



**CITY OF WINTER PARK
HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD**

9:00 a.m.
January 14, 2015
Commission Chambers
401 Park Avenue South

MINUTES

1. Call to order. The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

Present: Chairman Randall Glidden, Vice-Chair Rebecca Talbert, Louise Sprimont, Barbara De Vane, Genean McKinnon, and Phil Wood. Absent: Candace Chemtob and Michael Miller. Also Present: City Attorney Robin McKinney. Staff: Senior Planner Lindsey Hayes, Sylvia Hawkins and Smitha Raphael representing Code Compliance and Recording Secretary Lisa Smith.

2. Approval of Minutes.

Motion made by Ms. Talbert, seconded by Mrs. Sprimont to approve the October 22, November 12, and December 10, 2014 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments:

No one wished to speak. Public comment was closed.

3. Action Item.

- COR 15-001 Request of Rollins College on behalf of Holt Properties LLC to demolish the duplex at their property located at 483 Holt Avenue. The property is a contributing resource in the College Quarter Historic District; Zoned R-2. Parcel ID #05-22-30-9400-89-161.

Senior Planner Lindsey Hayes presented the staff report. She explained that the residential property located at 483 Holt Avenue is a contributing property in the College Quarter Historic District by virtue of its age and association with the final period of development in the College Quarter. She used a Power Point presentation to review the history of the subject property and discuss the details of the certificate of review request. She said that the duplex has been vacant since its purchase by Rollins College; and that Rollins College as Holt Properties LLC, has no plans to activate the duplex as living space. Ms. Hayes noted that the empty building is in a state of decline, and that Code Compliance is monitoring the condition of the property. She explained that Rollins is requesting to demolish the duplex and proposes to completely fence the commercial property from this residential property with chain link fencing and add climbing jasmine along the fence line. The existing portion of the chain link fence around the commercial property would then completely separate the commercial from the residential lots and direct campus traffic to the commercial property entrance. The property would then be maintained in an open park-like condition. A more permanent fence or wall structure would help dispel neighborhood concerns about rezoning and encroachment of non-residential uses in the future.

In addition, at this time Rollins College would construct a sidewalk on the north side of Holt Avenue from the existing sidewalk to the curb cut serving Rollins' commercial property in an effort to improve pedestrian connections now rather than in the future. Some additional landscaping will be added along the fence line to screen the property. She noted that the historic district residents have long been concerned about the vacant commercial property and unlive in duplex. With city permission, the commercial lot has been used in the past as a staging area for campus construction. To allay some longstanding neighborhood concerns, it should be stated that any future use(s) of the lot, including commercial or public quasi-public, other than what is permitted in an R-2 residential district would require rezoning. Storm water retention or parking for commercial or public quasi-public uses on the adjacent lot would not be permitted without rezoning. She said that if demolition is approved, any future redevelopment must meet the Residential R-2 zoning code and would require design review approval by the HPB at a public hearing. She reviewed in detail the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Policies relating to this application and the demolition guidelines established in the Land Development Code for historic districts. She stated the demolition criteria as follows:

(1) The structure is of such interest or quality that it would reasonably meet national, state or local criteria for designation as a historic landmark. *(Ms. Hayes noted that the subject property is not a landmark.)*

(2) The structure is of such design, craftsmanship or material that it could be reproduced only with great difficulty and/or expense. *(Ms. Hayes noted that this would be a simple structure to replicate, and the type of masonry block is available.)*

(3) The structure is one of the last remaining examples of its kind in the city, the county or the region. *(Ms. Hayes stated that the structure is not a significant architectural example and does not embody distinctive craftsmanship.)*

(4) The structure contributes to the historic character of a designated district. *(Ms. Hayes noted that the simple dwelling helps establish the beginning of the residential historic district at the northwest corner of the neighborhood.)*

