

Minutes of the meeting of the
Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)
City of Belton
333 Water Street
Thursday, December 8, 2016

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, Dave Covington and Tammie Baggerly. The following Staff Members were present: Director of Planning/Historic Preservation Officer, Erin Smith and Planning Clerk, Laura Livingston. Members Sheila Donahue and Leo Camden Jr. were absent.

1. Call To Order.

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

2. Minutes from the previous meetings.

Mr. Covington made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 22, 2016 meeting. Ms. Baggerly seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously with 3 ayes, 0 nays.

3. H-16-17 Consider authorizing a Façade Improvement Grant to Kat Kaliski, 208 North Penelope Street.

Ms. Smith presented the staff report.

Chair Hutchinson asked if the new lighting be drilled into the exterior and interior brick? Mr. Dean Winkler, of CRW Construction which is the contractor for the remodel, said yes, in the locations shown in the plans for the sconces. Chair Hutchinson asked if a masonry drill bit will be used to install the lights and Mr. Winkler said yes.

Ms. Baggerly asked about the sidewalk. Mr. Winkler said there is an existing sidewalk with a 3-inch offset and it is located next to the building. Ms. Baggerly asked if it will remain the same? Mr. Winkler said the alley is paved so it's accessible and no gate is proposed to the outdoor seating area. Ms. Baggerly asked if a gate to the outdoor seating area is required. Ms. Smith said the gate is a TABC requirement and the applicant is responsible for complying with those regulations. She said the other wine bar downtown has an opening without a gate.

Chair Hutchinson asked if the current owner of the Belton Journal, David Tuma, is fine with the building being painted? Ms. Smith said yes, he strongly encouraged it.

Mr. Covington made a motion to approve the item H-16-17, authorizing a FIG to Kat Kaliski for 208 North Penelope Street. Ms. Baggerly seconded the motion. The item was approved unanimously with 3 ayes, 0 nays.

4. H-16-18 Consider a request to widen the driveway, construct a new parking lot, install an ADA ramp, and demolish a storage building at 1011 North Main Street, located in the North Central Belton Historic District, on the east side of North Main Street, north of 10th Avenue and west of North Penelope Street.

Ms. Smith presented the staff report.

Chair Hutchinson opened up the meeting to public comment. Mr. and Mrs. Ronald and Krissie Lastovica, 1019 North Main Street, approached the Commission. Mrs. Lastovica said she is concerned about the increased driveway width and the tree in the front yard at 1011 North Main Street. She would like to know if the driveway is going to be wider than a normal residential driveway. She feels the area should maintain its appearance as residential and historic. If the driveway is two-way, it will disrupt the ambiance of how a home should appear and it will appear as if it is a business. Mrs. Lastovica said she spoke with Ms. Smith who said an increased driveway width will require TxDOT approval. Mrs. Lastovica asked about fencing since the proposed parking lot proposed in the rear next to their property will be visible from their kitchen window. She would prefer to not look at parked cars. Chair Hutchinson asked if looking at fencing is preferable to parked cars? Mrs. Lastovica said yes, because they could add some type of landscaping to obstruct the view of cars coming and going. She added that she didn't believe there were any obstructions to installing fencing. Chair Hutchinson asked if fencing existed all the way around? Ms. Smith said yes. Chair Hutchinson clarified if Mrs. Lastovica was asking about the fence height and that if it were raised there are no branches or tree trunks in its way? Ms. Smith said yes; trimming of the trees will be needed.

