



HAMMOND HISTORIC DISTRICT

*Minutes of the Hammond Historic District Commission  
October 18th, 2017 11:00A.M.  
Hammond City Council Chamber- 312 East Charles*

- Meeting called to order by Chairman, Mr. Ryan Faulk at 11:00 am. Verification of meeting notice given by Administrative Director, Ms. Leah Solomon.
- Roll call taken:
  - Present: Jessica Shirey, Howard Nichols, Marguerite Walter, Shauna Seals, Ryan Faulk, Susan Seale, and Jen White
  - Absent: N/A
- Motion to approve the minutes for September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017 by Mr. Nichols. Second by Mrs. Shirey. Vote taken with unanimous approval.
- Old Business:
  - 110 N. Cate (Courtyard Café) – Signage
    - Application presented by business owner, Rose Belcher
    - *The applicants are adding to their proposed window signage an interior hanging “open” sign similar to that proposed by Boutique de Fumee in their application. Otherwise all window signage is included in the application and remains under 20% coverage. Mrs. Shirey points out that the open sign proposed has a “flash” setting, which would not be permitted in the district per the guidelines. Ms. Belcher notes that while the setting exists, she does not prefer it and therefore does not use it. Mr. Faulk asks if the business hours will be posted. Ms. Belcher answers that they will not for the time being. Mrs. Walter confirms with Ms. Belcher that future signage should come before the Commission prior to installation.*
    - Mr. Faulk asks if there is any public input. No takers.
    - Motion to approve the application for window signage by Mr. Faulk. Second by Mr. Nichols. Vote taken with unanimous approval.
  - 207 E. Thomas (Mojitos Bistro) – Signage
    - Application presented by business owner Jose Valencia
    - *Ms. Solomon happened upon Mr. Valencia installing a primary sign, which was approved previously in design, onto the brick exterior of the building immediately adjacent. Ms. Solomon explains that she notified Mr. Valencia that this new installation location was not approved and therefore would have to come before the Commission – particularly because it appeared that some of the bolt points were through the brick. Also, this new sign location is not actually on Mr. Valencia’s building and therefore those building owners (205 E. Thomas) would need to sign off on the change. An eyewitness account claimed that the bolts for the sign were going through the brick, but Mr. Valencia’s sign installer claimed that he specifically only went through the mortar. Mr. Valencia continues that he tried to follow*

*the vertical lines of the mortar joints and thinks that his installer is telling the truth. Mr. Faulk states that with the sign off of the building owner, the photographs of the placement look close to the mortar. The only way to be sure would be to take down the sign. Mrs. Shirey asks why the sign placement changed. Mr. Valencia explains that the sign was too heavy for the aluminum awning where it was originally proposed and approved to hang. He mentions that the installer mentioned the brick was too difficult to drill through so he specifically went through the mortar. Mrs. Seals states that it appears that some of these bolts are through the mortar, but she doesn't want to take it down to find out. Mr. Nichols expresses concern that if the Commission doesn't do anything about the potential demolition of brick in this case, a negative precedent will be set. Mrs. Shirey brings up that this could have been avoided if the applicant came before the Commission prior to installation, which is an issue the district has as a whole with a lot of applications. Had constituents come before the Commission, actions detrimental to buildings could have been avoided in a lot of recent cases. Mrs. Seale asks if this can be made an exception, but Mrs. Shirey asks if that fixes the problem of this happening as frequently as it does. She asks Mr. Faulk directly if in this case there will be continual active damage to the brick over time like there was on a previous instance of brick demolition. Mr. Faulk explains that it is under an awning and it is only the outermost layer of brick affected, therefore it is not as detrimental as a steel through bolt from the interior of the building, for instance. The one or two damaged bricks can be patched or replaced relatively easily. When the sign comes down, it will need to be repaired. Mrs. White and Mrs. Seals voice concern that it will not be repaired when the sign comes down and the next building owner will use existing holes in brick to create more holes for his/her purposes. How can the Commission prevent that? Mr. Faulk asks if a fine is being requested. Mrs. Seals says that seems to be the only option to keep discouraging these actions. Mrs. Walter states that it should be fixed instead of fined. Mr. Nichols asks if it is appropriate to request that the sign be removed, the holes repaired, and the sign re-installed through the mortar because that would be following the rules of the historic district guidelines. Mrs. Shirey clarifies that there is no issue with the sign or the sign's location, but only with the mounting method. Mrs. Seals would like more information before voting on a motion. Mr. Faulk asks Mr. Valencia to take more photographs of the site to document and return before the Commission with close ups. Mr. Faulk states that if it's in the brick it will need to be repaired, but if it is not then this is moot.*

