

LIBERTY HISTORIC DISTRICT REVIEW COMMISSION
Meeting Summary
February 20, 2024
5:30 pm
City Council Chambers

Roll Call: Paemon Aramjoo, Linda Armstrong, John Carr, Kathy Chelton, Vern Drottz, Aimee Gray, Matt Grundy, Brett Rinker, Katie Schmidt

Present: Paemon Aramjoo, Linda Armstrong, John Carr, Kathy Chelton, Vern Drottz, Aimee Gray, Matt Grundy, Brett Rinker, Katie Schmidt

Staff Present: Katherine Sharp, Director of Planning & Development and Jeanine Thill, Community Development Manager

Chairman Grundy called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Summary: February 6, 2024 HDRC Meeting Summary

A motion was made by Commissioner Aramjoo to approve the February 6, 2024 meeting summary. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Carr. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Current Business:

Discussion on Design Guidelines from other communities

- Commissioner Drottz referenced page 84 of the Franklin, TN. Design Guidelines on new commercial buildings. He said he sees similarities between Franklin and Liberty. He feels their design guidelines are very good and we might want to consider having ours rewritten, using theirs as a template. He added that he spoke to Emily Huff with the City of Franklin she said their guidelines are based on the Department of Interior Standards. They received public input and also looked at other historic districts when developing the guidelines. Commissioner Drottz commented that they don't have a Courthouse Square, but a roundabout with a 15-20-year-old infill project and a parking garage. There are some good examples of appropriate design in their community.
- Commissioner Gray said she would like to understand what is already in place for our zoning.
- Showing images of Franklin's downtown area, Commissioner Drottz said they have three story buildings. There is an infill project that is four story. There is a good diagram that explains Franklin's height restrictions. They allow taller buildings off their main historic streets.
- Commissioner Armstrong said you see vertical separation on their infill buildings, that is nice to visually break up a big building, making it look better. She added that the new residential areas fit in well. Their parking garage in Franklin is new, it almost looks like two buildings, but it is one. There may not be windows, but there appear to be openings, which makes it blend well.

- Commissioner Gray commented that defining street edge is important. She asked what the primary zoning is on Mill Street?
- Ms. Sharp said North of Mill is zoned CBD (Central Business District), with no front or rear yard setback and South of Mill is CBS (Central Business Service) the setbacks for those areas are no front or rear yard also. Height in CBD is 3 stories max. CBS max 2 stories.
- Commissioner Gray asked what the next phase of the infill plan.
- Ms. Sharp said typically a consultant will be hired to help with the steps.
- Ms. Sharp said that currently the consultant is looking at what might fit well in specific locations. She said that Edmond, OK has a good example of a nice pocket neighborhood that might be something to consider for the Mississippi / Prairie lot. The Lark and the Ember, they are a mix of sizes 800 sq- just under 2000 sq ft. The consultant currently working on the infill plan is hoping to wrap this phase up in the Spring.
- Commissioner Gray asked if there is a mix of residential and commercial on Mill. Ms. Sharp said there is a mix.
- Ms. Sharp said there is a steering committee that is leading the infill discussions. She can't speak to what might come out of it. Parking is also a concern. She will add the image of the Franklin, TN parking garage to the image board and share it with the consultant.
- Commissioner Gray asked what adjacent project would come before HDRC?
- Ms. Sharp said she would need to read the code. There will be opportunity for public discussion on these projects.
- Commissioner Drottz asked how we can update our design guideline book.
- Ms. Thill said there are grants available to CLG's.
- Commissioner Gray added that Independence received a \$50,000 grant to write design guidelines.
- Commissioner Gray commented that we have guidelines and not standards. We should consider standards.
- Ms. Sharp explained that guidelines are guiding documents that we would use when reviewing an application. They are a guiding principle, what you use to deny or approve an application. In a larger project it's a recommendation. Standards are more regulatory. That would have to be something a consultant could help with. We could see if we can have it in the budget for next year. A budget request would have to be made in October for matching funds for 2025.
- Commissioner Drottz said he thinks if we had user friendly guidelines it would be helpful.
- Ms. Sharp said she would be interested learning more about the firm that Franklin, TN. used to write their Design Guidelines.
- Commissioner Drottz said it is New Haven. When you are driving around Franklin it feels historic but there are areas that are newer too.
- Vice Chairman Carr said it would be nice to take as much from the Franklin TN guidelines and put them into our guidelines that would be advantageous.

- Ms. Sharp said that the 353 Tax Abatement was slated to sunset next year. One way to make it more of an incentive to use this in historic districts.
- Commissioner Armstrong said there are some areas near where she lives that are in a neighborhood that can use the 353 Tax Abatement.
- Ms. Sharp said the neighborhoods that you drive through matter. The 353 Tax Abatement program isn't in the planning department, it's in Economic Development, so she and Ms. Thill are not the staff members who bring it through.
- Commissioner Drottz asked if we can expand the Historic District boundaries.
- Ms. Sharp said if the Commission is looking into bringing in other areas, we might want to start with the Grooms addition or the area off of Mississippi or the homes on Ridge or on Liberty Drive.

Other Business:

Administrative Approvals since the February 6, 2024 meeting:

- 411 Miller Ave for like in kind replacement of the drive approach, wood rot and the front porch.

Miscellaneous matters from the Commission:

- None

Miscellaneous matters from Staff:

- At the last meeting Ms. Gray asked if insurance is required of the demolition company, Ms. Thill confirmed with the building official that insurance is required.
- Staff sent a link to a webinar/ training on Substitute Materials to the commission. The training is available on Feb 22 and April 25, registration is required. This will meet the commissioners annual training requirement.
- Ken Personett is hosting an open house at 462 E Kansas on Saturday March 9 from 1-4.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm.