



City of Richmond

Where History Meets Opportunity

Richmond Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

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

Tuesday, May 21, 2019, at 8:00 a.m.

The Richmond Historical Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, May 21, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. Cindy Drabek, Chairperson, called the meeting to order and a quorum was present, with the following members in attendance:

Carol Edwards
Cindy Drabek
Lonnie Meadows
Becky Haas
Jess Stuart
Karen Bliel

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

Chairperson Drabek introduced agenda item number A2., public comment, and opened the floor for public discussion of items not covered on the agenda. Hearing no public comment, the agenda item was closed.

Chairperson Drabek introduced consent agenda items B1. - Review and approve minutes from April 16, 2019 regular meeting; and B2. - Announce the next Richmond Historical Commission meeting to be held on June 18, 2019 at 8 a.m. Commission member Edwards moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commission member Meadows seconded the motion. The vote for approval was unanimous.

Chairperson Drabek introduced agenda item C1a., Downtown Richmond Updates. No updates were reported.

Chairperson Drabek introduced agenda item C1b., Community and Museum Events updates. No updates were reported.

Chairperson Drabek introduced agenda item C2a., Certificate of Appropriateness for a sign application for Mercy Goods, located at 501 Morton Street. Jose Abraham (HPO) indicated that the application pertains to a sign reface of an existing freestanding sign which meets the

requirements of the Unified Development Code (UDC) and the Historic District Design Guidelines. He also stated that the sign was installed before the formal approval to achieve better visibility and identification at the May 4th, 2019 Artwalk and Motor Madness event. Commission member Edwards moved to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness. Commission member Bliel seconded the motion. The vote for approval was unanimous.

Chairperson Drabek introduced agenda item C2b., Update on preliminary determination of potential demolition by neglect for buildings located at: (a) 209 Calhoun Street; (b) 101 S 3rd Street; (c) 206 Morton Street; (d) 300-308 Morton Street. Mr. Abraham provided the update, detailing that staff had conducted limited inspections of the properties based on which the preliminary determination report was prepared. Mr. Abraham stated that buildings on all the property show signs of deterioration at varying intensities. He added that none of the buildings are occupied and are not in immediate risk of demolition. He also stated that access to these buildings is needed to make detailed assessment of deterioration and health and safety concerns. In conclusion, Mr. Abraham stated that staff's recommendation is to contact the property owners without invoking the Demolition by Neglect provisions of the UDC. He added that doing so would allow staff to inform property owners about the provisions of Demolition by Neglect and also resources available to pursue repairs and upgrades to the subject buildings.


Regarding the building at 209 Calhoun Street, Commission member Haas asked when staff would be contacting the property owner. Mr. Abraham indicated that staff intends to contact the property owners before the next meeting. Commission member Haas added that with passing time the subject building is rotting and that the building should be demolished. In response, Building Official Lori Bownds asked for the reasoning to demolish the property, offering instead that the building added character to the area. City Secretary Laura Scarlato elaborated that old buildings with character makes the historic district a preferred location for photography. Commission member Edwards also advocated her support for preserving the structure and the mural on one of the walls. Commission member Haas clarified that deteriorating properties are not good for the historic district and the commission and staff should prioritize property upkeep. Commission member Meadows indicated his opinion that progress is being made in this matter. Furthermore, Commission member Edwards suggested that staff provide updates on the status of the preliminary demolition by neglect determinations for all of the subject properties.

Mr. Abraham proceeded to discuss the property at 101 S 3rd Street. During the presentation for the report, Commission member Edwards asked for additional clarification regarding the notification of property owners of a demolition by neglect determination. Mr. Abraham offered additional detail on the process for contacting property owners, but stated that staff had not reached that point for any of the subject properties. Following this discussion, Mr. Abraham continued presenting the initial findings for the remaining properties at 206 Morton Street, and 300-308 Morton Street. Commission member Edwards noted during the presentation of the property at 206 Morton Street that the report incorrectly stated the address in certain portions of the report. Mr. Abraham noted this correction.

Mr. Abraham concluded by reiterating staff's overall recommendation to contact the property owners without invoking the Demolition by Neglect provisions. Mr. Abraham stated that contacting property owners outside of an official notice would allow staff to communicate the provisions and minimum expectations set forth in the Unified Development Code, and provide them with the preliminary findings pertaining to their building, and also to offer available resources for maintenance to the owners. Mr. Abraham emphasized that as this was staff's first foray into Demolition by Neglect proceedings, it was paramount to adhere to due process and being fair in terms of informing property owners about the proceedings prior to issuing official notices. Commission member Edwards moved to approve the preliminary determination report, with changes to address typographical error and the added provision that staff would provide monthly progress reports. Commission member Bliel seconded the motion. The vote for approval was unanimous.

There being no further business to be brought before the Richmond Historical Commission, Chairperson Drabek adjourned the meeting at 8:23 a.m.

Approved



Cindy Drabek, Richmond Historical Commission Chair