- Motion to approve application for new signage location, but remove, repair and re-place by Mrs. Shirey. Second by Mrs. Walter. Vote taken with approval from all Commissioners except for Mrs. Seals, who abstained.
- 219 W. Thomas (Vantage Health) – Signage
  - Application presented by representative from Gulf South Signs Kimberly Gremillion
  - *Mrs. White asks Mrs. Gremillion to confirm that the sign is the same as the previous application in size and design, but that it is now to be hung on the front elevation and not the side. Mrs. Shirey asks if it will be centered on the front elevation. Mrs. Gremillion says it will. Mrs. Seale ensures that the mounting will go into the mortar, which Mrs. Gremillion confirms and continues that the sign will be hung perpendicular to the building and double-faced. The previous application only approved the door vinyl, so both the primary sign design and placement are up for approval.*

- Motion to approve application for primary signage by Mrs. Shirey. Second by Mrs. Seale. Vote taken with unanimous approval.
- 119 E. Thomas (Sweet Rolls) – Signage
  - Application presented by business owner Olaf Ross
  - *Mr. Ross explains that he returned to his sign maker with the window vinyl design that was established in the previous HHDC meeting. The issue with splitting a large logo between the two large panes, as was discussed previously, was that the mullion between the windows is too thick (3 inches). The design proposed now still adheres to the HHDC requirement that the logo not be repeated in consecutive windows and it is less than 20% coverage. The application's turned in render doesn't reflect this new design because of the late discovery that it wouldn't work. Mr. Ross explains that there will be swooping script in one window with the logo in the other. Mr. Faulk agrees that this is acceptable and Mrs. Walter asks how the Commission can approve a design based on a verbal description. Mrs. Seale asks if the graphic artist could send a new render with dimensions to the office. Mrs. Shirey recommends that the applicant send the new design to Ms. Solomon, who can ensure it suits this description and put on file.*
  - Motion to approve the application as described pending revised graphics by Mrs. Shirey. Second by Mrs. White. Vote taken with unanimous approval.
- New Business:
  - 206 E. Thomas (Boutique de Fumee) – Signage
    - *No applicant in attendance. Application receives automatic denial.*
    - There is a brief discussion of 206 E. Thomas and the potential violation of brick demolition as Mr. Faulk found the owner, Todd Delaune, installing a large window at the rear elevation of the building that was not approved by the Commission.
      - *Ms. Solomon explains that Mr. Delaune was issued a building permit and COA because the building plans that the Commission approved in a previous meeting did include the rear window replacement. Even though it wasn't specifically discussed in the meeting, it was technically approved. Ms. Solomon provides the plans on file from the application. Mrs. Shirey recalls that only the storefront was discussed. Mr. Delaune was not in attendance to present and therefore the issue cannot be discussed further.*
  - 207 E. Thomas (Mojitos Bistro) CONTINUED – Signage
    - Jose Valencia returns to present close ups
    - *Mr. Valencia provides close-up photographs of the sign's four corners where the bolts are to show the mortar trajectory. Ms. Solomon notes that one corner looks in the brick, although it could just be in the corner of the course. Mr. Faulk examines the photos and passes them along the Commission. Mr. Valencia appreciates why this was an issue and believes that everything is in the mortar. After deliberation, Mr. Faulk agrees that at least three are in the mortar. The top right is the only questionable bolt. Mrs. Seale asks how we then resolve this question and Mrs. Shirey asks if the Commission is satisfied with at least three bolts being through the mortar. Removing the sign would do more harm than good, therefore the consensus is that the Commission is appeased. Mr. Faulk states for the record*

