

NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

**506 Main Street
North Little Rock, Arkansas 72114
Telephone (501) 371-0755**

**MINUTES
NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
June 12, 2025
506 Main Street
North Little Rock, AR
5:30 P.M.**

Commission Members Present:

**Tom Marr
Charlie Hart
Susan Markman
Debra Roberts
Mason Toms**

Others Present:

**Kelli Peters, Staff
Cary Bradburn, Staff
Macey Wadley, Argenta Commons
Jarrod M. Dulski, Hydco, Inc.
Travis McKenney
Alan New
Diana New**

Commission Members Absent:

None

Commission Chairman Tom Marr called the meeting of the North Little Rock Historic District Commission to order on June 12, 2025 at 5:30 P.M., and quorum was established.

Mr. Marr asked the guests to introduce themselves. Applicants for Argenta Commons, Macey Wadley; Hydco, Inc., Jarrod Dulski; and Travis McKenney introduced themselves (Alan and Diana New hadn't yet arrived).

CORRECTION AND ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Mr. Marr asked if Commissioners had read the minutes of the March 13, 2025 Historic District Commission meeting. Debra Roberts moved to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2025 HDC meeting as written. Mason Toms seconded the motion and it was approved 4-0 in a roll call vote (Susan Markman hadn't yet arrived for the vote).

New Business:

- A. 201 W. 4th Street, 216 W. 4th Street, 321 Maple Street, & 201 W. Broadway –
Installation of “private parking” signs at entrances to properties owned/used
by Argenta Commons**

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Tom Marr introduced the project, pointing out that, according to the guidelines, the size should be limited to 24" x 24". Macey Wadley clarified for the Commission the type and size of signs they would like to install. She added that the inspiration for the signs was taken from the sign at the parking lot behind our building. They liked that sign because it was attractive, permanent, and not easily damaged. However, they are open to whatever recommendations the Commission makes.

Debra Roberts asked if they measured the sign behind our building, and Ms. Wadley answered "yes." She added that they want to mirror the sign that's in front of the Manees House (one of the properties they own), and they want something inconspicuous. They have a problem with people parking in their lots, especially during baseball season, because people don't realize that these are private parking lots.

Charlie Hart asked where he would go to get his car if it were towed (from one of their lots). Ms. Wadley answered that they haven't figured that out yet. He added that he thinks they should put the number of the towing company on the signs so that people would know how to retrieve their vehicles, to which she agreed. She added that the signs are really more of a deterrent.

Mr. Marr opened the discussion for public comment. Because no one from the public made any comments, he closed public comment.

Mr. Hart pointed out that the signs should not be oversized, and then the group discussed the locations of the signs. Ms. Wadley stated that they need all of their available parking spots during their events. Alan New, who had just joined the meeting, asked for permission to ask a question. Mr. Marr granted him permission. Mr. New asked how many spaces their parking lots had. Ms. Wadley answered that it would be approximately 50-55 spaces. Mr. New asked for clarification that those would be prohibited spaces, 24/7, not open to the public. Ms. Wadley answered "yes." She added that one of their venues holds 250 people, and another holds 150 people, so they definitely need all of the spaces they have available whenever there are events at both venues.

Mason Toms asked if they could accomplish their goal with smaller, 24" x 24" signs. She said she thought so. She then clarified that they need to put the phone number on the signs. Mr. Hart told her that they should. Mr. Marr asked her if they would be agreeable to reducing the size of the signs, to which Ms. Wadley replied, "Absolutely."

Debra Roberts made a motion to approve the application based on the stipulation that the size of each sign be reduced to 24" x 24" and the phone number of either the towing company or their office number be included on each sign. Ms. Roberts added that Ms. Wadley should submit the final design to staff for approval before a COA could be issued. Mr. Hart asked if the signs would be lit. Ms. Wadley answered that that was not

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their intention. Charlie Hart seconded the motion and it was approved 4-0 in a roll call vote (Susan Markman hadn't yet arrived for the vote).

B. 800 Main Street – Renovations to exterior of office building, carport, & storage building

Tom Marr introduced the project and added that the application also includes signage. Kelli Peters pointed out that the drawings indicate two signs attached to the building, but those will not be allowed (by the National Park Service) so they are proposing a monument sign instead. Jarred Dulski showed the commissioners where they propose to put the monument sign (on the grassy area by the sidewalk).

Mr. Marr stated that he doesn't remember ever reviewing a monument sign in the district. Mr. Dulski explained that the reason they decided against the wall-mounted signs was because the (National Park Service) prohibited any signage from being attached to the building.

