

COURTHOUSE SQUARE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Be it remembered that the Courthouse Square Preservation Commission did meet on Monday, November 2, 2009, at 5:00 p.m. on the second floor in the courtroom of City Hall with the following members present:

Jim Pryor, Chairman
Donna Gottshall
Theresa Flautt
Andy Phillips
Will Lewis

Tiffany Smith, Consultant
Mary Annie Brown, Secretary
Randy Barber, Building Director

Absent: Mike Overstreet
Phil Bailey

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Pryor.

Chairman Jim Pryor then called for approval of the minutes of October 14, 2009. Commissioner Will Lewis noted that the minutes did not reflect his absence from the meeting. Commissioner Theresa Flautt made a motion to approve the October 14, 2009 minutes with the correction as noted. Commissioner Donna Gottshall seconded the motion. All present voted aye.

After Chairman Jim Pryor asked for any questions or amendments regarding the agenda, a motion was made by Commissioner Phillips to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lewis. All present voted aye.

CHS CASE #036: Erin Smith came before the Commission representing Frank & Marlee's in regard to a Certificate of Appropriateness for 1210 Harrison Avenue. Commissioner Pryor explained that this request for a COA was presented last month to the Commission and it was asked of Ms. Smith to submit detailed drawings to meet the conditional approval. Ms. Smith presented the requested detailed drawings, including proposals for garage style windows, a new front door and a tin awning. She further spoke of the problems she was having with the roof. She requested a metal roof with a high rib to replace the damaged shingle roof. After further discussion regarding the detailed drawings presented, Commissioner Andy Phillips moved to approve the COA as presented, with Commissioner Theresa Flautt seconding the motion. All present voted aye.

CHS CASE #037: After Commissioner Will Lewis recused himself from this case, he came before the Commission representing The J. E. Neilson Company in regard to a Certificate of

Appropriates at 119 Courthouse Square. Mr. Lewis requested to replace backboards and letters on existing signs within the cornices on front façade with back lit L.E.D. signs. The proposed signs will have identical backboards and letters. The only change will be in the lighting of the signs. After further discussion, Commissioner Flautt moved to approve the COA. Commissioner Gottshall seconded the motion. All present voted aye.

DISCUSSION REGARDING INTERIOR LIGHTING AND BANNERS ON THE SQUARE:

A discussion was heard on the concern over interior lighting, particular neon commercial advertising signs in the windows of storefronts on the square. Consultant Tiffany Smith informed the Commission that the historic preservation ordinance and the design guidelines do not currently provide a vehicle for control of these signs. The commission has jurisdiction over interior architectural elements that can be seen from the exterior. However, she informed the Commission that she did not believe this provision could be extended to include interior signage. Oxford's sign ordinances address these issues. Building Director Randy Barber informed the Commission that interior lighted signs are currently allowed on the square. After further discussion and concerns, it was decided that the Commission should send a letter to the appropriate city body addressing their concerns regarding the interior lighted signage and request that some action be taken before this issue becomes a serious historic preservation problem. Commissioner Phillips made a motion that the Commission send a letter to the Board of Aldermen, Planning Commission or the appropriate body expressing concern for commercial advertising signs which are visible in storefronts on the square. Commissioner Phillips' added that the letter should convey the commission's belief that such signage is inconsistent with the character of the square and is impacting the historic significance of the district. The letter would further request that some action be taken to eliminate commercial neon signs. Commissioner Will Lewis seconded the proposal. All present voted aye.

Next, the Commission discussed the impact of banners on balconies around the square. It was discussed how the integrity of the square is being effected by the quantity and frequency of such banners. Director of Building, Randy Barber explained that each business was allowed one banner for thirty days, four times a year. After further discussion, Commissioner Phillips proposed that the Commission send a letter to the Board of Aldermen or the appropriate body expressing concerns regarding the provisions and ordinances of banners on the square and request that action be taken to minimize the impact of the banners on the historic square.

With no further business, the Commission meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Jim Pryor.

The next regular meeting date will be Monday, December 7, 2009 at 5:00 p.m.