- that they do not condone installation through brick, but it looks like there was a reasonable effort to get the bolts through the mortar.*
- Motion to retract the first motion made for 207 E. Thomas by Mrs. Shirey. Second by Mrs. Seale. Vote taken with unanimous approval.
  - Motion to accept the new application for placement of primary sign by Mrs. Shirey. Second by Mrs. Seale. Vote taken with unanimous approval.
- 111 N. Magnolia (Residence) – Exterior Renovations
    - Application presented by the project contractor Steve Emmons
    - *Mrs. White goes on the record to say that she’s excited to see what is being done. Mrs. Shirey echoes these sentiments to thank the owner for purchasing the house and moving quickly to restore it. Mr. Nichols asks about the curved porch on the south side because the application makes no reference to it. He continues that it is a recent addition (within the last 20 years). Mr. Emmons answers that they will be keeping it, but removing the “wedding cake” steps that were an abandoned project. The porch will just be restored in its current profile. Mrs. Shirey asks if the property will be commercial or residential. The building owner, John Exnicios, answers that it will be residential. Mr. Nichols asks about the front door because he sees that it will be replaced, but he could not recall the current door. Mr. Emmons answers that it’s a 6-panel Lowes door that doesn’t fit the opening. Mr. Faulk asks the reasoning behind removing the bottom sashes of the windows on the current north elevation. Mr. Emmons answers that it is to create space for kitchen cabinets on the interior. The decorative elements would be saved and then the new window height would be 4 foot reusing the decorative sashes. Mr. Emmons asks about options for covered parking on the back of the house. There is an open driveway now that leads up to the non-historic “carriage house.” Mr. Emmons also asks if the Commission would prefer that carriage house demolished or restored. Mrs. Shirey references the guidelines about garages and outbuildings as it specifies retaining only historic garages and outbuildings. Mr. Faulk says that it sounds like a porte cochere and that it would be appropriate for such a thing to be attached via breezeway to the porch. Before any plans or demolition, the applicant must come again before the Commission. Mrs. White asks if what the plans for the windows on the north elevation is in keeping with the guidelines. Mrs. Walter believes that it keeps with the character of the house and the general profile. Mrs. Shirey reads over the guidelines to confirm that the proposal is in keeping with the guidelines. Ms. Solomon asks about what the applicant intends to do with the colored glass. Mr. Emmons answers that the plan is to replace with clear glass or clear leaded glass. The plan is to neutralize the house, so the color doesn’t fit as well with that vision. Ms. Solomon states that the reason she asks is because Victorian architectural styles, particularly Queen Anne, had main tenets of asymmetry and polychromatic exteriors. Therefore because the plan is the paint the house white, which is in style right now, maintaining the polychromatic windowpanes would keep true to the intentions of the style. She asks Mr. Nichols if he can confirm that those colored glass panes are historic and he states that they are at least 60 years old as his memory of the house since the beginning of his tenure in Hammond has them there. Mr. Nichols continues that it was very common to have colored glass in upscale homes. Mr. Faulk agrees that the colored glass is a part of the character of this house and that it should stay. Mr. Faulk asks about plumbing in HVAC as it could affect the exterior. Mr. Emmons answers that the HVAC units will be behind the house and there will otherwise be minimal if any new intrusion. Mr. Emmons asks about the roof shingle options. The plan is to take the current asbestos roof off*

