

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

May 4, 2021

MONTGOMERY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Waddell declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Present: Jeffrey Waddell, Britnee Ghutzman, Merriam Walker, Keri May, Allyson Clark

Absent: None

Also Present: Dave McCorquodale, Assistant City Admin. / Director of Planning & Development

VISITOR/CITIZENS FORUM

No comments were given.

1. Consideration and possible action regarding regular meeting minutes of April 6, 2021.

Britnee Ghutzman moved to approve the minutes as presented. Allyson Clark seconded the motion, the motion carried unanimously. (5-0)

2. Consideration and possible action regarding recent exterior painting for Southern Roots Salon located at 14275 Street in the Historic Preservation District.

Staff introduced the item, noted the applicants were not present at the meeting, and referenced an excerpt from the Historic District Design Guidelines that discusses color requirements included in the agenda packet, noting the Commission has wide latitude on what colors are approved and the only prohibited colors are metallic and fluorescent colors. Merriam Walker observed that she knew of the extensive renovation work on the building and that the exterior painting happened quickly. She stated the change from white to black seemed stark and aesthetically different from the rest of the downtown. Mrs. Walker also pointed to the applicant's assertion that the black color had ties to the history of the site or building being associated with the Masonic Lodge. Staff stated it was unclear whether the site or the building had specific ties to the Masonic Lodge, noting the Montgomery Historical Society owns the land according to the tax roll. Merriam Walker asked to clarify that the only item being considered was the paint color, and the other renovation work was allowed without needing P&Z approval. Staff

stated that was correct and the proposed back porch rebuild mentioned by the applicant would not need approval if it were the same size and location as the existing porch. Mrs. Walker also noted the rock steps on the front of the building were replaced with new wood steps. Allyson Clark noted the black color was not consistent with any of the other buildings downtown and that she understood the operator of the salon may be affiliated with the Historic Montgomery Business Association. Noting the applicant had been in this location and active in downtown for seven years, they should have known the Historic District had at least some requirements. She noted the good quality of the renovation work, and the building age information from the appraisal district. She asked about the final color of the wood deck since it was left natural. Mrs. Clark noted the rest of the businesses downtown who do follow the Historic District guidelines and lamented the fact that the applicant was not in attendance to answer questions. Mrs. Walker agreed on the points. Chairman Waddell agreed the porch seemed to need finishing and mentioned the historic New England homes he grew up in and around were typically either painted white or had a very dark stain and that the black color of this building reminded him of those homes even if this new color did not match other structures down the street. Chairman Waddell also pointed out the City needs to communicate that changes to the downtown buildings need to be approved before the work is done. Mrs. Clark stated she had spoken to several business owners downtown who were shocked that the applicants painted the building without approval. Mrs. Walker asked if the tin was acceptable as skirting around the bottom of the building. Mr. Waddell stated he liked the eclectic mix of aesthetics in downtown and that as long as building materials and workmanship are of good quality, he has no issues with owners expressing character and individuality. Britnee Ghutzman stated while she personally liked the color scheme, the bigger issue is doing the work before approval, noting similar occurrences in the past. Mrs. Ghutzman asked to confirm that what the Commission is being asked to approve is the final product or if other changes were planned. Merriam Walker agreed and asked about the process of enforcement for work done without approval. Mr. McCorquodale stated a more robust City code enforcement program would accommodate enforcement of such items. Mrs. Walker said given the business investment involved in such a renovation it seems they would do the research to know what requirements are. Chairman Waddell stated he does have some understanding of how busy things get for businesses although it does not make it okay to not receive City approval.

Allyson Clark moved to table the item to allow the owners to attend the next meeting to provide additional information. Britnee Ghutzman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. (5-0)

3. Consideration and possible action regarding a proposed wood privacy fence at 825 College Street in the Historic Preservation District.

Staff introduced the item and noted the applicant, Mr. Justin Elliott, was present at the meeting. Allyson Clark asked if Mr. Elliott currently lived in the house and if he was hiring a contractor to install the fence. He said he was planning on moving into the home soon and was hiring a contractor for the work. Mrs. Clark mentioned the proposed front fence and if there would be animals in the yard. Mr. Elliott stated he did have dogs and has three children who will be playing in the back yard. Mrs. Clark asked what fence style he planned on the front of the property. Mr. Elliott stated he initially planned on a privacy fence on the front. Mrs. Clark asked if the neighbors were sharing in the cost of the fence and Mr. Elliott stated he would be paying for the entire fence. Keri May asked if he would be staining the fence or leaving it natural. Mr. Elliott said his current plan was to leave it natural and he had not considered a color for the fence. Chairman Waddell stated the rationale for lower fences in the front of the property was to be able to see the historic structures in the district, though he understood the need for privacy. Chairman Waddell asked if the tall privacy fence in the front was critical to his plan, and Mr. Elliott stated he was open to options on the front fence. Allyson Clark asked if he had any renovation plans for the exterior of the home. Mr. Elliott stated he knows the existing single-pane windows need to be replaced with energy-efficient windows as well as replacing the tin roof with an exact replacement. Mr. Elliott stated he did not want to change anything that would take away from the historic character of the home. Merriam Walker asked to clarify exactly where the front fence would be in relation to the garage and stated she did not see a need for a privacy fence. Mr. Elliott stated he was open to moving the privacy fence to the rear edge of the house in order to keep the visibility of the house from the street and character of the property. The Commission members generally liked and indicated support for the idea of moving the front fence to the back corners of the house. Mrs. Walker asked when the applicant plans to start construction. Mr. Elliott said he would like to start in the next few weeks.