Mr. Marr stated that they also intend to replace the windows. Mr. Dulski explained that they intend to remove all of the windows and storm windows, and replace them with more energy-efficient windows, keeping the same look as the original windows. They will give the building a cleaner look. They had submitted a photo to the (National Park Service) of one of the windows they have already replaced. The framing would be standard, aluminum storefront framing. Debra Roberts asked Mr. Dulski if the National Park Service has already approved the new windows. Mr. Dulski told her that they won't get an answer for another 30 days. She then asked if the HDC approves the change, but the NPS prohibits it, would they still change the windows? Mr. Dulski answered that they will do whatever the NPS allows. Charlie Hart then asked if Hydco would come back to the HDC for approval if they make any changes. Mr. Dulski answered that if the NPS says they can only remove the storm windows, but not the original windows, they won't be changing them.

Mr. Marr asked about the corrugated panels on the building that have been painted. Mr. Dulski told them that they intend to clean them up and repaint them. Mason Toms asked if they have tested the panels for asbestos. Mr. Dulski answered that they had the panels tested for both lead and asbestos, and the panels had neither of those. Mr. Toms then added that he is very fond of those panels and that they very often contain asbestos. Mr. Marr asked what color they will paint them but Mr. Dulski said that their interior decorator hasn't chosen the color yet.

Mr. Marr then asked if the rear façade of the building has painted concrete. Mr. Dulski stated that all of the precast block and brick has been painted, but they will paint it a different color.

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Kelli Peters redirected the conversation to the signs, pointing out that the design guidelines for signage are located in two (2) different sections. The guidelines on the staff report address the wall signs, which were the original plan, and that is what was sent to the commissioners to review for the meeting. She was made aware of the sign change after-the-fact, and the other section in the design guidelines applies to the monument sign. She then read the part of those guidelines that state:

41. SIGNS

E. Freestanding signs may be used where necessary but should be low and small and constructed of wood or a non-reflective finish.

Ms. Roberts commented that the proposed sign definitely isn't low. Mr. Marr asked Mr. Dulski if the sign would be internally-lit to which he answered "yes." Ms. Roberts asked Ms. Peters if that section (on signs) talks about internally-lit signs, because they typically don't allow them; Ms. Peters read the following:

41. SIGNS

I. Signs of neon or internal lighting should not be used on dwellings or commercially-used residential buildings but may be appropriate for commercial buildings.

Mr. Marr stated that that is one of the issues we were looking at updating in the guidelines. Ms. Peters suggested that using external lighting, aimed upwards toward the sign, would be preferable. Mr. Hart listed a few businesses downtown that have internally-lit or neon signs. Mr. Toms mentioned that the size of the sign is a greater issue than the internal lighting.

Mr. Hart told Mr. Dulski that they would let them light it internally if they would make it smaller but Mr. Dulski said that they probably wouldn't want to do that because, if it's lowered too much, it would be blocked by trees and a fence. Mr. Hart asked him if that is the only place they could put the sign and Mr. Dulski answered "yes." Mr. Dulski then added that they haven't decided yet whether the sign will be internally-lit but they wanted to see if it would be allowed, because they have seen other signs that are so lit.

Mr. Marr opened the discussion for public comment. Travis McKenney asked about the height and width of the sign. Mr. Dulski answered that it would be 4 feet wide by 9 feet tall. Alan New then stated that there are no other signs set perpendicular to the street so that if this is allowed, no matter the size, it would set a precedent in the district. Mr. McKenney added that our guidelines state that internally-lit signs are allowed and Mr. Hart confirmed that they have allowed some, but they are mounted on the buildings, and are not perpendicular to the street. Mr. Dulski then reminded them that the (National Park Service) would not allow signs to be attached to the building because there were never any

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signs attached to the building. Mr. Toms corrected that statement by pointing out that, originally, there were aluminum letters attached to the building which created the sign: "NORTH LITTLE ROCK ELECTRIC BUILDING." Mr. Dulski stated that he is just going by what the (National Park Service) has stated.

Mr. New stated that a sign that is lit from below reads differently than an internally-lit sign. He added that because of the development that's going on in the immediate area, this would be a good opportunity to set a precedent.

Mr. New then asked Mr. Dulski if the wrap around the building is precast concrete. Mr. Dulski showed him on the plans where that is located. He added that they don't intend to paint the precast concrete, except for the bottom, which the NPS is allowing them to do.

Diana New commented that when a sign is mounted on a large building it doesn't look as big, but when you take that sign off the building, it starts to look larger because you take away the face of the proportion. Debra Roberts commented that a sign that large, internally-lit, would be massive. Mr. Dulski clarified that the entire sign would not be internally-lit, only the red "H" would be lit internally. That part is 5' x 4'.

