

The following minutes are from the Historic Commission meeting on Tuesday, October 10, 2023, in the Abita Springs Town Hall. The meeting convened at 6:00 P.M.

Commissioner Chairman Mancil called the meeting to order. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners in attendance included Thad Mancil, Otto Dinkelacker, Paul Vogt, Ron Blitch, and Andre Monnot. Kristin Tortorich and Heather Hockman were also present.

Call for Agenda Modification

Commission Chairman Mancil stated there was new information for the Minkler Street property from the previous meeting. Commissioner Blitch motioned to revisit that property. Commissioner Dinkelacker seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Blitch asked if it was possible to modify the agenda to include a discussion item for smaller items to be reviewed throughout the month. Kristin Tortorich said that should have been added to the agenda in advance, so it would be added to next month's agenda.

Acceptance of Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes.

Commissioner Dinkelacker motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Commissioner Monnot seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Certificate of Appropriateness 72125 Gum Street

The application is to repaint the house. The homeowner stated the siding will be the same light blue color with white and bronze accents and a gray porch.

Commissioner Blitch motioned to approve the application as submitted. Commissioner Dinkelacker seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Certificate of Appropriateness 72082 Live Oak Street

The application is to add a 6' cedar fence to the rear right side of the property. The homeowner stated it would match the existing fence and would just extend along the rear of the property.

Commissioner Monnot motioned to approve as submitted. Commissioner Dinkelacker seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Certificate of Appropriateness Abita Lumber 21459 Hwy 36

The application is to replace the existing shingle roof with a metal roof and to remove the dormers. The applicant submitted samples with two color choices. Commissioner Mancil said he thought the brownish slate would be more appropriate and would age better. Commissioner Mancil said his concern is if the standing seam roof would work with the flare on the towers. The applicant stated he hasn't spoken with the roofing contractor about that specifically, but that he thinks it would work. Alternatively, he said they could reframe the top of the tower, eliminating the flare. Commissioner Blitch said he thought the flare on the towers would add some character since the dormers would be removed. Commissioner Mancil said the metal roof would be a nice improvement, but they'd have to see how the metal roof on the towers would be executed. The applicant mentioned his desire to change the windows as well. Commissioner Mancil said the windows would need to be reviewed when he decides what he wants to install. Commissioner Blitch said once the roofing details are finalized, it could be handled by email. Window and trim suggestions were offered to the applicant along with a metal shingle roof option.

Commissioner Blitch motioned to give conceptual approval of removal of the dormers and other modifications as discussed at the meeting subject to submission of details of final product selection. Commissioner Dinkelacker seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Commissioner Mancil is assigned.

Certificate for Appropriateness 22202 Level Street

The application is for demolition of the house. Commission Chairman Mancil said the house is one of the oldest in town and has been neglected for a very long time. The applicant stated he was looking to demolish the house and sell the vacant property. Commission Chairman Mancil asked if the house is in danger of collapsing. The applicant said it is definitely in bad shape and has a lot of holes visible from the inside. Commissioner Blitch asked if the applicant is the owner. The applicant confirmed he is the owner. He also stated it is time for the house to go. He said he has no one willing to put in the money and resources to bring the house back, and he would like a new owner to be able to come in, build, and become a member of the community. Commissioner Blitch asked if the owner had gotten any proposals to fix the shoring and replace some of the footings. The owner stated people had looked at the property and discussed it but were not serious about the work. Commissioner Blitch said that there were a lot of houses in Abita that were built in the same time period and shoring companies were able to make proposals for shoring and the properties were salvaged. Commissioner Blitch asked that the owner get a proposal for shoring. The applicant stated that due to the condition, he really felt the demolition would be better for the community. Commissioner Blitch asked how long the property was owned by the current owner. He stated he has owned the property for 4 or 5 years. Commissioner Dinkelacker stated he believes it requires more than shoring, and that the roof and below need to be replaced. Commissioner Blitch stated that the house was occupied not that many months ago. Commission Chairman Mancil stated the house shouldn't have been occupied and hadn't been taken care of for a long time.