Mrs. Lastovica said she's concerned with signage as well. They are still living in their home, but the residential areas are being converted to businesses. She would prefer the sign be similar to the "Aware Central Texas" sign, small and decorative. Mrs. Lastovica stated that Ms. Smith said the home is a Colonial Revival and she recommends keeping the sign in that theme, instead of a square box. Ms. Lastovica measured the distance of the "Aware Central Texas" sign and the "Crusader Catholic Center" from Main Street; measuring 7 feet to the sidewalk, or 17 feet to the street pavement. She said she prefers that the sign not be neon. She asked if the masonry was taken into account when measuring the overall sign height and she would like to ensure it is no more than 5 feet high and 8 feet wide. Ms. Smith said the requirement is 5 feet from the ground to the top of the sign, including the masonry base as part of the measurement. Ms. Smith said the Lastovicases stated they do not want an illuminated sign at this location. Ms. Baggerly said the ordinance does allow for illumination. Ms. Smith said she agrees with the Lastovicases and instead would recommend shining lights on the sign. Chair Hutchinson asked if the smaller lights will have a "black out time"? Ms. Smith said no, they could be left on all night, but staff will ensure the lights do not face other residents. Mrs. Lastovica said she recommended the signage be consistent with historic Belton. She feels every sign should have similar masonry, wood and size because she believes it will look more beautiful.

Mrs. Lastovica said she's concerned with the security lighting around the proposed parking lot and what the applicant is proposing to do for lighting. "Walmart lighting," for example, may not be conducive to the neighborhood. When the road was reconfigured and sidewalks were put in front of their home, the water runoff goes into their backyard, which is the way it's supposed to flow. If the parking lot is asphalt and is elevated, the water could pool on their property.

Mr. Lastovica said he's lived in the home for 26 years and he's dedicated to historic preservation. He finds these homes to be of great value to Belton. These are homes where families are raised and when you bring businesses in, it changes the dynamic of the neighborhood. He does not want cars coming through his backyard, which is what's proposed with the east side exit. He thinks it's a bad idea and needs to stop. As citizens of Belton, we need to be good stewards of these homes, he said and be guarded in what we do allow or don't allow to take place.

Ms. Baggerly said she would vote no until the Commission has plans about the signage and other items. She asked if the ADA ramp will be permanent. Ms. Smith stated yes, it is proposed to be concrete.

Ms. Baggerly asked if the tree on the property is a heritage tree and does that need to be addressed before the Commission considers the request to widen the driveway? Does it need to be a two-way drive? Ms. Smith said cars could circle around the driveway in the rear if the driveway was widened. Ms. Baggerly asked if the driveway is wider in front, could cars parallel park along the house? Ms. Smith said yes, the issue may be with backing out onto Main Street along with other factors -- including the standards for driveway widths and rules regarding fire access -- is why she believed a wider circular drive in the back may be the best option.

Mr. Covington asked where is the existing paving in the back? Ms. Smith pointed to the areas on the map and said she will encourage the applicant to use the existing pavement.

Chair Hutchinson said he's concerned about the flood mitigation and the exit driveway in the rear. Ms. Smith said they would be required to submit a permit for this and the drainage will be reviewed by the City Engineer to determine if any enhancements are needed.

Chair Hutchinson asked to table the item. Ms. Smith asked if the Commission would prefer for her to speak with the applicant about their concerns. Chair Hutchinson then asked if the sign would be hidden from the existing vegetation. Ms. Smith said she feels the recommendation to create a colonial look for the sign was a good idea. She said the concerns from the Lastovicas about lighting is valid and staff will meet with the applicant to discuss the concerns. Chair Hutchinson asked about the fire code and what is required. Ms. Smith said the Fire Marshal will need to review the plans and make a determination. Chair Hutchinson requested Ms. Smith return with an idea of what the occupancy will be and a striped parking lot plan.

Mr. Covington made a motion to table the item H-16-18. Chair Hutchinson seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously 3 ayes, 0 nays.

5. Hold a workshop regarding the City of Belton Historic Tax Exemption Program.

Ms. Smith presented the information to the Commission. Ms. Smith said she researched how to incentivize restoration of Belton's historic neighborhoods. The Façade Improvement Grant has been a great success. With more than 300 homes in the historic districts, owners could really benefit from this tax exemption program. It only applies to historically significant properties. Ms. Smith described the process by which a property can become tax exempt from city taxes for a five-year period.

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

Ms. Smith updated the Commission on administrative approvals.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Chair, Historic Preservation Commission