

Minutes of the meeting of the
Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)
City of Belton
333 Water Street
Thursday, July 9, 2015

The Historic Preservation Commission met at 5:00 P.M. in the Wright Room at the Harris Community Center. The following members were present: Chair, Nelson Hutchinson, Tammie Baggerly, Leo Camden, and Sheila Donahue. The following Staff Members were present: Director of Planning, Erin Smith and Planning Clerk, Laura Livingston.

1. Call To Order.

Nelson Hutchinson called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

2. Minutes from the previous meetings.

Ms. Donahue made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Baggerly seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously with 4 ayes, 0 nays.

3. Selection of Vice Chair for the Historic Preservation Commission.

Ms. Baggerly made a motion appoint Shelia Donahue as Vice Chair for the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Camden seconded the motion and the nomination was approved unanimously with 4 ayes, 0 nays.

4. H-15-09 Consider a request to construct a cement driveway in the front yard at 709 North Main Street, located in the North Central Belton Historic District, on the east side of North Main Street, north of East 7th Avenue and south of East 8th Avenue.

Ms. Smith presented the staff report.

Ms. Baggerly stated the current drive is concrete and the new drive will be extended with like material. Ms. Smith stated that is correct.

Ms. Donahue asked if the proposed drive will encompass most of the grass in the front yard. Ms. Smith stated the applicant wants to keep the tree in the front yard. The property owner is proposing to cut a few of the lower limbs so they can access the proposed drive. The end of the drive will extend to the (southern) corner of the house.

Ms. Baggerly asked if vehicles will be parked in that space or will it just serve as a turnaround?

Mr. Meyer, 709 North Main Street, stated if visitors come over, they are permitted to park in that space. In the past, their visitors would park in the lot next door, but the new business is very busy now and there is no extra parking available. The drive is going to be built at ground level, so you will not be able to see it from Main Street.

Chair Hutchinson stated Main Street is obviously difficult to get in and out of. His concern is that he does not want to see this becoming the norm for all property owners along Main

Street. He understands it is difficult for the property owner to back out into traffic on Main Street.

Ms. Meyer stated traffic is much worse now that the traffic light has been installed at MLK and Main Street intersection.

Chair Hutchinson asked if the other properties along Main Street are larger in size and have a more option for parking. Ms. Smith stated the Student Catholic Center and daycare along Main Street were able to construct circular drives around the buildings. Several properties along Main Street are located on corner lots and have access to a side street.

Ms. Baggerly asked if the property across the street has the same type of drive as this request.

Nancy Alexander, 706 North Main Street stated that is her home and she has a turnaround drive, so both themselves and their visitors can turn around and pull out onto Main Street safely. They park their vehicles in the drive close to the garage and carport and use the turnaround to head out onto Main Street.

Chair Hutchinson asked if anyone would like to speak on this request.

Ms. Alexander stated she has lived in her home for 32 years and she thanks God she has a turnaround. This is an older, established neighborhood. Most of the people that live on this block have been stable homeowners. Their property, like the Meyer's property, is landlocked and a turnaround is best alternative to the situation.

Ms. Donahue made a motion to approve the request to construct a cement driveway in the front yard at 709 North Main Street. Ms. Baggerly seconded the motion and it was approved with 4 ayes, 0 nays.

5. H-15-10 Consider authorizing a Façade Improvement Grant to Michelle Begley, 217 East Central Avenue.

Ms. Smith presented the staff report.

Ms. Baggerly asked if the awing will look like the example in the picture and if it will have a slope for drainage purposes? Ms. Smith said the awing will look like the one presented and it will have a slope of 1:12.

Mr. Camden asked how deep the awning is from the building to the curb? Ms. Smith stated the proposed awning is four feet wide. Mr. Camden stated the awning will have a 4" rise, so the angle will not be that noticeable. Ms. Smith stated it will be angled just enough to have adequate water runoff.

