

City of Lockhart
Historical Preservation Commission
February 20, 2019

MINUTES

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

Members Absent: Victor Corpus, Juan Alvarez, Jr.

Staff Present: Yvette Aguado, Kevin Waller, Dan Gibson

Public Present: Cody Kimbell (applicant, Agenda Item 3)

1. Call meeting to order. Chair Lairsen called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.
2. Consider the minutes of the February 6, 2019 meeting.

Commissioner McCormick recommended that the minutes be amended to include the addition of the Texas Historical Commission's Caroline Wright at the top of Page 1, since Ms. Wright spoke about tax credits at the meeting.

Vice-Chair Reagan moved to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Faulstich seconded, and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

3. CFA-19-02. Consider a request by Cody Kimbell and Kana Harris for approval of a Certificate for Alteration for the proposed Bluebonnet Records business to allow a wall sign on Part of Lot 2, Block 13, Original Town of Lockhart, zoned CCB (Commercial Central Business District) and located at 112 East Market Street.

Planning Staff Kevin Waller gave Staff's report explaining the proposed wall sign to be centered on the front building façade above the canopy and painted directly onto the wall, including the use of a PowerPoint presentation, and answered Commissioners' questions. The sign will utilize black lettering and read "Bluebonnet Records" in a stylized, all-caps font, with two Bluebonnet flower stem graphics, also black in color, beneath the business name. The lettering and graphics will be located on a painted white rectangular background measuring 6 ½ feet wide by 4 1/3 feet high. Staff recommended approval, if the Commission were to find the white sign background acceptable.

Applicant Cody Kimbell, 404 E. Market St., Lockhart, approached the podium and responded to Commissioners' questions, and considered their suggestions regarding design elements.

Planning Staff Dan Gibson also gave his opinion and suggestions.

Commissioner Thomson asked for clarification as to whether the Commission would vote on the sign's design or how it was to be applied to the building.

Mr. Kimbell stated that he is open to any suggested modifications to the sign.

Chair Lairsen stated that the Commission's primary concern is how the sign would be applied to the building, and also that he appreciated additional input.

Commissioner Thomson moved to approve CFA-19-02, with the option to remove the sign's white background. Commissioner Faulstich seconded, and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

4. Consider the draft Historic Property Preservation Tax Abatement Application, with any suggested revisions.

Discussion ensued regarding the draft Historic Property Preservation Tax Abatement Application.

Mr. Gibson stated that adopting a fee for the application must be passed by City Council via Resolution.

Mr. Waller stated that according to the Historic Districts and Landmarks Ordinance, a fee for the Tax Abatement Application is not required. He added that since the application requires review by Planning Staff, the Historical Preservation Commission, and City Council, a fee would help to recover the cost of Staff's time.

Mr. Gibson explained that the proposed fee range shown on the draft application, based upon property size, is the same as that used for other Planning Department application forms, with the exception being the Subdivision Plat Application.

Vice-Chair Reagan suggested adding the term "City" in front of "State or National Historic Designation(s)..." on Page 1 of the application, under the "Historical Significance" section.

Commissioner McCormick discussed an email correspondence received from Coyle Buhler that was provided the Commission at the beginning of the meeting, with Mr. Buhler's suggestions for the application.

Chair Lairsen noted that Mr. Buhler suggested a supplemental information sheet be provided with the application, summarizing the review process set forth in the Ordinance, with additional clarification on certain terms. Buhler also suggested adding a companion worksheet to determine tax abatement eligibility, the amount of tax abatement approved/recommended, and the review process timeline. Finally, Mr. Buhler recommended that Item 4 on Page 2 of the application, under the "Submittal Requirements" section, include the following at the end of the sentence: "...and a copy of the property's current Appraisal Card and property tax record on file at the Caldwell County Appraisal District."

Chair Lairsen offered that Item 4 on the draft application is acceptable as written and is what the Ordinance requires. He suggested adding that taxes must be current on one of the supplemental information sheets, and that the tax abatement applies only to City of Lockhart taxes.

Vice-Chair Reagan suggested that the second line of the application's heading read "City Tax Abatement Application", instead of simply "Tax Abatement Application".

Mr. Gibson stated that the application's heading should be consistent with any guidelines set forth in the Ordinance.

Vice-Chair Reagan indicated that she disagreed with the proposed fee range.

Chair Lairsen stated that the intent of the tax abatement program is to promote historic preservation and encourage owners of historic properties to restore their homes. An application fee, however, may deter owners, as it would be just another cost on top of that of restoration.

Commissioner Faulstich suggested a two-year grace period for each applicant before an application fee is charged.

Vice-Chair Reagan suggested that the fee mirror that of a building permit for the project and should not be based upon lot size.

Commissioner Faulstich inquired as to how much tax abatement is allowed.

Vice-Chair Reagan suggested either a flat application fee or a variable fee based upon the cost of the project.

Chair Lairsen suggested the fee be designated a processing fee, set at \$50.00.

Mr. Gibson explained that with regard to the variable fee structure, projects for downtown properties would be \$125.00, essentially creating a flat fee for downtown projects. He also stated that the City's fees are significantly lower than those of other cities.

Commissioner Faulstich inquired again as to how the tax abatement amount is calculated.

Mr. Waller replied that the minimum tax abatement allowed is the equivalent of the applicant's City property taxes paid for the previous two years, with a maximum of five years. Beyond this, the abatement would be assessed at 50% for an additional five years.

Vice-Chair Reagan asked if her bill for an air conditioning install was \$15,000.00 and the property taxes paid were \$4,000.00, how is the abatement amount determined.

Commissioner McCormick expressed that charging an application fee may be a deterrent, especially since the Certificate for Alteration applications brought before the Commission have no fee.

Chair Lairsen explained that the fee options at this point are to offer a two-year grace period, a \$125.00 flat fee, or a \$125.00 fee upon approval.

Commissioner Faulstich stated that a fee should be charged to help recoup the cost of Staff time.

Chair Lairsen recommended the \$125.00 flat fee, with no refunds if the application is denied.

Commissioner Faulstich moved to approve the Tax Abatement Application with a \$125.00 flat fee, add the term "City" to Page 1 of the application form under the third line of the "Historical Significance" section, and add the supplemental information sheets to the application as discussed. Commissioner Thomson seconded, and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

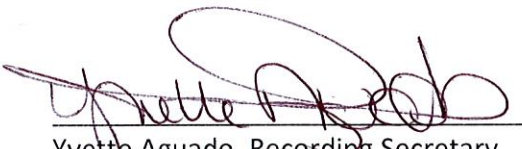
5. Discuss the date and agenda of next meeting, including Commission requests for agenda items.

Commission members suggested that Staff discuss Commission absences with City Secretary Connie Constancio.

Mr. Waller reported that two applications have been submitted for the next regularly scheduled meeting of March 6, 2019. One application is for new signage at the Caracara Brewing Company, and the other, a roof replacement at the Gaslight-Baker Theatre storage building.

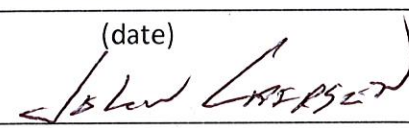
6. Adjournment.

Commissioner Faulstich moved to adjourn the meeting, and Commissioner Thomson seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0, and the meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.



Yvette Aguado, Recording Secretary

Approved: 3/6/19

(date)


John Lairsen, Chair