(5) Retention of the structure promotes the general welfare of the city by providing an opportunity for study of local history, architecture, and design, or by developing an understanding of the importance and value of a particular culture and heritage. *(Ms. Hayes noted that the building does not contribute in this area other than being part of the final period of development of the College Quarter historic district.)*

(6) There are definite plans for reuse of the property if the proposed demolition is carried out, and there is an explanation of what the effect of those plans will be on the character of the surrounding area. *(Ms. Hayes noted that removing the building subtracts a dwelling from the district entrance at northwest end of Holt Avenue, and it is desirable that an appropriate dwelling be built on the site in the future.)*

Staff recommended approval subject to HPB review, with a condition that a fence and landscaping be installed and maintained. Ms. Hayes responded to Board member questions and concerns.

Scott Bitikofer, Facilities Manager, represented Rollins College. He agreed with the staff report as presented by Ms. Hayes. He explained that Rollins desires to demolish the structure because they do not feel it is a benefit to the neighborhood. He said that Rollins has no plans for future of the property and feel that demolition makes the most sense. He provided insight with regard to the decline of the property. He responded to Board member questions and concerns. Messrs. Glidden and Wood questioned the applicant about potential trade-offs that Rollins would be willing to provide. Mr. Bitikofer stated that he could not commit to anything on behalf of Rollins College.

Several residents of the College Quarter Neighborhood were present for the public hearing. The following addressed the Board:

Nancy La Porte, 479 Holt Avenue, opposed the request. She said that she feels that the subject property is the cornerstone of their historic neighborhood, and that it provides both sight and sound barriers. She explained that her property is the most impacted in the neighborhood as she owns next door. She expressed frustration that the applicant has allowed the property to exist continually in the current state of decline. She presented photographs to validate her concerns.

John Schofield, 358 Vitoria Avenue, stated that he is an admirer of Rollins in the community, but feels that the subject property degrades the surrounding community with the way the property has been maintained and opposes demolition.

Margie Bridges, 767 Antonette Avenue, opposed the demolition of the structure as it is a contributing resource, and it marks the end of the residential in the historic district. She said that she feels that demolition would create a domino effect. She added that she feels that the structure could be rehabbed and used as housing in the City.

Gordon Blitch, 695 French Avenue opposed the demolition. He expressed concern about the parking lot on residential zoned property. He stated that he feels that demolition is inappropriate. He suggested that the Holt Avenue property be sold at market rate, or donate the property to either the College Quarter Neighborhood or the City for use as a park.

Nancy Galyean, 746 McIntyre Avenue, opposed the demolition and also expressed concerns with Rollins' use of the College Arms residential property as parking.

Elizabeth Bosterman, 818 Antonette Avenue, agreed with the previous comments and wanted to go on record as opposed to the demolition.

No one else wished to speak concerning the request. Public Hearing closed.

The Board members requested further information concerning the pending code compliance case for the subject property. Sylvia Hawkins, Code Compliance Section Chief, addressed the Board concerning the pending case against the applicant. She stated that in order for the property to be brought up to compliance standards it requires exterior painting, installation of buffer on rear of property, repair doors, and removal of the boarded up windows. She provided the Board with a detailed overview of the entire code compliance process and responded to Board member questions and concerns.

Mr. Wood observed that this case appeared to be a case of demolition by neglect. Mrs. McKinnon stated that she feels that this request is a classic example of an owner's right to decide what to do with their property versus the neighborhood. She agreed with the comments made regarding the "little house movement" but felt that it is at the discretion of the applicant what they chose to do with the property. Further, if the structure is demolished and the green space created, that would enhance the drive along Holt Avenue. She supported staff recommendation. She encouraged anyone that wanted to see the property redeveloped with two tiny residences to make an offer to purchase the property from the applicant.

Motion made by Mrs. McKinnon to approve the request subject to staff recommendations. Motion failed due to lack of a second.

Motion made by Mr. Wood to deny the request. Mr. Wood withdrew his motion.