Ms. Donahue asked if the awing will be aluminum and what color will it be. Michelle Begley, 217 East Central Avenue, stated the awing will be black and made of aluminum.

Ms. Baggerly stated she has been inside this building and the work the owner has completed looks great. If the exterior is anything like the interior, we will be very happy with the outcome.

Chair Hutchinson asked the applicant if they have considered painting the inset areas with an accent color. Ms. Begley stated she had originally asked to install shutters on both sides of the second story windows, but Ms. Smith informed her that shutters were not historically accurate. She feels it looks better painted one solid color and the sign will provide an accent color that would give it that pop. The sign will also stick out a little more. They want to maintain a classic high-end appearance and in her opinion, an accent color in the inset areas will make the exterior too busy.

Chair Hutchinson asked if anyone would like to speak on this request. Hearing none, Chair Hutchinson asked for a motion.

Ms. Baggerly made a motion to approve the request for a Façade Improvement Grant to construct an awning and sign. Mr. Camden seconded the motion and it was approved with 4 ayes, 0 nays.

6. H-15-11 Consider a request to demolish the Bell County Jail Annex at 115 West Central Avenue and Bell County Juvenile Center at 117 North Pearl Street, located in the Downtown Belton Commercial Historic District, on the east side of North Pearl Street, north of West Central Avenue and south of West 1st Avenue.

Ms. Smith presented the staff report.

Ms. Baggerly asked if all the offices have moved to the new complex.

Richard Cortese, Bell County Commissioner, stated the juvenile offices have moved to Killeen. There is no information stating what the juvenile center building was utilized as in the 1950's and 1960's, when it was first built. We now have concrete rooms and juvenile cells; very different from what was there in the 1950's.

Ms. Baggerly asked if new facilities will need to be rebuilt somewhere else to provide additional space, can these existing buildings be refurbished for future use? Bell County Commissioner Cortese stated the jail across the street (Central Avenue) is being used right now and they will continue to house prisoners there. That building also contains the CPS courts and Child Support courts. They call in 120 child support cases every Wednesday and it would really help to have additional parking space in this area, rather than parking over by the Gin and the other parking lot (north of 1st Avenue). We block everything downtown when we bring in those 120 people and this additional parking will alleviate that issue.

Mr. Camden asked how long will the demolition take? Joe Latteo, Bell County Contract Manager, stated the demolition will take approximately six weeks. There is still testing that needs to be performed and then waiting on those results. There are several items that have to take place before they can move forward with the demolition. They are waiting on a letter from the Jail Commission to decommission the jail, then they will submit to Texas Historic Commission as the code requires.

Mr. Hutchinson stated the parking lot north of West 1st Avenue is underutilized. Is that the case on the day those cases are heard as well or is that parking lot typically full? Bell County Commissioner Cortese stated the parking lot is not full, but people will not park that far away. The jail is on the same route to the courthouse and people don't like to walk beside the

jail. He feels that once the jail is gone, people will utilize the new parking area because they will be able to see where they are going.

Mr. Hutchinson stated he hates to see a parking lot that is going to be equally underutilized. Bell County Commissioner Cortese stated he thinks it will be utilized because right now we are using everything downtown and there are people driving around on those days looking for available parking. The fact of the matter is there is the potential, at some point in time, to construct a building on the lot north of 1st Avenue and utilize the parking lot between those two buildings. This will give us the option to do some things differently than what we are doing right now.

Ms. Donahue would like more information about any large trees that may be in jeopardy and she asked will there be anything in place to protect those trees? Mr. Latteo stated the scope of work will have a full description of how the trees will be protected. We will utilize professional commercial tree protection practices, such as protective fencing. None of the trees will be removed unless the tree study states a tree is dead or dying. There is one tree that is in pretty bad shape. These trees are hundreds of years old and they have no plans to take them down. He will meet with City staff regarding the parking lot layout. The parking lot will be constructed with islands and they plan to utilize the existing trees for shade.

Ms. Donahue stated with the beautiful things that are happening downtown and the area it would be a shame to see those trees cut down.

Ms. Smith stated Mr. Latteo has great construction experience. He has been a contractor for Bell County for several years. They worked together on the Bell County Engineers Office addition and he did a great job following City policies and codes.

Mr. Hutchinson asked if new curbing will be installed along Pearl Street. Mr. Latteo stated they have not completed the design, but the intention will be to install curbing.

Ms. Baggerly asked for clarification on what a parking island is and will the parking lot be constructed with asphalt? Ms. Smith stated a. landscape island is typically located at the terminus of a parking aisle with trees and shrubs. The Design Standards requirements for parking lot design and tree mitigation will be reviewed by City staff and the applicant during construction plan review.

Ms. Baggerly asked if the parking lot design will require HPC approval? Ms. Smith stated she has administrative approval, but she will present the plans to the Commission once she received them.

Mr. Latteo stated the parking lot north of 1st Avenue is underutilized; however, it is a prime place to park and is often full, especially now that the businesses along Main Street have opened. There are County personal, jailers, parking and walking through the alley. We have a great need for additional parking.

Bell County Commissioner Mr. Cortese stated there will be several more employees in that area because it requires more jailers to run this building, than the old building. There will be 15 employees on duty per shift, so that will change the parking needs. In regard to the parking lot off 1st Avenue, there are several people who come into that parking lot with trailers to turn around. This parking lot is also used for parking cars prior to sales, so there

has been an increase in activity. He believes the reason it is not utilized more is because people don't want to walk past the old jail and there is not a sidewalk there for pedestrian traffic. There is a walkway between the buildings, but people would rather park farther away because they can't see the building.

Mr. Camden stated he owns the building on the (southwest) corner of 1st Avenue and Main Street and he and his staff have to park in the lot across the street because they cannot find a spot close to his building on those days.

Ms. Baggerly asked if there will be an opportunity to make the existing parking lot and the proposed parking lot all look cohesive. Mr. Latteo stated it is unknown at this time. They have not completed any site development plans at this time.

Bell County Commissioner Mr. Cortese stated part of that lot belongs to the owners of the buildings that face Main Street. There are some easements and agreements for those parking spaces.

Ms. Baggerly asked if there is an opportunity for any grant money.

Ms. Smith stated the only money she has available is for the Façade Improvement Grant and that is strictly for the exterior of buildings.

Chair Hutchinson asked if there has been any consideration to sell some of the land for private use. Bell County Judge John Burrows stated there are no plans to sell the property.

Chair Hutchinson asked if anyone would like to speak on this request.

Bell County Judge John Burrows stated rehabilitating the buildings for other uses is not feasible. Mr. Latteo has stated that it is cheaper to tear the buildings down and start over as opposed to rehabilitation. There is no feasible way to rehabilitate the buildings to make them useful once again.

Mr. Latteo stated if there were a way to rehabilitate the buildings, they would consider it. The buildings contain concrete blocks filled with steel. To change the configuration of the buildings would require all new elevators, stairwells, and all ADA requirements would need to be complied with. There are so many upgrades that would be required, that it would be like starting with nothing but an exterior wall. The cost to move everything out would also be more than to start with a new building.

Judge John Burrows stated to rehabilitate these buildings for significant use is not feasible. There are asbestos issues and several other items that could bring it to a halt.

Mr. Camden made a motion to approve the request to demolish the Bell County Jail Annex at 115 West Central and Bell County Juvenile Center at 117 North Pearl Street. Ms. Baggerly seconded the motion and it was approved with 4 ayes, 0 nays.

7. Update the Historic Preservation Commission regarding Administrative approvals granted by the Historic Preservation Officer.

Ms. Smith stated there were seven administratively approved Certificate of Appropriateness applications during the last month.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Chair, Historic Preservation Commission