Ms. New pointed out that there are different aspects of internally-lit signs to consider such as the temperature of the lighting, the footcandles, which can affect the level of brightness and glare. She has witnessed several car accidents at the intersection of 8th & Main and she is concerned that a sign in this location would be distracting to drivers paying more attention to Hydco's sign than the traffic light. Her main concern is the level of brightness.

Mr. McKenney asked if the City has a sign ordinance. Mr. Marr & Ms. Roberts said yes, and Ms. Roberts clarified that the Sign Board was transferred to the Board of Adjustment.

Mr. Marr then closed the public comment portion of the meeting. Mason Toms suggested that the application be separated into two applications because the sign seems to be a separate issue from the building.

Mr. New asked if he could make a comment about compatibility in the neighborhood but Mr. Marr declined to allow him to comment because they were not reviewing that at this meeting.

Mr. Toms pointed out that three (3) members of the Commission have architectural training, plus one engineer, so they are very well aware of various aspects of construction.

Charlie Hart reiterated from the guideline that free-standing signs should be low and small. He pointed out that it is too big. Mr. Dulski asked what the correct size should be. Mr.

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Hart said that it's now 9 feet, and suggested that it could be half that, or 4½ feet, but that's still pretty big. Mr. Toms suggested that they could use the monument sign in front of the library as an example – it's about 4 feet tall. Mr. Hart then asked Mr. Dulski about the things that would obscure the sign so he listed a blooming tree and 3-4 foot tall fence that would be in front of it. Ms. Peters asked if the fence had to be there but he said that they would not want to take it down.

Debra Roberts asked if the main concern about the building is the windows. The group discussed all of the proposed changes and decided that the windows would be the only thing they would consider to be controversial.

Mr. Marr then asked Mr. Dulski if he would agree to their separating the application into two different applications, and only voting on the building portion. Mr. Dulski answered that he really didn't have a choice. Mr. Toms, Ms. Roberts, & Ms. Markman pointed out that doing that would help his application move forward.

Jarred Dulski then showed the commissioners a photo of the sign on his cell phone. Ms. Roberts asked him if he would consider changing it from a vertical sign to a horizontal sign, putting the logo and address side-by-side. He pointed out that the "H" and the gray portion comprise their whole logo. Ms. Roberts said that 6 feet is better than 9 feet but she still thinks that a 6-foot sign, internally-lit, is still a pretty big sign. Maybe 6 feet with ground-lighting would not be as bad. Mr. Hart said that he could live with that.

Mason Toms noticed that signage isn't mentioned in the application so he asked Kelli Peters if there had been an amendment to the application. She answered, no. Mr. Marr told Mr. Dulski that because the application doesn't include the signage, they will vote only on the building, and he can come back at the next meeting for them to review the signage.

Chairman Marr asked for a motion to approve or deny the application. Debra Roberts made a motion to approve the application with the stipulation that if the National Park Service does not approve the change in windows, that portion of the application is not approved. Mason Toms seconded the motion and it was approved 5-0 in a roll call vote (Susan Markman had since arrived to provide the 5th vote).

Mr. Dulski told the commissioners that he would like to know what his size limitations are so that he can have a different sign designed to meet their specifications. He pointed out that there are a lot of inconsistencies in the guidelines, regarding signage. Ms. Roberts told him that a 6-foot sign is already big, compared to what else is in the district. She said that she, personally, would be okay with it if it were ground-lit. He then stated that he is simply trying to find out if he is allowed to use an internally-lit sign or if it has to be ground-lit. Mr. Hart acknowledged that they have approved internally-lit signs on buildings, but not a 6-foot monument sign. He suggested that Mr. Dulski propose what he wants to do, and

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they will vote on it. Mr. Dulski reiterated that he is just trying to get clarification on what is allowed, and what isn't.

He said that he understands why the application was separated. Mr. Toms corrected him by explaining that they didn't separate the application, pointing out that the application does not mention the signage. Technically, we don't have to review anything that is not included on the application. Mr. Dulski said he understood.

Mr. Dulski then stated again that he needs to know what specific height the sign needs to be, whether it can be internally-lit or if it has to be ground-lit, and if it has to be wood, based on the guidelines Ms. Peters read. Mr. Hart stated that he wouldn't vote for a 6-foot internally-lit sign. Ms. Markman agreed. Ms. Peters acknowledged that there are some inconsistencies in the guidelines, and no specific height limits, but it's basically up to interpretation by the commissioners. Debra Roberts said that her concern is setting a precedent in the district by approving a 6-foot, internally-lit sign. She realizes that the district is always evolving, but that would set a precedent, and would change the character of the district if others decided to do the same thing. Ms. Markman agreed that a 6-foot sign is rather tall. Mr. Dulski thanked the commissioners and agreed to come back next month.

