

**GAINESVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
AUGUST 1, 2013**

**Members present:** Chairman Dick Bachman, Vice Chairman Kevin Meyer and Commissioners Jim Walters and Jack Bailey

**Members absent:** Commissioner Cheryl Morrow

**Staff present:** Special Projects Manager Jessica Tullar and Recording Secretary Judy Foster

**Others present:** Council Member Ruth Bruner, Communications & Tourism Director Catiel Felts, Main Street Manager Regina Mansfield and Consultant Cameron Sexton, with Brockington and Associates, Inc.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was held in the Green Street Station Training Room and was called to order by Chairman Bachman at 5:30 p.m.

### **MINUTES OF MARCH 26, 2013 MEETING**

#### **Motion to approve the Minutes as presented.**

Motion made by Commissioner Bailey

Motion seconded by Vice Chairman Kevin Meyer

**Vote – 3 favor, 2 absent (Morrow, Walters)**

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

#### **Design Guidelines Update / Grant Project**

Special Projects Manager Jessica Tullar introduced Cameron Sexton as the Consultant with Brockington and Associates, Inc. who has been working on updating the design guidelines which hopefully will be ready for adoption by the HPC in October or November, after the State HPD approval.

Ms. Sexton stated that based on previous comments from the Commission, the current residential design guidelines were working relatively well so there are not an extraordinary amount of changes but shared the major differences in the proposed draft guidelines as follows:

- Clarification of signage issues.
- Broadened the scope of what comes under design review.
- Addition of commercial downtown guidelines.
- Separation of purely residential uses vs. residential-style uses for commercial, i.e. Green Street and Brenau.
- ADA compliance.
- Clarification of demolition process.
- Suggested language demonstrating hardship as recommended by James Reap who is an attorney as well as a preservation law professor at UGA.
- The administrative process is in the forefront instead of at the back of the guidelines so that it could be used as a preservation manual as well as guidelines.

- Information was also included regarding what is considered routine maintenance, recommended and not recommended maintenance, and a table to show what does and does not require design review.
- Document was reorganized and there were format changes, such as color coded sections, to make it easier to read.

**NOTE: Commissioner Walters arrived at the meeting at 5:37 p.m.**

There were several discussions/comments regarding the following:

- Trees – There was some flexibility regarding tree removal if it was in the rear yard, otherwise, it is basically the same.
- Website – The final approved document will be placed on the City's website and will have a utility in place to make for easy navigation.
- Satellite Dishes – There was a general consensus among the HPC to allow staff to handle requests as minor work projects for satellite dishes on the side or rear yard.
- Exterior Lighting Features – There was a general consensus among the HPC to allow staff to handle requests as minor work projects for exterior lighting features on the front or side façades as long as they are in keeping with the design guidelines for the historical period.
- Minor Work Projects – The possibility of exempting a formal review process for minor work projects as long as the guidelines are published as to what is allowed and not allowed.
- Signage – There was a general consensus among the HPC to allow staff to handle requests as minor work projects for new or replacement signs as long as they are of the same style and size (or smaller) and in character with the neighborhood.
- Appeal Process – There was some discussion regarding the appeal process available to property owners who do not agree with staff or HPC decisions.

Main Street Manager Regina Mansfield was present and had some questions/comments specific to the commercial downtown district. They were as follows:

- Signage – Creative Cuts (Bradford Street) has a vintage iconic neon sign which they want to take down and restore, without the neon, and discussion was held regarding whether they would have issues when they put the sign back up. There was a general consensus that maintenance on an existing sign would be grandfathered in. Mrs. Tullar stated that an issue could be made with the zoning ordinance since it is a non-conforming sign, noting there is some flexibility within historic districts. However, she suggested the owner fully document the location and appearance of the existing sign with photographs to insure it is an accurate restoration.
- Façade Grants – Explanation of how façade grants work and for what improvements they can be used.
- LED lights – Discussion was held about the move from neon to LED lighting, particularly in downtown districts, and how the zoning ordinance may require indirect lighting for central business districts.
- Designation of Downtown Historic District – Whether there was any interest from the downtown businesses to be included in a LHD and how the guidelines will be helpful to preserve the downtown.
- Documentation – Chairman Bachman suggested the City take pictures of each building for documentation purposes.

- Paint – Discussion of how paint color cannot be controlled by the Commission and how paint can damage the integrity of the brick, noting if the brick is unpainted, it should remain that way.
- Mirrored Buildings – There was some history shared about the Ninth District Opportunity offices on Spring Street which was originally an old brick building which housed a car dealership, then The Times, then WDUN, then an office for Attorney Gordon Sawyer who installed the mirrors, and then the Georgia Mutual Insurance Company.
- Restaurants – Discussion was held regarding outdoor seating, painting of sidewalks, cantilever decking and rooftop dining, all of which have been suggested by restaurants to expand and improve the atmosphere of the downtown dining experience. Ms. Sexton stated that sidewalk painting, cantilever decking and rooftop dining are both new items which are addressed in the proposed draft guidelines. Cantilever decking is not recommended in the proposed guidelines. It was noted that if a restaurant was located on the second floor of a building, it would be required to have a sprinkler system.
- Renaissance Study Program – Communications & Tourism Director Catiel Felts stated that they have been working with a UGA student who is a Renaissance Study Program Fellow regarding the streetscapes in the downtown area, particularly where there are no streetscapes and how to improve them. They should have the study results and some options from UGA in the next few weeks.
- Downtown Master Plan – Mrs. Felts also reported that the City Council approved funding for the current fiscal year to complete a downtown master plan.
- Courthouse Annex – There was some discussion about the possibility of tearing down the white marble addition to the 1938 Hall County Courthouse (a/k/a “the Annex”), which was completed in 1976, in order to expose the original Courthouse and make room for additional parking for downtown. It was noted that Transportation Enhancement dollars could be used to fund the restoration.
- Sidewalk Painting – There was some discussion regarding businesses painting the sidewalk in front of their businesses which could be a safety hazard. The City would like to extend the streetscape as far as possible, but definitely along the main thoroughfares, noting the sidewalks need to be pedestrian friendly. It was suggested that downtown be designated as a smoke free area as well.
- Advantages of Designation – Some flexibility is given in the building codes if a building is on the National Register and/or locally designated. There are multiple tax incentives available for rehab/improvements. There would be some control as to what is allowed to be constructed on the fourth side of the square.
- Fire Safety Compliance – Any construction would have to consist of fire treated lumber as downtown is in the fire district.
- Entryways – The proposed guidelines do address the preservation of historic commercial entryways where certain flooring was used, such as mosaic tiles.
- Local Designation – There was discussion regarding the possibility of locally designating downtown and how to present it to the property owners. It was noted that the district must be designated in order for the guidelines to be in effect which could be used as leverage to negotiate any opposition.
- Murals – Existing murals should be maintained as it is considered public art. Also noted that historic preservation and local designation would not be the avenue for encouraging certain styles, designs, etc. of murals or other public art.
- Vacancies – The City is currently working on filling vacant buildings in downtown, noting that people are investing in downtown.

***NOTE: Commissioner Bailey left the meeting at 6:28 p.m.***

Special Projects Manager Jessica Tullar asked Main Street Manager Regina Mansfield to identify supporters of downtown designation before the public outreach begins.

Chairman Bachman thanked Ms. Sexton for her work on the proposed guidelines and Ms. Mansfield for her questions.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m. by Chairman Bachman.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dick Bachman, Chairman

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Judy Foster, Recording Secretary