

City of Lockhart
Historical Preservation Commission
October 18, 2017

MINUTES

Members Present: Ronda Reagan, Ron Faulstich, John Lairsen, Kathy McCormick, Juan Alvarez, Jr.

Member Absent: Victor Corpus

Staff Present: Yvette Aguado, Kevin Waller, Dan Gibson

Public Present: Rick Thomson

1. Call to Order. Chair Lairsen called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.
2. Consider the minutes of the August 16, 2017 meeting.

Vice-Chair Reagan moved to approve the minutes, with revisions regarding allowed absences. Commissioner McCormick seconded, and the motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

3. CFA-17-11. Consider a request by Rick Thomson for approval of a Certificate for Alteration to allow a new illuminated wall sign for the existing "Flash Candy and Toys" business on Part of Lot 2, Block 17, Original Town of Lockhart, zoned CCB (Commercial Central Business District) and located at 110 South Commerce Street.

Mr. Waller approached the podium to present Planning Staff's report and a PowerPoint presentation for the proposed sign. The applicant proposes a new illuminated wall sign for the existing "Flash Candy and Toys" business. It will be located above the awning, centered on the upper wall. The sign measures 6 feet wide by 5 ½ feet high, occupying 6.6 percent of the overall front building façade, which is under the 7 percent threshold. The sign will be of metal construction, mounted to the wall with metal brackets, secured by concrete sleeve anchors through the mortar joints in the brick wall, and illuminated with LED lighting. The sign will be illuminated only during business hours after dark.

Vice-Chair Reagan asked when the previous sign was removed, and if it was on the awning.

Applicant Rick Thomson explained that the previous sign was removed before his business opened. He stated that the sign was drilled to the brick and not the awning, making it difficult to remove.

Chair Lairsen asked if any signage was currently on the building.

Mr. Thomson explained that the building's existing signage includes the words "Candy" and "Toys" on the front windows, but that those signs would be removed once the proposed sign is in place.

Vice-Chair Reagan asked if the peach-colored portion of the building, above the awning, was stucco over brick, and if the portion below the awning was painted red.

Mr. Thomson explained that the peach-colored portion was brick that was painted, and the brick below the awning was not a distinct color but may appear red, due to the picture's lighting.

Commissioner Faulstich arrived at 5:38pm.

Vice-Chair Reagan moved to approve CFA-17-11. Commissioner Alvarez seconded, and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

4. Discuss the progress on the Historic Landmarks project.

Mr. Waller explained that there had not been much traction on the Historic Landmarks Initiative since the last meeting. Mr. Waller stated that he and Mr. Gibson are consulting with the School District on the potential future historical designations of the Adams Gym and the old Lockhart High School building on the ML Cisneros Campus. He added that the City will first determine the extent of the proposed improvements to the High School building, prior to having Lockhart ISD formally submit Historic Landmark applications.

Vice-Chair Reagan questioned whether it is a good idea to wait to determine the extent of the proposed improvements, as the purpose is to declare the building a Historic Landmark before any work is completed and before possible damage or changes to the façade take place.

Mr. Gibson explained that the City communicated with the LISD Superintendent, who indicated that LISD would not proceed with Historic Landmark designation until improvements to the High School building are completed. Mr. Gibson continued that based on the plans submitted, LISD will only be changing the windows, which are not original to the building, and may in fact be installing better windows. He explained that the plans do not show any extensive exterior changes or architectural additions that would affect the building's façade.

Vice-Chair Reagan suggested that City Staff inform the School Board of the potential for eligibility of an available grant for designated Historic Landmarks, which could be an incentive for the School District to obtain grant money.

Mr. Gibson stated that after discussions with the Building Official and several emails to LISD officials, there didn't seem to be any issues with the plans submitted as they were mainly for interior renovations except for the windows.

Vice-Chair Reagan inquired as to the thoughts of the School Board regarding the potential designation of the High School building as a Historic Landmark, and expressed her hope that the School District wouldn't demolish the Adams Gym.

Mr. Gibson didn't believe there was an issue with Landmark designation for the Adams Gym, but potentially for the High School building. It would be preferred that the

designation happen after the renovations are completed, so as to avoid going through the Commission and Certificate for Alteration process.

Chair Lairsen stated that if the School Board decides not to submit an application for Landmark designation, they can't be forced. He then asked if there were any other updates on the Historic Landmarks Initiative.

Mr. Waller explained that he had reached out to one other property owner who recently purchased a home that was already on the list of potential Historic Landmarks, and that the owner expressed interest in potentially moving forward with Landmark designation.

Commissioner Faulstich asked if considerations had been given for incentives to designation, such as freezing property taxes.

Mr. Gibson responded that the Historic Districts and Landmarks Ordinance was somewhat amended to offer rebates for Landmark designation, but not specifically tax breaks.

Chair Lairsen suggested that the Commission and Staff discuss tax benefit options for historic preservation at some point in the future, which could later be presented to the City Council.

Mr. Gibson explained that the Council, in consultations with the City Attorney, explored another tax benefit option, but the City Manager did not agree to it, so minimal changes were made to the Ordinance.

Commissioner Faulstich commented that neighboring cities have tax incentive programs, and asked what incentives exist, if any, for Historic Landmark Designation in Lockhart.

Vice-Chair Reagan stated that while older homes require constant upkeep, it is considered maintenance and does not automatically raise taxes.

Chair Lairsen asked if a building permit application were submitted to spend \$50,000 for a minor modification project, would the property value increase.

Commissioner McCormick stated that the property value would not increase until the appraisal is updated.

Chair Lairsen stated that the project would prompt an appraiser to visit the property.

Vice-Chair Reagan stated that a remodel project would not automatically prompt an appraiser to re-assess the property, nor trigger an automatic raise in the property value.

Commissioner McCormick indicated that in years past, she had provided information to the City regarding a rebate program in Galveston which seemed to be successful.

Mr. Gibson explained that the information was considered and discussed with the City Attorney.

Commissioner McCormick asked if a seat continues to remain vacant on the Commission, which City Council member would make the appointment.

Vice-Chair Reagan suggested Mr. Rick Thomson would be a suitable candidate, since he resides in a historical home and has a business in the Historical District.

Commissioner McCormick clarified that the appointed individual does not have to reside within the same district that the Council member represents. She stated that the Historic Districts and Landmarks Ordinance specifies that appointed Commission members should be property owners, business owners, architects, realtors, bankers, or engineers.

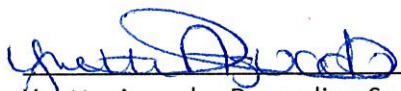
Mr. Gibson read the Ordinance section that specifies the qualifications of Historical Preservation Commission members. He also read the section regarding tax abatement for properties with a Historical designation.

5. Discuss the date and agenda of next meeting, including Commission requests for agenda items.

Mr. Waller stated that the next regularly scheduled meeting would be November 1st, pending applications received.

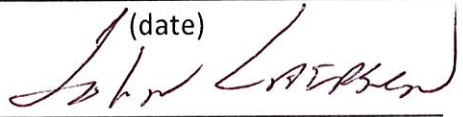
6. Adjournment.

Commissioner Faulstich moved to adjourn the meeting, and Vice-Chair Reagan seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0, and the meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.



Yvette Aguado, Recording Secretary

Approved: 11/3/18

(date)


John Lairsen, Chair