

**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  
October 12, 2023  
506 Main Street  
North Little Rock, AR  
5:30 P.M.**

---

**Commission Members Present:**

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

**Others Present:**

**Sandra Taylor Smith, Director  
Kelli Peters, Staff  
Corine Brown  
Courtney Swanigan**

**Commission Members Absent:**

**Susan Markman**

---

Commission Chairman Tom Marr called the meeting of the North Little Rock Historic District Commission to order on October 12, 2023 at 5:30 P.M., and quorum was established. Commissioner Susan Markman had an excused absence.

**CORRECTION AND ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Mr. Marr asked if Commissioners had read the minutes of the September 14, 2023 Historic District Commission meeting. Mason Toms moved to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2023 HDC meeting as written. Debra Roberts seconded the motion and it was approved 4-0 in roll call vote.

**New Business:**

**A. 304 W. 7th St. – Renovation of house**

Sandra Smith asked that this item be deferred until next month because Antoinette “Toni” Johnson, the owner’s representative, cannot be here this evening, and wishes to present the project at the November meeting.

**B. 406 W. 5th St. – Remove metal siding and repair/replace original wood siding where needed; install gate at alley in backyard**

## NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

**Meeting October 12, 2023**

**Page 2**

Sandra Smith explained that this item was tabled from last month. She presented a picture of the gate the owner would like to install at the alley. She added that the owner now wishes to remove the metal siding and restore the original wood siding underneath. She added that she is unable to be at the meeting tonight but she has explained that the wood siding, if any of it needs replacing, needs to match the width of the original siding.

Mr. Marr asked for any comments or questions, from both the Commission and the public. There were none so he closed public comment. He asked for a motion to approve or deny the application. Debra Roberts made a motion to approve the gate, the removal of the metal siding, and the restoration of the original wood siding underneath. Charlie Hart seconded the motion and it was approved 4-0 in a roll call vote.

### **C. 229 Melrose Cir. – Replace steel siding with steel siding; replace wood windows; replace doors; replace awnings on west elevation**

Sandra Smith presented everyone with pictures of the various elements that were being considered for replacement: a sample of the metal siding, a printout of the windows proposal from Pella Windows, a catalog sheet showing the door, and a photo of the awning.

Looking at the catalog sheet, Charlie Hart asked if the door will be fiberglass. Ms. Smith asked Corine Brown if the door is available in wood. Ms. Brown stated that she thought it was wood, and that the store told her it was wood. Mr. Hart asked if we had ever approved fiberglass doors in the district. Ms. Smith answered that they hadn't knowingly approved any. Ms. Brown offered to keep the existing door instead. Ms. Smith told her that she doesn't have to replace it so this item was taken out of consideration.

Ms. Smith asked Ms. Brown if she had ever considered painting the siding. Ms. Roberts told Ms. Brown that they can't tell where the siding is damaged. Ms. Smith pointed out the damaged portion around the electrical box at the back corner of the house. Ms. Roberts then asked for staff recommendation on the siding. Ms. Smith stated that she doesn't understand the reason for replacing it, other than the one place where it's damaged. Courtney Swanigan explained that the insurance company will pay for replacing the siding on the whole house, and he didn't understand why they were getting resistance since they were replacing it with the same type of material.

Tom Marr explained that the problem is that artificial siding material is on the house. Even though it was on there when Ms. Brown bought the house, they typically allow people to repair the damaged area only. However, taking off all of the artificial siding, they would want them to restore the original wood siding underneath. Removing artificial siding and putting new artificial siding back on is going in the wrong direction.

Mr. Swanigan stated that they had approved in the last meeting so he doesn't understand

## NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

**Meeting October 12, 2023**

**Page 3**

how it's going backwards. Ms. Smith pointed out that the previous item on the agenda is comparable in that she plans to remove the steel siding and restore the original wood siding underneath, and they're excited about that because it will greatly improve the appearance of the house.

Ms. Smith asked Mr. Swanigan if there are dents in the siding. He explained that after 34 years, and due to weather and other factors, it has a lot of dents.

The Commissioners discussed the issue amongst themselves. Mr. Marr stated that the National Park Service would prohibit new siding from being put on after removing the artificial siding. They would require that the original wood siding be restored.

Mr. Toms stated that, since the house is a contributing structure in the district, it really wouldn't change the appearance of the house, thereby making it non-contributing, as long as the reveal is the same.