Commission Chairman Mancil asked if there is a law about demolitions for demolition by neglect. Commissioner Blitch then asked what the Commission's authority is, and said he wished they had a legal opinion because they have never addressed a demolition before. Kristin Tortorich said she thought the owner would have to advertise for a number of months to give notice of the demolition if the Commission denied his application before he could move forward with the demolition, or they could approve it and he could move forward right away. Ms. Tortorich stated the property has been for sale for months and no one has purchased it yet. She also stated the Building Inspector has inspected the property, the house is sliding off its piers, and the Town disconnected the natural gas for fear of a safety issue with the house. Commissioner Blitch asked if the owner had any professional or engineering reports. The owner stated that he had multiple contractors for potential buyers come through to look at the property and none of them wanted to pursue the property after looking it over. Commissioner Blitch then asked if he had plans to subdivide the property. The owner stated he was selling it as one parcel. Kristin Tortorich stated that currently, due to the lot size, it cannot be divided to build two houses, however there is a potential opportunity to build an ancillary structure, such as a mother-in-law suite. Ms. Tortorich added that should the Master Plan reduce the minimum lot size in that area, then there might be the possibility of the lot being subdivided in the future, but that is currently not the case. Commission Chairman Mancil asked if no action was the same as a denial, Commissioner Blitch asked if the application could be deferred until more details could be obtained from the Town Attorney, and Commissioner Monnot said he thought for due process, the Commission should deny the application. Commission Chairman Mancil asked if denied, if the advertising window would then begin and if the Commission would have a chance to revisit the application once more information could be gathered. Kristin Tortorich said she didn't think it could be revisited if denied and she recommended deferral.

Commissioner Blitch motioned to defer until more information could be gathered. Commissioner Dinkelacker seconded the motion.

Ms. Tortorich asked for clarification on what information the Commission is requesting. Commissioner Blitch stated he would like a professional to state the condition of the house and what would be required to stabilize it, as well as a proposal from a shoring company on the cost to stabilize the property. Commissioner Blitch also stated he'd like to see the roof covered to keep it as dry as possible in the meantime. Commissioner Mancil said that for him, the age of the house is a concern because it is one of the original houses in Abita and likely listed on the Historic Register. Commissioner Blitch said he would like to see the house revitalized.

A vote was held on the standing motion and second. All voted in favor to defer.

Commission Chairman Mancil asked if there was a report from the Building Inspector for them to review or if the Building Inspector could be present at the meeting to state his findings. Ms. Tortorich said that there is a report from the inspection that was done.

Certificate of Appropriateness Ochsner 22070 Hwy 59

The application is for repainting the building and adding shutters. Commissioner Blitch asked about the type of shutters to be installed. The applicant stated they would be decorative but the appropriate size so if they were not fixed, they would be able to close. Commissioner Vogt asked if the shutters would be on all windows. Due to deterioration, the original shutters have come off over time, but the applicant wants to bring them back to all windows. The building will be white with exception to the porch ceilings, porch deck, and handrails. The top of the handrails will be New Orleans green to match the shutters.

Commissioner Blitch motioned to approve the application as submitted. Commissioner Dinkelacker seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Commissioner Mancil is assigned.

Certificate of Appropriateness Palmer Street Lot 1 Terrace Trace

The application is for a new house and fence. The Commissioners reviewed the plans and went through the checklist. The house will be elevated, Hardie siding, fiberglass shingle roof with 8/12 slope, wood decking and stairs for the front porch with the appropriate width, no fireplace/chimney. Commissioner Blitch recommended a fourth column and Commissioner Dinkelacker recommended placing columns lined up with the piers for structural support. Board and batten will be only on the front porch. Commissioner Blitch reminded the applicant that he will have to get colors approved once they are selected. The height of the building is under the 35' restriction. Window trim is Hardie, trim is Hardie as well. Columns are wood, doors are wood except for steel back door, and no shutters are planned. There will be a carport that doesn't appear to be visible from the street on the Plot Plan. The fence plan is for a combination of wood and iron. Exterior lighting will be a porch fan with light, lights on either side of the door, and possibly can lights.

