

City of Lockhart
Historical Preservation Commission
January 3, 2018

MINUTES

Members Present: Ronda Reagan, Ron Faulstich, John Lairsen, Kathy McCormick, Victor Corpus, Richard Thomson

Member Absent: Juan Alvarez, Jr.

Staff Present: Yvette Aguado, Kevin Waller, Dan Gibson

Public Present: J. Douglas Phelan

1. Call to Order. Chair Lairsen called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.
2. Consider the minutes of the October 18, 2017 meeting.

Commissioner McCormick moved to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Corpus seconded, and the motion passed by a vote of 5 -0.

3. Discuss a proposal by J. Douglas Phelan to make improvements to the north wall of the World Finance Corporation, located at 100 South Commerce Street. The improvements are considered "Ordinary Maintenance" according to Section 28-10 of the Historic Districts and Landmarks Ordinance, and do not require a Certificate for Alteration application. The property owner is simply soliciting input from the Commission on how best to conduct the project in a way that minimizes degradation to the building.

Mr. Waller approached the podium to present Planning Staff's memo to the Commission and a PowerPoint presentation for the proposed improvements. The proposal is to improve the north wall of the building at 100 S. Commerce Street. The improvements would be made all along the north stone wall, except for that portion along the attorney's office, which is brick and in a good state of repair. One of the improvements includes removal of the existing paint/plaster coating on the north wall with two applications of paint stripper, pressure-washing the wall, and providing water and debris run-off protection on the sidewalk. Another improvement includes miscellaneous repair of the stone areas of the north wall, raking the mortar joints $\frac{3}{4}$ inch deep, and tuck-pointing with mortar resembling the existing mortar as closely as possible. The third improvement includes extending the metal roof coping to cover the brick along the top of the wall, utilizing 26-gauge metal. The owner states that the project would involve no drilling into the stone, and that no repainting of the stone is proposed. He further states that the application of paint stripper, pressure-washing, and metal roof coping extension may not be utilized, but is under consideration. The owner has concerns about pressure-washing, and that water might be retained within the gaps between the stone and mortar, which could lead to expansion in cold conditions and further cracking of the mortar.

Mr. Phelan approached the podium and stated that he was unsure as to what actual changes would be made to the north wall. He restated his interest in soliciting ideas from the Commission. Mr. Phelan further stated that currently there are no problems with the building's interior but thought he would get ahead of any potential future issues with the proposed exterior improvements. A new roof was added to the building about a year ago, and you can see the metal lining along the brick atop the north wall. He referred to the PowerPoint pictures of crumbled stone and paint on the ground below the north wall to explain the water penetration from Hurricane Harvey.

Commissioner Corpus suggested that improvements may have been made to the upper portions of the wall, which might be the cause of any leakage.

Chair Lairsen asked if it would be sufficient for Mr. Phelan to pressure wash down to the original stone and utilize cement blobs, or if he would possibly consider repainting.

Mr. Phelan replied that in conversing with Kevin, Phelan hadn't yet made a decision. Mr. Phelan stated that another option he is considering is to repaint the wall in a similar fashion to that of a nearby building at the southwest corner of San Antonio & Main Streets (building shown in PowerPoint presentation), or to just let mother nature continue to run its course with the existing deterioration.

Chair Lairsen suggested the possibility of removing all paint and going down to the natural stone, and possibly using some type of clear cement sealer for protection.

Commissioner Thomson stated that he worked on a building using sandblasting, but suggested soda blasting for this proposal, which might not be as aggressive. This can clean the wall down to the natural stone, and should be followed by sealing the wall with a two-part epoxy.

Commissioner Faulstich suggested a product called Peel Away that he has used in his home to remove 130-year old paint, and it cut the painters' time in half. It is rubbed on, left overnight, and then peeled back with the old paint coating. He indicated that this product was used on the Masonic Building that houses the Chisholm Trail Ballroom. Commissioner Faulstich shared that it was expensive and could be purchased at Sherwin-Williams.

Mr. Phelan asked if it was a code violation to use the Peel Away procedure and go back to the natural stone.

Vice-Chair Reagan arrived at 5:48 pm.

Vice-Chair Reagan responded that this would not be a violation, but that sandblasting the wall would.

Chair Lairsen stated that it was suggested the applicant could strip the wall to the natural stone and possibly add an epoxy clear-coat to fix the moisture problem but preserve the stone.

Vice-Chair Reagan stated that she was opposed to epoxy clear-coat since it would give the wall a shiny appearance that will deteriorate with time.

Commissioner Faulstich stated that once the paint is stripped, that might be a better time to determine how to proceed.

Commissioner McCormick stated that she was not as familiar with everything discussed as the other Commissioners but believes the final wall composition is the critical component. She understands that further analysis is needed in order to determine the final composition. Commissioner McCormick suggested that Mr. Phelan consider the locations of the utility wiring on the building's exterior when the project begins.

Chair Lairsen reiterated all that was discussed, and that the suggestions made were within the guidelines of the Historic District. He voiced the Commission's appreciation for Mr. Phelan's attendance and desire for feedback before beginning work.

4. Discuss the Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit, as outlined in a flyer provided at the October 17, 2017 Historical Commission Grants and Tax Breaks workshop in Seguin.

Vice-Chair Reagan shared information that was provided at the meeting she attended along with Mr. Waller regarding the Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit. The tax credit offers 25 percent of the qualified project costs for a certified rehabilitation of a historic building in the form of a state franchise tax credit. The flyer presented to Commission members from the workshop also addressed the federal tax credit program and outlines the differences between the state and federal credits, as well as how both credits can work together for a single project. Vice-Chair Reagan also explained that large corporations can apply for a federal tax credit, and the tax credits on a federal tax return are not always able to be used, which allows one to sell the credit. Both State and federal tax credits can be applied for at the same time. Vice-Chair Reagan suggested that it might be beneficial to mail the flyer out to businesses in the Historic District to heighten awareness of the tax credits.

Chair Lairsen asked if buildings with historical designation markers were eligible and solicited further ideas as to how to inform the public of the tax incentives.

Vice-Chair Reagan suggested that an informative seminar be held for the community.

Chair Lairsen asked about the status of the Historic Landmarks Initiative. He also suggested mailing out a letter to solicit interest in a community-wide tax credit seminar, prior to holding the seminar.

Vice-Chair Reagan asked if Planning Staff could draft a flyer for the tax credit seminar for the Commission to review before mailing it out to the public.

Mr. Waller agreed to draft the flyer.

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

Mr. Waller stated that no applications had been submitted for the next regularly scheduled meeting of January 17, the application deadline of which is today (Jan. 3rd). Mr. Waller informed the Commission that they will be notified if applications are received for the February 7 meeting. Mr. Waller also stated that he could draft and email the flyer for the tax credit seminar to the Commission ahead of the next meeting, and then include the flyer in the packet for the meeting.

6. Adjournment.

Commissioner Thomson moved to adjourn the meeting, and Commissioner Faulstich seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0, and the meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Approved: 2/7/18
(date)


Yvette Aguado, Recording Secretary


John Lairsen, Chair