

MINUTES OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
CITY OF KENNESAW
Council Chambers
January 19, 2024
8:00 AM

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Whipple at 7:59 a.m.

Roll Call: Commissioner Gallagher, Commissioner Blandford, Commissioner Bramlett, and Commissioner Butler

Absent: Commissioner Buffington

Staff Present: Darryl Simmons (Planning and Zoning Administrator), Chanelle Campbell (Assistant Planning and Zoning Administrator and City Planner), and Natalie Faustine (Community Development Administrative Assistant)

Speakers Present: Ellen Harris (President of Ethos Preservation)

2. Election of Officers

Commissioner Blandford nominated Kevin Whipple as Chair.

Commissioner Butler nominated Patrick Gallagher as Chair.

Vote taken, Kevin Whipple was declared elected Chairman by majority of votes (3-1) and accepted the position.

Commissioner Blandford nominated Patrick Gallagher as Vice Chair.

Vote taken, Patrick Gallagher is declared elected Vice Chairman by majority of votes (4-0) and accepted the position.

Mr. Darryl Simmons introduced the new Assistant Planning and Zoning Administrator and City Planner to the Commissioners. Ms. Campbell came to the podium and further introduced herself.

3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

A. Meeting Minutes from December 6, 2023

Chairman Whipple called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from December 6, 2023 as submitted.

Motion by Commissioner Gallagher to approve.

Seconded by Commissioner Butler.

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 4-0. Motion carried.

4. Financial Report

Mr. Darryl Simmons reported that the finances have been unchanged from December 23, 2023 to January 24, 2024. At the time of this meeting, there was a \$1,000 department budget, \$2,500 for training, and \$20,213 collected for historic preservation action by the city from fees. He reported no new expenditures.

Chairman Whipple called for a motion to approve the financial report as submitted.

Motion by Commissioner Blandford to approve.

Seconded by Commissioner Gallagher.

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 4-0. Motion carried.

5. Old Business

6. New Business

7. COAA Approval by City Staff and HPC Chair

A. COAA2023-23 - 3000 N Main Street

This Certificate of Appropriateness application was submitted by William Benson for tree pruning and the removal of one tree that is causing damage to the roof and likely to the foundation of his home at 3000 N Main Street. The applicant submitted professional recommendations from a tree company and home inspector to remove the tree posing risk. It was administratively reviewed and approved on December 8, 2023.

8. Discussion

A. Discussion of Kennesaw Ordinance Revisions as prepared by Ethos Preservation

Mr. Simmons gave a brief background on the creation of the Central Business District and discussed some of the issues the city has faced regarding redevelopment downtown. The city has asked Ethos Preservation to revise the ordinances regarding the historic districts and interview key stakeholders. Mr. Simmons introduced Ms. Ellen Harris, President of Ethos Preservation to present the scope of work, methodology, and recommendations they provided.

Ms. Harris began by reviewing the introduction and scope of work, methodology, and summary feedback from stakeholder interviews from the Ethos Preservation report. She noted a recurring comment among stakeholders was the loss of historic buildings, which has resulted in stringent criteria applying to areas that may not have the same defining features and characteristics as other historical areas. It was also noted that the ordinance contained some conflicting standards, and it was not stated which took precedent.

She continued to discuss her recommendations for revision.

- At this time, all buildings and districts that are listed on the National Register are also included in the local historic overlay districts. It is recommended to separate

the National Register District from the local historic overlay districts, as each district type has different implications for property owners.