Staff Report/Comments/Discussion:

Kelli Peters told the commissioners that she had a stack of things to discuss with them:

301 Main St. – Birdies signage

Ms. Peters reported that she had given a COA to Birdies for signage. A few days later, she saw additional signage that she hadn't permitted. After some discussion they determined that it was okay to leave it as is because it's basically a logo, it's removable, and you can still see through it to the inside of the building. The consensus was that they were okay with it.

400 Main St. – Faucette Building deterioration

Ms. Peters reported that she had been communicating with the mayor, city attorney's office, and the owner, Dr. Phillip Jaros, regarding the condition of the building. He had responded to her first (certified) letter, but only a window was repaired. She sent him another letter, giving him a hard deadline of May 31, to get *all* of the work on the building completed, but got no response, and no repairs had been done. The letter stated that if he did not do the repairs, and/or did not contact her with a reason why he hadn't done the repairs, by the May 31 deadline, she would turn the matter over to the city attorney's office. Several city government officials, including Tom Marr & Kelli Peters, met to report their involvement, so that they could all be on the same page. Receiving no response from Dr. Jaros by the May 31 deadline, Ms. Peters turned the matter over to the assistant city attorney, who is the one assigned to the case. That was on June 2. On June 4 or so, the assistant city attorney

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notified Ms. Peters that they had decided to issue citations to Dr. Jaros in lieu of sending him another letter, due to his history of ignoring letters. As a result of this being turned over to the city attorney's office, this may end up becoming another court case. Mr. Marr said that it may turn out to be like the case of 304 W. 7th St., which involved taking the owner to court. He assured the commissioners that no one involved wants the building to be torn down. It will likely end up in circuit court. Cary Bradburn added that the Cook Building at 423 Main ended up in court, too.

Ms. Peters added that Director Sandra Taylor Smith would like for Ms. Peters to pursue the Argenta Drug Building and Vogel's Hall (Blake Furniture) next, due to the poor condition of both buildings. She reported that bricks have fallen off the one-story portion of the Argenta Drug Building over the Crush Wine Bar.

710 Main St. – Demolition of old service station

Ms. Peters reported that the owner's contractor had approached her about demolishing the old service station building with plans to build something new on the lot, however, they have no plans drawn up for a new building. Tom Marr reminded the commissioners that the previous owners wanted to demolish it but the HDC's approval of the demolition was stipulated on the approval of the design of a new building on the site. He stressed that we don't want to approve the demolition of a building for a parking lot on Main Street. He suggested that the Commission could give guidance to the owners about other options. He suggested that the fuel island could possibly be removed, to allow for some additional parking spaces. Charlie Hart brought up the possibility that they would get approval for the demolition and new construction, tear down the building, and then say that they don't have the money for the new building. Debra Roberts said that approval for demolition should be stipulated on actually starting construction. Ms. Peters said that the building would look better, and it has potential, if it were fixed up. Bob Markman reminded the commissioners that there are 10,000-gallon tanks underneath the pavement (that will eventually have to be removed).

817 Maple St. – Addition of "decklet"

Ms. Peters reported that Charlie Hart had reported to her that the owners of this house built a little "decklet" on the front of the building, over the course of a rainy weekend. This was not permitted. She said that she is concerned that ignoring it would set a precedent so, if they have a problem with it, she will send a violation letter. They all said she should.

723 Orange – Picket fence

The owner started putting up a 4-foot picket fence around her house, without a COA. She is only allowed 3.5 feet in height but she said she needs 4 feet in order to keep her dog in the yard. Ms. Peters got verbal permission from Charlie Hart to approve the increase to 4 feet so that is what she put on the COA.

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414 Willow – Security bar on front window

Ms. Peters reported that the owner had recently installed a security bar on the front window. She showed them photos of the house before & after the security bar was installed. None of them were okay with it. This appears to be the only window that has one but more may be planned. She added that the guidelines state that those are not prohibited, but they are discouraged. They are supposed to be unobtrusive. Susan Markman added that we need to stop that. Ms. Peters added that the fire marshal may not approve of security bars because of the safety factor. They advised Ms. Peters to send a violation letter regarding the security bar(s).

Susan Markman apologized to the group for her tardiness, stating that she had thought all day long that the meeting started at 6:00 PM.

After Tom Marr determined that there was no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelli Peters, NLR History Commission Staff