasing its historic value. Ms. Coppin explained that there is another one that was moved to the back of the house many years ago and that is a solid post with a ring on top. Ms. Coppin stated that she is open to any option, as she does not want either hitching post or the fence.

Mr. Guess asked who Mr. Wilkins was and what their intention was for the hitching post. Ms. Coppin explained that the previous owner, Larry Alice Wilkins, would like to put them in front of his house.

Mr. Stumberg asked if the house was purchased after the historic districts were in place and Ms. Coppin stated that she believe that she did, as she just closed on the house February 28, 2013. Mr. Stumberg stated that he has an issue with the item being removed,

even though the house doesn't fall within historical requirements, because once it is removed, it is no longer part of the history. Ms. Coppin stated that she realizes it is an antique and will put it back if that is what is requested of her; however, she would prefer not to have it.

Mr. Kirkley suggested relocating it with a plaque, because there is currently not a standard guideline and the house that is currently there is not the original house that was there when the amenities were in place.

Mr. Guess stated that he would prefer for the monument to be given to an organization who could locate a house on that street that would be willing to have the monument at their house, because of its historic significance. Ms. Donohue added that she would prefer that both hitching posts be relocated to a house within the NCBHD neighborhood with a plaque.

Ms. Newcomer added that there are local foundations that may be interested in taking the hitching posts to find a proper location that they can be relocated to.

For future cases, Ms. Newcomer reiterated that she will make sure that the homeowners understand that the entire property is considered historic, including the elements surrounding the property. According to the Historic Preservation Ordinance, if an item is removed without permission from the HPC or HPO, there is a fee of \$250 per day until the item is put back in the original location.

Mr. Stumberg asked who reinforces the fine. Ms. Newcomer stated that the City reinforces the fine and she would note each day that it was in violation of the Ordinance, and contact legal. She also stated that each property is treated equally, whether it is classified as contributing or non-contributing.

Mr. Stumberg stated that he still had an issue with it being moved to a different location, because once it is moved, it will be a new addition to that property; therefore, making it a non-contributing element of that property. Mr. Kirkley added that the Ordinance allows for the movement of houses. Ms. Newcomer added that if the property were to ever be demolished in the future, or any changes done to the property, it would have to go before the Commission for approval. She also stated that the new survey would include the new location of the fence and hitching post/carriage step. Mr. Stumberg asked if it would be a contributing item at its new location. Ms. Newcomer stated that even if it were a non-contributing item, it would still be protected because it is in a historic district. Mr. Stumberg added that since the Ordinance allows for the movement of houses, it also allows for the movement of historic property elements.

Ms. Donahue stated that she appreciated that the new addition will be in hardy board, so that there is no confusion whether is part of the original structure.

Mr. Kirkley made a motion that we approve the construction of the 100 square foot addition at 903 North Penelope St. and that Dorothy Coppin donate both the fence and the two hitching posts to a local foundation that will be willing to move it to a proper location. Mr. Guess seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously, 5-0.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

NOTE: The Commission approved the 100 square foot addition to the residence; however, in relation to the fence and hitching post/carriage step, the Commission recommended that it be donated to a local charity. The property owner, Dorothy Coppin, promised the previous property owner, Larry Wilkins, that she would give him the hitching posts to put on his property. On Friday, March 15, 2013, Mr. Wilkins called Erin Newcomer, City Planning Director, to discuss the hitching posts. He stated that the hitching posts and fence are not original to the property. These items were once located on a ranch on Sunshine Road in Salado prior to their removal and relocation to this Belton property in 1952. He stated that these items have been in his family for years and are not original Belton historic elements. Due to the information discovered after the HPC meeting, Ms. Newcomer informed Mr. Wilkins that he could relocate both the fence and hitching posts to his home.

Chair, Historic Preservation Commission