City Attorney McKinney read Section 58-474, Decision of the Commission, into the record in its entirety. She reiterated that if the Board motions to deny the request the specific section of the code must be cited for the basis of the recommendation of denial, and a description of the findings, specifically the six points spelled out by staff in the staff report.

Motion made by Ms. Talbert, seconded by Mrs. De Vane recommending denial of the request based upon evidence presented at today's hearing in that the applicant failed to prove their case to demolish the structure located at 483 Holt Avenue in accordance with Section 58-479(a)(4) in that the simple dwelling helps establish the beginning of the residential historic district at the northwest corner of the neighborhood; and plans for reuse of the property did not follow the criteria set forth in Section 58-479(a)(6) of the Land Development Code. A roll call vote was taken and the following Board members voted in favor of the motion: Mr. Wood, Mrs. Devane, Ms. Talbert, Mr. Glidden and Mrs. Sprimont. Mrs. McKinnon voted against the motion. Motion carried with a vote of 5-1.

- Potential Incentive discussion

Ms. Hayes continued the discussion with the Board members regarding proposed Incentives for historic preservation that need to be incorporated into the ordinance. She explained that at the Board's request, staff has studied more closely the pros and cons of offering ad valorem tax relief in exchange for designation. She stated that staff took a very close look at FLA Statutes 196 regarding Taxation and Finance, specifically Statutes 196.1961 and 196.1997. She advised that staff did not find any broad ability to provide ad valorem tax relief for historic properties. She noted that staff found two exemptions for historic properties. One is used for commercial and non-profit properties that open to the public, and one that relates to the rehabilitation of historic properties, and that is already in the City's ordinance. Ms. Hayes reviewed in detail how ad valorem tax relief would affect the properties currently on the city's historic resources survey. This issue was discussed at length. They responded to questions posed by Board members. Mr. Glidden proposed that in lieu of providing tax relief the City could potentially allocate a percentage of the taxable income from historic properties to fund the grant. He suggested that the grant could be developed and funded based on the income that the City receives in taxing historic properties. Ms. McKinney responded that Mr. Glidden's proposal is more restrictive. She said that if a grant program is initiated, the City could benefit in that there is more control over the improvements that are made because all of the applications would have to come before the Board for review and approval; and from the budgeting perspective, the City would be able to predict more accurately the amount of funds utilized each year.

City Attorney McKinney and Ms. Hayes also reviewed the pros/cons of whether it is legally possible to create a non-profit organization as a shelter and incentive to reduce property taxes for designated historic properties specifically Tier One or Tier Two. City Attorney McKinney reviewed the provisions of Florida Statutes Chapter 617 that governs the establishing of non-profits. Attorney McKinney explained that the advantage of this is that it allows the city more control, and the city will be able to accurately predict each year the amount of funds that will be coming in. They responded to questions posed by members of the Board.

Mr. Woods requested that more consideration be given to the idea of ad valorem tax relief. Mrs. De Vane requested more information from communities that have grant programs and what they entail. City Attorney McKinney agreed to research the grant programs more and report back with her findings.

- Staff Updates

Ms. Hayes reported that The Gary Morgan House (formerly Mrs. Ann Saurman's home) located at 1041 Osceola Avenue, is up for consideration for designation to the national trust for historic preservation.

She said that staff is researching Lake Killarney condos as they have requested to come forward for designation.

The First Congregational Church at 225 South Interlachen Avenue is requesting designation of the church and fellowship hall. She noted that the subject property is already included in the Interlachen Avenue National Historic District.

Mrs. McKinnon inquired as to when the recognition of Mr. John Spang would occur, and the possibility of spotlighting historic homes at each city commission meeting. Ms. Hayes responded that staff would have to address these inquiries to City Management.

4. New Business.

There were no items of new business.

5. Adjournment. There was no further business. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa M. Smith,
Recording Secretary