- and go with an architectural shingle. Mr. Nichols expresses that he believes that this house originally had a shake roof. Mr. Faulk requests that Mr. Emmons follow up with the asphalt shingle style to the office. Mrs. Shirey asks if the porch columns are original. Mr. Emmons states that the current columns are older wood if not original, so they will be rehabbed and restored. Mrs. Shirey asks what exactly the Commission is approving. Mr. Faulk states that the applicant is proposing to enclose a rear porch, restore all exterior elements in-kind, maintain the colored glass but remove bottom sashes on the north elevation, and use architectural shingles for the roof. Ms. Solomon clarifies that the applicant will need to return for demolition of the carriage house, construction of the carport, and paint color.*
- Mr. Faulk asks for public input. No takers.
  - Motion to approve the application except for the replacement of colored glass with clear by Mrs. Shirey. Second by Mr. Faulk. Vote taken with unanimous approval.
- 205 E. Thomas (Our Mom's) – Signage
    - Application presented by Arms Signs representative Trevor Davidge
    - *Mr. Faulk asks if the existing neon on the owners' current building (Your Mom's on Morris Ave.) has separate or engaged letters. Mr. Davidge answers that they are separate. Mr. Faulk continues that the proposed halo lighting has come before the Commission before and his concern about this type of lighting has to do with its placement within the district. It is not cohesive with its neighbors and Mr. Faulk is not in support of this type of lighting for this building. He recommends neon. Mr. Davidge responds that his clients are against neon. Mrs. White asks about external lighting and Mr. Davidge answers that they do not prefer it. His clients are looking to have an exact match to their Baton Rouge location, which has halo lighting. Mr. Faulk points out that while halo lighting can be considered a loophole around the design guidelines' definition of internally-lit as "shining through the face of the letter," the HHDC's establishing ordinance expressly prohibits internal lighting without an exception approved by the Commission. Mrs. Shirey echoes these sentiments as they are outside the character of the main street. Mrs. Seale states that she sees no reason why it is necessary to match the Baton Rouge location's lighting. Ms. Solomon asks the issue with neon to which Mr. Davidge responds that his clients are concerned patrons on the balcony could drop things onto the neon and break it. Mrs. Shirey and Mr. Faulk offer alternatives to protect the neon with a plexi-glass barrier or channel letters that the neon could sit within. Mrs. Shirey infers that the clients are simply against neon and Mr. Davidge confirms this. Mr. Nichols offers that lighting on top of the canopy could shine up onto the sign.*
    - Motion to approve the size, lettering, and location of the sign, but not the lighting by Mrs. White. Second by Mrs. Seals. Vote taken with unanimous approval.
- Updates From Director:
    - Preservation Training Grant
      1. The historic district commission was awarded a \$24,000 grant from the Louisiana State Certified Local Government Program to host the annual preservation commission training session in the spring. The purpose of the grant is also to dole out portions as smaller grants grants to ensure commissioner attendance.
    - Door hangers were printed for the Central Hammond Historic Structures Survey.
    - The budget is in good order

- Potential November Meeting Date Adjustment

- 1. Because of holiday and travel issues (November's meeting is currently set for the 22<sup>nd</sup> the day before Thanksgiving), Ms. Solomon presents a couple of options for date changes. The Commission can split the month with two meetings on November 8<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> as an application catchall, pick one new date for the month, or give the option of a special session if anyone needs it. The Commission agrees to move the meeting to November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

- Mrs. Shirey brings up concerns over proliferation of banners in the District as well as "open" signs that have a flash option (which is not permitted in the design guidelines).

- Mrs. Seale asks about the 200 SW Railroad building. Have they come before the Commission for their vinyl window signage? Ms. Solomon answers that the tenants in the building that have not applied are not currently in the district as they face SW Railroad instead of Morris Ave.

- Motion to adjourn by Mr. Nichols. Second by Mrs. Seale. Vote was taken with unanimous approval.

*NEXT MEETING: November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017*