

Historic Preservation Commission

December 12, 2017, 5:30 p.m.

Council Auditorium

City Hall, 103 North Perry Street

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Dr. Richard Bailey, Chair

Ms. Carole King, Vice-Chair

Mrs. Sangernetta Gilbert Bush

Mr. Walter Bush

Mr. James Long

Dr. Dallas Hanbury

Mr. Brian Mann

Mr. Douglas McCants

PLANNING CONTROLS DIVISION

Thomas M. Tyson, Executive Secretary

The next scheduled meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission is January 9, 2018, at 5:30 p.m. in Council Auditorium, City Hall.

Approval of Actions from the November 14, 2017 Meeting

I. Old Business

a. Review of draft of outbuilding guidelines

- An application would be required
- Staff may approve if certain conditions are met:
 - Building not to exceed 100 square feet
 - No other outbuilding on the property (multiple buildings pose other issues from a zoning standpoint)—must be verified
 - Meets Building Code requirements/zoning requirements (setback from property lines/separation from other structures)
 - Shed or gable roof (no gambrel/barn roofs)
 - Lap siding (wood or cementitious); T111 panels need to have battens applied over the groove to be acceptable; board and batten; wood or cementitious shake; brick. No plastic, no metal.
 - Foundation—skids, piers, slab
 - If visible from the street, screening required (fences would still require Board approval).
 - Roof material: any material
 - Windows—any material: sash, awning, picture, skylight
 - Doors—any material, need to swing not roll up

b. Honorary registry for historic properties (Long)

II. New business

c. Topics for HPC presentations

(Format—15-20 minutes by local speaker, visuals, public encouraged to attend)

Last year we kicked off several meetings with a short, educational power point on various topics (designation process, ARB review, historic districts, etc.) The following is a list generated last year with a few things I've added this year. The HPC is charged with developing topics, and identifying a good speaker to cover them (because this year Carole and I did all of them, and I know I'm not that interesting).

Montgomery's Historic Districts—where they are, how old, history 101, etc. **(covered some of this in 2017)**

- Residential
- Commercial
- Individual

Anatomy of a House—general terminology of components

Montgomery's Architectural Styles—overview with architects/pattern books

Researching Your House's History—process and resources available

Living in a Historic District (covered in 2017)

- Historic Preservation Commission
- Architectural Review Board regulations

Taking Care of Your Old House—maintenance, inspections

Historic Streetscapes and Gardens—appropriate period plantings and placement

History of the Jackson Community House

Overview of Montgomery County Archives

Invite new directors of Landmarks Foundation (hired) and Montgomery County Historical Society (yet to be hired) to talk about their organizations

Invite someone from the Montgomery Improvement Association (Joe Caver?) to talk about their organization and history

Invite heads of various museums to talk about their collections and resources (Archives, Hank Williams, Rosa Parks, Fitzgerald, etc)

d. Developing an Annual Work Plan for 2018

For several years, the HPC has been presented with its powers and duties and a list of potential projects/activities for the following year. Last year the HPC kicked off an awards program and did some of the aforementioned educational presentations. It might be helpful to have a discussion about what you think the HPC should be, because it can do more than just hand out signs.

Powers and duties of the HPC

a. Sec. 15-34. - Powers and duties. (Montgomery City Code)

The commission shall have the following powers and duties and shall be authorized to:

- (1) Preserve and protect buildings, structures and sites of historic and architectural value in the historic districts designated pursuant to this ordinance and previously designated pursuant to Ordinance No. 10-91.
- (2) Prepare a survey of and maintain an inventory of all historic and architecturally significant property in the city.
- (3) Recommend to the mayor and city council specific buildings, structures, sites and districts for designation as historic properties or districts.
- (4) Restore and preserve any historic properties acquired by the city or the commission.
- (5) Promote acquisition of facade and conservation easements by the city or by the commission.
- (6) Develop and conduct educational programs on historic projects, properties and districts.

- (7) Make such investigations and studies of matters relating to historic preservation as the city or the commission deems necessary and appropriate for the purposes of this chapter.
- (8) Apply for funds to carry out the purposes and responsibilities of the commission from municipal, county, state, federal and private agencies and sources.
- (9) Purchase, sell, contract to purchase, contract to sell, own, encumber, lease, mortgage and insure real and personal property in carrying out the purposes and responsibilities of the commission.
- (10) Investigate, survey and process nominations of properties to the National Register of Historic Places.
- (11) Investigate, survey and process applications for certification of historic properties for tax credits for preservation expenditures.
- (12) Contract with other municipal, county, state, federal and private agencies and organizations to perform historic preservation related functions.
- (13) Approve design guidelines based on the secretary of the interior's standards for rehabilitation; and
- (14) Exercise such further powers as the commission may deem reasonably necessary and proper to carry out the purposes, responsibilities and powers of the commission.

