

Montevallo Historic Preservation Commission
Minutes
February 20, 2024
6:00 p.m.
Parnell Memorial Library

Members present: Janice Seaman, Susan Godwin, Sherry Vallides, James Salter, Veronica Bailey, Tara Brantley

Members absent: Melinda Nix, Bill Glosson, Kenneth Dukes

A quorum was established and the meeting called to order at 6:08 pm.

Old Business:

Minutes from the December 5, 2023 meeting were not available for approval and will be reviewed at a future meeting.

T. Brantley stated that on December 5, 2023, M. Nix had provided minutes from the August 17, 2023 meeting of the Architectural Review Board for the MHPC to approve. T. Brantley had requested that M. Nix include a reference to the municipal code in those minutes. The MHPC voted to approve that change. M. Nix did include the reference, as agreed, and the minutes were posted on the city website. However, at the February 20, 2024 meeting of the MHPC, T. Brantley noted that the reference made the minutes more confusing for the public to understand, lacking further clarification. She asked whether the minutes could still be modified. S. Godwin said that they could. T. Brantley suggested that an explanation of Sec. 2-294 n (1) of the municipal code would help to clarify what had taken place in the meeting. The minutes from August 17, 2023 also did not mention that a vote was taken in which the ARB voted 5 to 2 in favor of rejecting the city's application for demolition of the Victory Building at 555 Main Street. J. Seaman's statement attached to the minutes does not make sense without this explanation. A motion was made by S. Vallides to approve these changes to the minutes of the ARB meeting dated August 17, 2023. The motion was seconded by S. Godwin, and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

J. Salter presented the application for wording on the plaque for Epsibeth Baptist Church. T. Brantley made a motion to approve the wording of the plaque for Epsibeth Baptist Church as presented, seconded by S. Vallides. Motion passed unanimously.

Other Business:

S. Vallides reported that after visiting the cemetery at Shoal Creek Park, she and S. Godwin noticed that all of the markers from the GPR archaeological survey had been removed from the gravesites. Only the marker for the grave of Elizabeth Lawler remained. She suspected that the city crew had removed the markers when they cut the grass, and suggested that the city would now have to pay for another survey in order to accurately re-mark all the graves. She volunteered to contact the University of Alabama to get the satellite images of the cemetery. S. Vallides also expressed a need for clarification as to who is in charge of the cemetery, the Shoal Creek Park Foundation or the MHPC, since it is a public historic property. Additionally, she stated for the record that the MHPC initiated the cemetery survey project, and not the Shoal Creek Park Foundation, as was printed in the *Chamber Chatter*.

J. Seaman stated that it is now going on four years that nothing has been done to restore the Mahler house except for a new roof over the garage. This inaction constitutes demolition by neglect.

J. Seaman also stated that changes were being made to downtown historic properties that would result in them no longer being eligible for listing in the National Register. She referenced vinyl siding being added to Smitherman's Pharmacy as a prime example, which is not in keeping with the Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, and asked who (if anyone) is approving these changes?

T. Brantley proposed that the MHPC look at creating a committee under Sec. 2-295 (a) of the municipal code: *Expedited review procedures for approval of routine maintenance*, which allows for the following:

"The commission may adopt expedited review procedures for approval of routine maintenance to historic properties or to buildings or structures in historic districts. Routine maintenance to historic properties includes ordinary maintenance or repair of any exterior architectural or environmental feature in or on a historic property to correct deterioration, decay, or damage, or to sustain the existing form that does not involve a material change in design, material, or outer appearance. Expedited review procedures shall waive the requirements for submission of an application for a certificate of appropriateness and for consideration at a public meeting."

T. Brantley stated that this would allow property owners – especially those in the business district – to get quick approval for maintenance and repairs. They would not have to wait for the next ARB meeting, would not be required to apply for a COA, and would not require a public meeting to get approval.

J. Seaman pointed out that it is time to elect new officers for 2024, but that this should be done at the next meeting. She also said that she planned to step down as chair of the MHPC.

T. Brantley made a motion to adjourn, seconded by S. Godwin. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm.