

CITY OF DOVER
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
April 18, 2019

The Regular Meeting of the City of Dover Historic District Commission was held on Thursday, April 18, 2019 at 3:30 PM with Chairman McDaniel presiding. Members present were Mr. Street, Chairman McDaniel, Ms. Mason and Ms. Horsey. Mr. Czerwinski was absent.

Planning Office Staff members present were Mrs. Melson-Williams, Mrs. Savage-Purnell and Mr. Swierczek.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Mason moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Mr. Street and the motion was unanimously carried 4-0. Mr. Czerwinski was absent.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING OF FEBRUARY 21, 2019

Ms. Horsey moved for approval of the meeting minutes of February 21, 2019, seconded by Mr. McDaniel and the motion was unanimously carried 4-0. Mr. Czerwinski was absent.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS

Summary of Applications for 2018

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that there have not been any changes. She has not seen action regarding the Fence Permit at 401 South Governors Avenue.

Chairman McDaniel asked if the above location was the Doggy Daycare business. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied yes.

Chairman McDaniel mentioned that there was currently a lot of activity going on in the building.

Ms. Mason mentioned that yesterday there were a lot of people inside the building doing cosmetic work. She introduced herself and asked one of the persons if she was opening the new business in the area but received the response that they were very busy cleaning and perhaps they would see her once the business is opened. Ms. Mason mentioned that today she did not see anyone in the building.

Chairman McDaniel asked if the work had started on the Governor's Café Kitchen Addition. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that the permit has been issued but she does not believe they have started the work. Once the permit has been issued it is good for six months and then they are eligible to extend the permit.

Chairman McDaniel asked once the Historic District Commission approves a permit how long is the permit good for (one or two years). He was specifically referring to the Downtown Plaza. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that the Downtown Plaza project went before the Historic District Commission and then the Planning Commission. Their expiration date is based upon the Planning Commission action, so they had two years. In the case of this project, it went before the Planning Commission in September 2016. They have received a one-year extension that will carry them

through September 2019.

Summary of Applications 2018

Summary of Architectural Review Certifications for 2019

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that with the Summary of Applications there were six (6) permits through the end of March that consists of interior renovations, exterior, roof and demolition permits. The Demolition Permit was related to interior work only.

Department of Planning & Inspections Update

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned the Planning Office is working on the Comprehensive Plan other than regular permit activities. She mentioned that she had a copy of the page from the Department's Annual Report for 2018 that focuses on the activities of the Historic District Commission. The Annual Report has been posted on the City of Dover website. There was a presentation to City Council. Some of the information will have to be reported through the reporting requirements for the Certified Local Government.

NEW BUSINESS

Review of Permits Referred to Commission.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that there was no review of Permits formally referred to Commission.

Certified Local Government (CLG) Program

Update on FFY2018 CLG Grant Application

Planning for Future Public Workshop

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that included in your packet was an excerpt from the grant agreement that specifically talks about this year's project which we have been working on and off all year. The grant application is related to preparation of the Historic Preservation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. There are some tasks that we will need to schedule in the near future that consist of a public outreach workshop. We have targeted property owners who specifically live in the local Historic District. We will also need to do updates to various brochures in addition to preparing the draft chapter on the Historic Preservation Plan document.

Chairman McDaniel asked if meetings would be held whereas they could invite people to come that live in the Historic District. Will there be presentations and questions? Mrs. Melson-Williams replied yes. One of the things we will want is the Historic District Commission to talk about the public workshop format. What we have done in the past with public workshops is more of an open house type setting where there is a timeframe and the opportunity for people to come and go. They can look at boards and have a set time for a presentation.

Chairman McDaniel asked what the timeframe for the workshop will be. He asked if it will be in the summer or fall or this month. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied it will be in the next couple of months (May or June timeframe) and in late afternoon or early evening timeframe. The workshop could also coincide with the Historic District Commission meeting.

During the workshop there is certainly an opportunity to take comments related to the Comprehensive Plan, but we see it also as the ability to see where they live on the map and whether they live in the local Historic District and/or National Register of Historic District which is a different type of designation.

Chairman McDaniel asked if they had received the grant. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied yes. We were waiting for the Grant Agreement and we now have the agreement. We have been working year-round.

Chairman McDaniel asked if someone was going to be hired to do work for the Historic District Commission. Mrs. Melson Williams replied not in the current grant that we are in now. The grant focuses on the Comprehensive Plan and the creation of the Historic Preservation Chapter. The grant we have now in place pays for some of her staff time to work specifically on that chapter and to do an outreach workshop and associated paper trail that consists of mailing, brochures and presentation material.

Chairman McDaniel asked about the previous grant. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that we had to let that grant go on the wayside. We are getting ready to come up on what would be the application timeframe for the next year's grant. She has not received the program guidance regarding the grant application yet. She expects it to be coming in the next couple of months.

Mrs. Melson-Williams asked the Commission if they had any other thoughts about planning for some type of public outreach. Any thoughts on things we should include, things we should and should not do, and if you think the open house type format is better than lecture style.

Chairman McDaniel stated that he thinks the open house format is workable.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that they would do a direct mailing of the announcement of the event to those properties that are in the local Historic District. It would still be published as a public meeting.

Ms. Mason asked if the area would be focused on The Green and Loockerman Street. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that as she looks at the map there is an area that focuses around The Green. The Victorian Dover Historic District that is listed in the National Register continues much further north on State Street. The east side goes all the way up through the cemetery. On the west side of State Street, it does not go that far. This is our current Historic District area. There is always an opportunity to expand. If there is significant interest in an area it can be a future focus. In the past we talked about the Tax Credit Program. There are existing brochures and application forms available to share that information of how the program works.

Project for Dover's 2019 Comprehensive Plan

- a) Update on Project Activities
- b) Review of Preliminary Draft #2A Goals and Recommendations

Update on Project Activities

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that Planning Staff recently did a project update to City Council on the overall project. Staff issued a couple of the map series back in the Fall. Staff continues to work on the refinement of the map series as well as preparation of other map information for the plan. Staff has made significant progress on the writing of the key text for the major topic area chapters and those have been circulated internally to other staff members to read. Those are chapters related to National Resources, Utilities, Transportation, Community Services, Economic Development and Housing. Accompanying each of those chapters is the series of Goals and Recommendations. At the end of February, we issued Preliminary Draft #2A which is the Goals for all the chapters including Historic Preservation. This was included in your packet and we are hoping to gather any last-minute thoughts on the goals.

Chairman McDaniel asked when the deadline was? Mrs. Melson-Williams replied the deadline was in February for the plan certification. It was officially extended. The new plan must be certified by February of 2020. We will be done before then. We are hoping to be done by Fall.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that today she included Preliminary Draft #2A Goals and Recommendations; it included all the chapters that have such Goals and Recommendations. There are historic area or things related to Historic Preservation in a number of other chapters like Economic Development, National Resources and Environmental Protection with open space, and The Green is a City Park.

Questions: Preliminary Draft #2A Goals and Recommendations

Chairman McDaniel asked if someone would do the evaluation and update of the *Design Standard and Guidelines for the City of Dover District Zone Historic Preservation*. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied yes. We have identified it as a project that is probably beyond the scope of Staff time. We will be seeking consultant services to work on the project.

Another item is to “evaluate and consider the standards and guidelines regarding the levels of protection for The Green and the Loockerman Street historic contexts”. Then there is “focus planning initiatives on Downtown Dover to strengthen Loockerman Street and adjoining areas while maintaining the balance of preservation and development activity”. Chairman McDaniel asked will there be higher standards for The Green than Loockerman Street. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied yes. Our current *Design Standards and Guidelines* already reflect that, but it is probably not as clear in how it is presented as it could be perhaps presented. Chairman McDaniel asked if it would be clarified. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that it would be likely part of any kind of revisions to the *Design Standards and Guidelines* that would focus more specifically by area. Right now, there is some discussion of The Green as a very different standard than Loockerman Street. Chairman McDaniel mentioned as it should be. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that it probably could be better captured in the documents so that it is understood. The other thing that you see on Loockerman Street that is the change over time has occurred more

frequently in that area which brings its own issues, problems, and potential difficulties in determining what's historic and to what standards should certain things be held to materialwise and appearance form.

Chairman McDaniel referred to "Recommendation 6: Support of Historic Resources and Landscapes; continue to identify, assist, and review the nominations of eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places" then asked what is the issue is when a property is mentioned that it is in the National Register of Historic Places to an insurance company? Mrs. Melson-Williams replied as with any insurance policy your premiums is based on risk. There are certainly insurance agencies and groups that probably specialize more often in dealing with historic properties that have higher level of expertise related to that.

Ms. Mason mentioned that when she was looking for insurance for the property at 36 The Green she was asked if the property was in the National Register of Historic Places because if she was the insurance premium would be five (5) times more than regular insurance.

Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that related to National Register of Historic Places there are properties that are individually listed and there are district nominations. The district nominations are made up of a collection of properties which include properties that are considered conforming/contributing or noncontributing to the district.

Chairman McDaniel referred to "Recommendation 7: Promote awareness of other Tax Credit Programs offered including State and Federal programs." Then he wanted to know if they could set up through the City's computer program that when a person in the Historic District obtained a permit there would be an alert that could mention you are in the Historic District and are you made aware of the incentives. This computer prompt would be a reminder to give the person a brochure of the incentives. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that there are a variety of things that could be treated the same way because we have incentives in different areas. Our current system does not have that capability, but we are in the middle of transitioning. Three years from now we may have that system.

Ms. Mason referred to "Recommendation 3: Coordinate with other Environmental Agencies and Groups - Identify potential flood mitigation projects along City waterways such as the St. Jones River, Puncheon Run, and the Little River." She wanted to know about the Little River. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that the Little River runs through the eastern portion of Dover. It crosses White Oak Road right around the Garrison Oak Technical Park. The headwaters run through Baytree Development and it basically runs out through the farmland towards Little Creek in general.

Ms. Mason asked about if the little branch behind Lynnhaven Drive was a part of Puncheon Run. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied yes.

Ms. Mason asked regarding utilities if there was a difference in what you are charged as far as time of day or the day of the week. For example, if you are running your washer or dryer after 6pm is it cheaper than running it during the day because the grid is down? Chairman McDaniel replied no; we do not have grid pricing in Dover. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied that she did not

believe that any of the City of Dover electric or water rates are based on time of usage. Our rates are based on the types of customer (residential verses heavy industrial users). There is a difference in rates between in city limits or out-of-city limits. We do provide electric and water services outside of the corporate limits of the city.

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned that Delaware Electric Co-Op Inc has the peak timeframe where they ask customers if they can limit the electric usage during that time because of high demand.

Mrs. Melson-Williams mentioned with the Comp Plan be prepared for a busy summer. Planning Staff is having to look at it that way because they hope to be getting to what is a complete DRAFT document to be able to release to start the formal review process for the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. McDaniel asked if the Planning Department was fully staffed. Mrs. Melson-Williams replied the Planning Office now is fully staffed. The overall Department is almost fully staffed. One of our Fire Marshals just received deployment orders.

Mr. Street moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Horsey and unanimously carried 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 4:11 PM

Sincerely,
Maretta Savage-Purnell
Secretary