(Ord. No. 28-2004, pt. I, § 4, 4-6-2004; Ord. No. 11-2007, 2-6-2007)

b. Food for thought

This came from a listserv thread on design guidelines, but I think it's important to keep in the back of your mind as we move through this process. This is from Bill Schmickle, who wrote *The Politics of Historic Districts: a Primer for Grassroots Preservation* and *Preservation Politics: Keeping Historic Districts Vital*:

“There is also the matter that, in my experience, many supporters of a historic district are in it for reasons other than preservation, for interests not addressed by the SOI (Secretary of the Interior’s Standards). I recently did a workshop attended by more than a hundred HPC commissioners and planning staffers. I asked how many were involved in their districts mainly for preservation. My rough estimate is that about 15% raised their hands. The remainder said they had other controlling interests: property values, prosperity, sense-of-place, quality of life. Thus, a district aimed at revitalization while securing the built environment may do better by having design guidelines that facilitate broad change rather than more tightly trying to gate-keep change.”

Design Guidelines

The HPC is charged with developing guidelines for the ARB to use in evaluating applications. Our current guidelines were done in 1985....

Neighborhood preservation plans

Related to guidelines and the above quote. Work with neighborhoods (= public input meetings) to develop both a working understanding of the character defining features of the neighborhood (sidewalks, trees, open porches, types of fencing, etc) as well as the neighborhood goals (e.g. investment in neglected properties outweighs rebuilding chimneys) that would be adopted by the neighborhood associations and the HPC for the ARB to use as a working document to help them evaluate projects. Plans would be re-evaluated every X number of years, etc.

Local resources

Compile a non-endorsement list of known contractors and suppliers that either do sensitive historic work (know to replace materials in kind) or supply materials that the ARB would accept as replacements. This has largely fallen to window sources, but lately we've had issues with people wanting storage buildings and most of the cheap pre-fab sheds do not meet the ARB guidelines (not compatible with the main dwelling, e.g. no overhanging eave, metal sheeting or vertical paneled siding).

Revamping the Historic Sign Program

As costs rise for the signs (when I got the sign for my house 13 years ago, it was \$10, now we have to charge \$40), it may be worth exploring other, more durable options as the cost is approaching a point where it exceeds the value. There are several options available:

- Cast aluminum signs, customized
- Cast resin signs, customized
- Color "printed" signs that look like the current signs that are UV resistant and scratch resistant (current signs fade fairly quickly)
- A standard seal—could be the logo of the fountain with the Historic Building of Montgomery on a round seal with no customization, but clearly brands it as HPC approved.

Most of these options will cost more, but will also yield a better product. A new sign would need a size, shape, design, color, material, etc. The color printed sign is a max size is 10"x16". A sample of that will be provided at the meeting. The current sign is approximately 14"x17".

Another component of this discussion should include whether or not the HPC, with a new sign program, wants to recognize remuddled houses as historic, or just up the bar. A house would not need to be pristine, but would need to retain its essential character. Or does everyone get a gold star?

Education

Old House workshops. Hands on, how to take care of your old house programming. Huntsville held one in a brewery last year.

Preservation Month

May is National Historic Preservation Month. HPC pushed this to June last year, we need to try to hit the Preservation Month target. Carole King and Brian Mann have volunteered to work as liaisons with Landmarks Foundation, with whom we have agreed to hold a joint program (and this means the HPC organize and recruit volunteers, Christy can't do this by herself, and Christy and Carole did the food last year).

Board Training

For HPC and ARB—annual refresher. As the education arm of the historic boards, you could establish a training program that addresses local board needs and then we can find a slate of speakers/teachers who might be able to offer the training.

Survey and Registration

Help staff identify buildings/areas that need to be surveyed and assist with the research and preparation of Alabama Register and National Register nominations. Capitol Heights is

launching a renewed effort to designate the remainder of the neighborhood, their survey is out of date and needs to be redone this winter.

Honorary registry

We've discussed this at previous meetings, but this could be part of a work plan. This would include an application, application standards (what information needs to be included? What makes an application complete?), assistance for homeowners who struggle with the forms, a compilation of available local resources (who has what information where). Does this take the place of the sign program? Do we replace the sign program with this and develop signs for these properties and require more information be provided?

Develop a "Preservation Leadership Course"

Mobile offers a 6 week spring course (1-1.5 hours) that covers history/historic districts, architecture, law (rules and regs and where they come from), one class date is touring a building that's boarded up or under renovation, and finish with a picnic in Magnolia Cemetery. We could charge a fee and have that deposited into a special project fund if there are activities the HPC would like to be able to undertake.