Commissioner Blitch motioned to approve the application as submitted with a recommendation to add a fourth column with columns lined up over the piers. Commissioner Monnot seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Commissioner Blitch is assigned.

Certificate of Appropriateness 71016 Golden Street

The application is for a new house and accessory building (cabana). The Commission reviewed the plans and checklist. The foundation is raised slab, Hardie plank siding, roof will have fiberglass shingles with more than 8/12 slope, wrap around porch that appears suspended, front steps brick, back steps will be wood. Railings will be wrought iron and the back will have a screen porch. Commissioner Blitch said if structure is added to attach the screen, it needs to proportionally fit within the columns. Commissioner Blitch mentioned there needs to be a fascia board above the screen. The applicant said he could add a

1"x8" board at the top at the siding line. Commissioner Mancil said the window trim is correct. The door would be painted fiberglass, shutters will be decorative with 50% on each side. The accessory building arch was recommended to be changed to match the house. The roof pitch will be different due to the size of the accessory building and the other design elements being appropriate.

Commissioner Blitch motioned to approve the application with the suggestion that the cabana arch be lowered slightly as discussed in the meeting and the detail above the screen porch be constructed as recommended. Commissioner Monnot seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Commissioner Dinkelacker is assigned.

Certificate of Appropriateness 71016 Golden Street

The application is for a fence. 6' cedar fence will be on the sides and a 54" aluminum pool fence will be along the back. Between the back porch steps and the cedar fence would be a gate. Commissioner Blitch recommended using treated pine instead of cedar for longevity and stepping the fence down from 6' to 4' over about an 8' span so there is a gradual change in height.

Commissioner Monnot motioned to approve the application. Commissioner Dinkelacker seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Commissioner Dinkelacker is assigned.

Certificate of Appropriateness 22364 Main Street

The application is for a roof replacement in-kind with heritage shingles submitted for emergency approval. This was approved between meetings.

Commissioner Blitch motioned to approve all of the upcoming applications done in house. Commissioner Dinkelacker seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Certificate of Appropriateness 72110 Gum Street

The application is for a metal roof replacement submitted for emergency approval. This was approved between meetings. **See motion above.**

Certificate of Appropriateness 71252 Marissa Lane

The application is for a roof replacement with gray shingles submitted for emergency approval. This was approved between meetings. **See motion above.**

Certificate of Appropriateness Trinity Lutheran Church 22139 Level Street

Commission Chairman Mancil presented this application and abstained from voting. The application is for a new sign to replace the Level Street side sign that suffered hurricane damage. This sign would go in the same location and be the same size or slightly smaller.

Commissioner Blitch motioned to approve the application as submitted. Commissioner Dinkelacker seconded the motion. All remaining Commissioners voted in favor.

Certificate of Appropriateness Trinity Lutheran Church 22139 Level Street

Commission Chairman Mancil presented this application and abstained from voting. The application is for lights on either side of the front entrance. Two options were presented, as the church has not decided which they prefer.

Commissioner Dinkelacker motioned to approve both options with the recommendation of Option B which has a larger lighting element. Commissioner Vogt seconded the motion. All remaining Commissioners voted in favor.

DISCUSSION

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commission Chairman Mancil said he felt like replacements in-kind could be handled in house and not have to go through a meeting.

Commissioner Blitch said that two Commissioners could review applications for in-kind replacements and give approval. He also said Commissioner Monnot had suggested adding a section to the agenda to show which applications were handled since the last meeting with Commission oversight. He added anyone with issues with those applications could be heard at the meeting.

Kristin Tortorich added she could provide a brief summary of the applications handled in house between meetings.

Certificate of Appropriateness 71180 Minkler Street

Commission Chairman Mancil reminded the Commission of the added agenda item for Minkler Street. A recorded survey of the resubdivided property was presented showing the lots combined, making the building in the application reviewed last month an accessory building to the main structure.

Commissioner Blitch motioned to accept the previous submission with the additional building based on the resubdivision. Commissioner Dinkelacker seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Dinkelacker motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Vogt seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 P.M.

Kristin M. Tortorich, Planning and Zoning

Date