



City of Richmond

Where History Meets Opportunity

Richmond Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

City Commission Room | 600 Morton Street, Richmond, Texas 77469

Tuesday, April 2, 2019, at 8:00 am.

The Richmond Historical Commission met in a special meeting on Tuesday, April 2, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. Cindy Drabek, Chairperson, called the meeting to order. A quorum was present, with the following members in attendance:

Cindy Drabek
Karen Bleil
Lonnie Meadows
Becky Haas
Jess Stuart
Claire Rogers
Carol Edwards

Staff in attendance: Jose Abraham, *Historic Preservation Officer (HPO)*; Mason Garcia, *Associate Planner*, Gary Smith, *City Attorney*; Howard Christian, *Assistant City Manager*; Jamie Walker, *Public Works Executive Secretary*; Lori Bownds, *Building Official*, Jordan Adams, *GIS Specialist*.

Chairperson Drabek introduced agenda item number A2., public comments, and opened the floor for public feedback for items not listed on the agenda. Hearing no public comment, the agenda item was closed.

Chairperson Drabek introduced agenda item A3. – Workshop on Demolition by Neglect procedures as provided in the Unified Development Code, and discussion about potential Demolition by Neglect in the Historic Overlay District. To open the discussion, Commission member Haas provided background for the special meeting, citing the need for clarification in the Unified Development Code regarding the criteria and procedure for enforcing demolition by neglect within the Historic Overlay District, and advocated for the Richmond Historical Commission to focus on preservation, rather than demolition. To support the discussion, Commission member Haas cited various examples of properties potentially eligible for demolition by neglect within the Historic Overlay District. Amongst the properties discussed included 209 Calhoun Street, the site of an old barbeque stand now adorned with murals; a vacant structure at 101 South 3rd Street; an old hotel located at 206 Morton Street; and 300-308 Morton Street, a property with interior leakage. Commission member Edwards inquired about available grants and funding for property owners to maintain historic properties. Mr. Abraham, HPO, answered that some funding was available through the City, and referred specifically to various grants and programs sponsored by the Development Corporation of Richmond.

At this point, Commission member Haas briefly outlined the current procedure and timetable for citing a property for demolition by neglect, and notifying property owners of these determinations. She explained that currently property owners have 30 days to initially respond to a preliminary determination of demolition by neglect by submitting a stabilization proposal to the HPO for review and approval. However, if the property owner fails to respond to the initial demolition by neglect citation within 30 days, a second notice with a 15-day response window would be sent for follow-up. If the homeowner failed to respond to the second notice of citation within 15 days, the matter would return to the Richmond Historic Commission for a citation hearing, wherein the property owner would be invited to address the Commission's concerns. Ultimately, if the property owner failed to respond to either multiple notices of citation, or invitation for public hearing, the matter would be turned over to the City Attorney's office for action in Municipal Court.

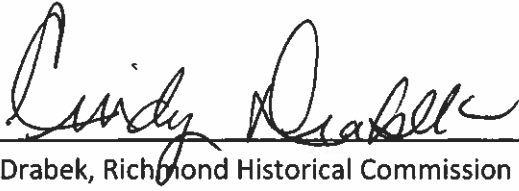
Chairperson Drabek referenced the four aforementioned properties, and asked Building Official Lori Bownds and Mr. Abraham (HPO) if these particular properties had been identified for demolition by neglect. Mr. Abraham indicated that code enforcement has been contacted about the referenced properties. Mr. Abraham elaborated further on staff's current procedure for identifying demolition by neglect, and the timeline for notifying property owners of a determination.

The Commission shifted the discussion back towards the highlighted properties at 209 Calhoun Street, 101 South 3rd Street, 206 Morton Street, 300-308 Morton Street, as well as other nearby buildings in the vicinity of those properties. The Commission members and Mr. Abraham discussed the status of these specific properties, their state of disrepair, and any correspondence with the respective property owners. Additionally, Mr. Robert Haas, former City staff, stated his recommendation for the Commission to reference the 2015 University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) historic building survey when determining the historic status of a property. Chairperson Drabek asked Mr. Abraham for his recommendation on proceeding forward with the demolition by neglect determination for the four discussed properties. Mr. Abraham stated that staff would review the various aesthetic and safety issues afflicting each property, and compile the findings into a report to be presented to the Commission. After a brief discourse, it was agreed that HPO will present an update on staff's activity on this issue at the next Richmond Historical Commission Meeting, set for April 16th, 2019.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Mr. Haas voiced his support of the Richmond Historical Commission's increased activity in managing and maintaining the character of the Historic Overlay District. Mr. Haas expressed his viewpoint about demolition by neglect determinations and emphasized preserving buildings with historic value. Mr. Haas also indicated that staff should aim at being proactive so that a need to demolition by neglect can be avoided.

Hearing no further discussion, Chairperson Drabek adjourned the meeting at 8:31 a.m.

Approved

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cindy Drabek". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Cindy Drabek, Richmond Historical Commission Chair