- There are currently 5 historic district designations in the city's code (historic, historic-obscured, non-historic, intrusion, and vacant). Ethos Preservation recommends simplifying the classification of buildings to simply historic and non-historic.
- The review of paint colors is specifically not permitted within the Georgia Historic Preservation Act, so it should be removed.
- In regards to the Site Design Standards for the Central Business District, it is not clear which standards should apply if there is a conflict. The code should be amended to clearly state where conflicts existing between the CBD standards and the historic districts standards, the historic district standards shall apply. It is also of note that there is inconsistent use of terminology when referencing the historic district standards, which are often referred to as "guidelines." Ethos Preservation recommends revisions to refer to historic district standards consistently.
- It is recommended that the city removes subjective, repetitive, overly explanatory, and irrelevant information to make it easier to find necessary information.
- Additionally, Ethos Preservation found the list of all application materials required for each review type to be unnecessary, as legislative action should not be required to change the application materials needed.
- Next Ms. Harris expanded on a recommendation from the 2018 New South Associates review of the historic districts. They recommended the creation of a single new district which would reduce the boundaries of the original 5 historic districts to account for the loss of historic character in some areas of the city. Ms. Harris recommends that the city revises the local historic district to match the reduced boundary that was recommended by New South Associates. However, she does not recommend including the newly proposed historic areas to this until after they have been listed on the national register and public outreach has been completed.
- Some details of the ordinance, such as platings, should be moved to an appendix.
- Ethos Preservation recommends removing parts of the code that can be deemed unenforcable.
- It is noted that the city would benefit with implementing clear and consistent definitions for terms used throughout the code.
- The city should consider whether the permitted building materials are consistent with historic preservation best practices, and if the level of documentation required for some permits is appropriate.

Mr. Whipple mentioned that the goal moving forward is to update the historic district design standards to account for the difference between historic and non-historic buildings so the city is not holding all buildings in the historic district to the same standard. Further, it would be beneficial for the design standards to consider the time

period in which the structure was built when standardizing the building materials that may be used in construction.

Mr. Whipple goes on to address the conflict between the CBD and HPC standards, especially in relation to variances that have been approved in the area. Mr. Simmons mentioned the importance of revising the five existing districts based on the loss of historical assets. Mr. Whipple and Mr. Simmons discussed the challenges the city will face while cataloging and re-classifying the structures in the historic district. Mr. Andrew Bramlett asked about the methodology to be used in the cataloging and reclassifying of historic properties, and Mr. Simmons explained some methods that have been used in the past and what is being considered for the future. Mr. Whipple mentioned that New South Associate's 2018 report includes photo documentation from the right-of-way.

Mr. Whipple asked Mr. Simmons to walk the Commissioners through what going through the next steps might look like. Mr. Simmons emphasized the importance of public outreach and feedback from professionals such as building inspectors, architects and engineers.

Mr. Whipple and Mr. Simmons discussed some of the priorities of this project, such as ensuring the city gives residents a clear summary of the proposed changes and give them an opportunity to give feedback on not only the ordinance, but how the historic district functions as a whole. They also considered how each of the five existing historic districts in Kennesaw have their own unique characteristics, and the implications of changing or combining them. They went on to discuss the recent variances approved, and how the revised code should reflect the precedent set from those decisions.

Commissioner Butler pointed out the recommended changes to section 4.5.04 and 5.5.10 of the Historic District Design Standards, which proposes removing the provisions that disallow the painting of brick, marble and granite. She mentioned that removing this revision would go against the best practices recommended by historic preservation professionals. Ms. Harris clarified that this recommendation is intended to make a distinction between historic masonry, which should never be painted, and new masonry that can hold up over time. Mr. Simmons further discussed the distinction between historic and non-historic masonry.

Chairman Whipple asked about the proposed timeline, and Mr. Simmons responded that it is difficult to determine at this time. Mr. Simmons explained some of the factors that contribute to the time it will take to complete this project, such as receiving and incorporating community feedback. Commissioner Butler asked what will be expected of the Commissioners' in order to ensure full participation from the public as well as the Commission, and Mr. Simmons mentioned the possibility of scheduling some extra public meetings to appropriately address everything.

Chairman Whipple opened the floor for comments by staff. Mr. Simmons and Chairman Whipple thanked Ethos Preservation and Ms. Harris for their time and hard work.

Mr. Bramlett discussed expanding the historic tours available in Kennesaw, and the Commissioners agreed that it is a good idea and he should proceed in making those arrangements.

9. Public Comment

10. Staff Comment

Mr. Simmons thanked the Commissioners for their time and mentioned that the city is still accepting applications regarding a vacancy on the Commission.

11. Adjourn

Chairman Whipple adjourned the meeting at 8:57 a.m.