Britnee Ghutzman moved to approve a 6.5-foot-tall fence for 825 College Street along the sides and rear of the property and ending at the back corners of the house. Keri May seconded the motion, the motion carried unanimously. (5-0)

4. Planning & Zoning Overview and Training regarding Land Use Zoning.

Mr. McCorquodale stated that a guest speaker was for the training, but she was not able to attend the meeting. Mr. McCorquodale presented material on the role of the Planning & Zoning Commission and an overview of the Historic Preservation District. Specific questions and comments from the Commission included:

- Merriam Walker and Allyson Clark asked if the City planned to expand the Historic District or sites. Mr. McCorquodale stated the City would be open if residents wanted to or if a historic site was found in the City.
- Merriam Walker asked if there are any planning-related project that are pending and could be taken up by the Commission. She also asked if there was current zoning on the AutoZone property related to building materials. Staff pointed to the state law from two years ago that prohibited cities from regulating building materials except in a Historic District and that development agreements could provide incentives to encourage better buildings.
- Chairman Waddell mentioned the tree ordinance and how the City worked to balance regulations with developer needs.
- Mr. McCorquodale pointed out that he had mentioned in a previous meeting that the Historic District Guidelines were not adopted. In researching the Historical Preservation Ordinance, he found the guidelines are adopted as part of the ordinance and apologized for providing incorrect information.
- Allyson Clark mentioned that quality craftsmanship is what often defines historic structures. Mrs. Clark stated residential fences play a large part in the appearance of a neighborhood and the Commission needs to move forward with purpose on approving fencing in the district.
- Mr. McCorquodale stated three projects to consider for the P&Z to work on are revising the Historic District Guidelines, updating the Table of Uses and adding a type of new commercial district for the downtown.

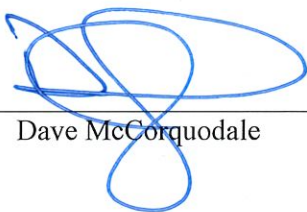
Commission Inquiry

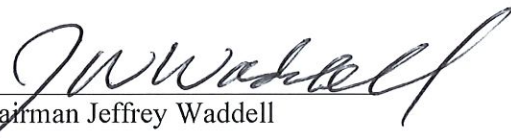
- Mrs. Walker pointed out the trash cans downtown that are still visible and she desires to see action on screening them.
- Mrs. Walker asked if the City knew when Chris Cheatham was starting the new office building on SH105. Staff stated the City has not heard an update on the project.

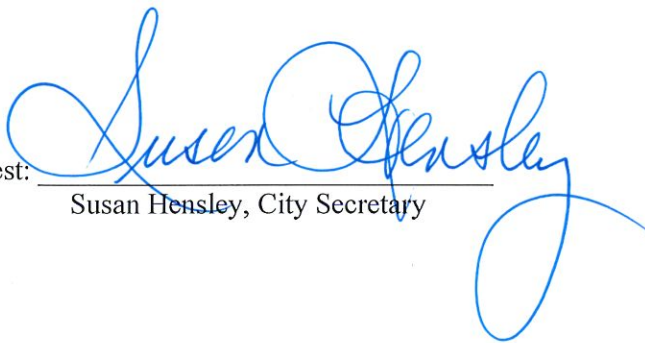
- Mrs. Walker asked about the provocative graphics on a vehicle that has been parked downtown. Mr. McCorquodale stated he had seen it, although the City cannot enforce vehicle graphics as part of the Historic District regulations.
- Chairman Waddell thanked Susan Hensley for all the work to conduct Zoom meetings for the City over the past year.

Adjournment

Merriam Walker moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 p.m. Allyson Clark seconded the motion, the motion carried unanimously. (5-0)

Prepared by:  Date approved: 06/01/2021
Dave McCorquodale


Chairman Jeffrey Waddell

Attest: 
Susan Hensley, City Secretary

