



City of Richmond

Where History Meets Opportunity

Richmond Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

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

Tuesday, July 16, 2019, at 8:00 am.

The Richmond Historical Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, July 16, 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
Claire Rogers
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*; Anthony Pryor, *Emergency Management Coordinator*

Chairperson Cindy Drabek declared the meeting open.

Chairperson Drabek introduced agenda item number A2., public comment. She asked if there were any public comments. Hearing no public comment the agenda item was closed.

Chairperson Drabek introduced consent agenda items B1. - Review and approve minutes from June 18, 2019 regular meeting; and B2. - Announce the next Richmond Historical Commission meeting to be held on August 20, 2019. Commission member Haas moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commission member Rogers seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous for approval.

Chairperson Drabek introduced agenda item C1a., Downtown Richmond Updates. Commission member Haas reported the following updates:

- Decreased foot and vehicular traffic, in addition to frequently empty parking spots;
- Merchants plan to begin speaking at Commission Meetings, but are devising ways in the meantime to attract more customers;
- Potential buyer for the downtown Hotel;
- The Historic Richmond Association announced a "Motown on Morton Street" for October.

Chairperson Drabek introduced agenda item C1b., Community and Museum Events, and Commission member Rogers provided the following updates:

- Fort Bend Archeological Meeting at the Gus George Academy, on July 16th at 7 pm;
- Movies on Morton Street presentation of “The Goonies”, on Friday, August 2nd;
- The Historic Richmond Association announced a “Motown on Morton Street” event in early October to raise money for ALS research;
- Weekly Fort Bend Museum history events and activities, every Friday morning;
- Daily George Ranch Historical Park summer history events and activities;
- Old Spanish Trail, Hwy 90, is celebrating their 100th Anniversary, and will commemorate a 10 yearlong celebration of the highway, with “The Old Spanish Trail Centennial Convention” held on July 25th, 26th, and 27th, in Houston.

Chairperson Drabek introduced agenda item C2a., Certificate of Appropriateness for a sign application for Zurovec’s Auto & Transmission located at 310 Jackson Street. Mr. Abraham, HPO, stated that this application was reviewed by Mason Garcia, Associate Planner, and he will be presenting the report. Mr. Garcia indicated the application is for a proposed reface of an existing legal nonconforming sign, which is permitted in the Unified Development Code (UDC). He further added that the proposed colors meet the Historic Downtown Guidelines, and that staff is recommending approval of the requested certificate of appropriateness.

Commission member Haas inquired about the definition of a legal nonconforming sign. Mr. Garcia explained that the term “legal nonconforming sign” indicates that a sign was installed legally prior to the adoption of the Unified Development Code (UDC), but does not currently conform to the UDC’s guidelines. Commission member Rogers added that because the sign was already installed, it could be refaced, but not removed and later reinstalled—a statement that Mr. Garcia corroborated. Commission member Rogers inquired about the specific features that classified this sign as nonconforming. Mr. Abraham stated that the sign height had not been previously measured or recorded, and that the measurement could exceed the maximum allowable height stipulated in the UDC. Commission member Haas asked further about various nonconforming signs. Mr. Abraham, HPO clarified that existing non-conforming signs can be refaced, but if a non-conforming sign is damaged to an extent that it needs to be replaced, the replacement must conform to the standards of the UDC. Commission member Rogers moved to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the sign application for Zurovec’s Auto & Transmission located at 310 Jackson Street. Commission member Edwards seconded the motion. The vote for approval was unanimous.

Chairperson Drabek introduced agenda item C2b., Historic District Demolition by Neglect follow-up discussion. Mr. Abraham, HPO, indicated that a letter was sent to property owners of the buildings that were discussed as potential demolition by neglect. The letter included information about the demolition by neglect procedures and requested them to make contact with staff to avoid the demolition by neglect procedures. He updated that staff has not received any response from property owners of the old Theater, and the old exchange hotel building; however, he noted that the old exchange hotel building has a potential buyer who is in the

negotiation process. He added that the letter sent to property owner of 209 Calhoun Street was not delivered and was returned.

Mr. Abraham, HPO, continued and said that Mr. Mike Elliott, property owner of 101 S 3rd Street, responded to the letter and was appreciative of the commission's efforts and expressed his support. Mr. Abraham, HPO added that staff surveyed the building from inside and it appeared that bringing the building up to current codes and making it usable would be challenging. He also noted that Mr. Elliot is exploring his options in terms of either restoring the existing building or build a new building if he is able to purchase any adjoining property in order to have a buffer site. In conclusion, Mr. Abraham, HPO, stated that staff will be working with Mr. Elliot to determine a plan and timeline for the subject site in the coming days.

Mr. Abraham, HPO, briefly talked about the property at 209 Calhoun Street and mentioned that there are multiple property owners, with Mr. Elliot being one of them. He indicated that Mr. Elliot has provided contact information for rest of the property owners so that staff could reach out to them. He also said that a second letter would be sent to property owners who have not responded, and that if property owners do not respond to the second letter, staff will initiate the "Demolition by Neglect" procedure.

Regarding the Old Theater Building at 206 Morton Street, Ms. Lori Bownds, Building Official, stated that the property owner, Ms. Nancy Hentschel, had applied for a temporary driveway permit off Calhoun Street. Ms. Bownds approved the temporary permit under the following conditions:

- The contractor would need to register with the City of Richmond;
- Provision of a site plan indicating the proposed location of the temporary driveway;
- Provision of a property survey, including stormwater prevention plans for the placement of removed grass and dirt debris to prevent runoff and flooding of neighboring properties;
- \$250 incident down-payment.
- Inspection of the property and temporary driveway upon completion.

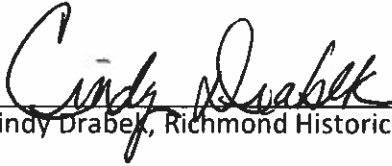
Ms. Bownds added that Ms. Hentschel had yet to respond to the conditions for the permit. Commission member Haas asked if there was a way to reject the permit because the front of the building needs to be repaired first. In response, Ms. Bownds indicated that the temporary driveway in the rear would serve as an access for the construction crew and that staff cannot reject a permit if all requirements are met. Commission member Haas expressed concern about the deterioration of the property, and the potential impact that the building's state could have on surrounding businesses.

Mr. Abraham, HPO proposed that it would be in the best interest of the Commission to consider potential agenda items in advance at each regular meeting. He said this would allow staff and members of the commission sufficient preparation time. He also noted that the City Commission follows the aforementioned procedure. With that, Commission member Haas proposed an

addition of a budget discussion item for the next Commission meeting. Mr. Abraham mentioned that the Planning and Zoning Commission and Richmond Historic Commission budgets had already been submitted for the upcoming fiscal year, but indicated that any specific budgetary needs could be discussed during the next Commission meeting.

There being no further business to be brought before the Richmond Historical Commission, Chairperson Drabek adjourned the meeting.

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