Mr. Hart said that he's fine with replacing the siding with the same, as long as the reveal is the same. He then told Mr. Swanigan that they would love it if they could take it off and restore the wood siding, but he realizes that not everyone can do that. Mr. Swanigan then explained that Ms. Brown needs more energy efficiency because the house has no other insulation.

Mr. Toms then directed the group toward a discussion on the windows. Looking over the specifications sheet they determined that the windows would be wood clad in aluminum painted white in a 4-over-1 pattern.

Mr. Toms then directed them to a discussion about the awnings. He said that he is not a fan of the awnings because they have more of a commercial feel to them. Mr. Hart pointed out that they look like the kind of metal roofing that they don't allow. Ms. Roberts asked if they were replacing all five and the answer was yes. Mr. Hart added that he can't support the type of awning they're proposing.

Ms. Smith asked if they would consider replacing them with canvas awnings. Mr. Swanigan explained that that was the closest thing they could find, but that they could keep looking. Ms. Smith asked the Commission if they would prefer canvas over this style to which Mr. Hart answered yes. Ms. Smith suggested that they look at Little Rock Tent & Awning to see what they have available. Ms. Roberts told them that they would prefer canvas or a metal awning that looks more like what's on the house now, as long as it has a residential look.

They decided that they would not be comfortable approving the awnings until they see exactly what they would be approving, so that item will be tabled. Ms. Roberts told Ms.

## NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

**Meeting October 12, 2023**

**Page 4**

Smtih that she would be okay with approving whatever they submit to Ms. Smith, as long as she approves it.

Ms. Roberts clarified with Mr. Swanigan that they are not replacing the door. Mr. Swanigan explained that they will not be replacing the front door, but they will be replacing the back door and the carport door. Ms. Smith asked what the doors look like. Ms. Smith showed the group a photo of the rear door which has a window in it and they all approved of it. Ms. Smith asked Ms. Brown what was wrong with the existing door. Ms. Smith pointed out that this style of door is very typical door of side & back doors on Melrose Circle. Ms. Brown explained that it has a crack in it but that she has decided to just repair it instead of replacing it.

Mr. Marr asked if there were any questions from the Commission. There were none so he asked for a motion to approve or deny the application. Debra Roberts made a motion to approve the replacement of the existing steel siding with steel siding of the same profile, the replacement of the wood windows as submitted, the front door will not be replaced, the carport door will be repaired, the back door will be allowed because it will not be visible from the street, and they will table the decision on the awnings until the applicant can get an example to Ms. Smith. Mason Toms seconded the motion and it was approved 4-0 in a roll call vote.

### **Staff Report/Comments/Discussion:**

Sandra Smith told the Commission that she is concerned about all the signage that is being installed around the district without coming through the Commission. She told the group about a huge, new sign commemorating the lynching of Homer Blackman in 1906 that was erected at the corner of 6th & Main streets. Mason Toms asked if we know who's putting them up and Ms. Smith answered that we do. Debra Roberts said that she thought they would have to go before the Sign Board for approval. Ms. Smith stated she doesn't think they went through anyone for approval. She added that Chris Kent is the contact for the City but that we found out when Alderman Linda Robinson called and alerted us. No one ever contacted us about it even though Cary Bradburn (NLR History Commission staff) researched and wrote about it 20 years ago for the Encyclopedia of Arkansas. Alderman Robinson told Ms. Smith that the group, the Peace & Justice Center, has erected a similar sign in Haven of Rest Cemetery in Little Rock, and that they are erecting signs all over the state commemorating lynchings. She added that Mr. Blackman was pulled out of the jail in 1906, when it was in our building, and hanged at 6th & Main streets. The sign had already been prepared, and then after speaking to Cary at great length, they learned that some of their information was incorrect. They have since corrected some of it but they never came to us for clarification or approval to put up the sign. We never got to read the wording on the sign before it was put up, nor did we get to discuss putting up a big sign on Main Street. Charlie Hart said that, in essence, they violated the Historic District guidelines. Ms. Smith agreed, and stated that we have never approved much signage on Main Street

## NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

**Meeting October 12, 2023**

**Page 5**

unless it pertained to particular businesses. She then added that there is an additional sign at the corner of 6th & Maple streets about the planet Uranus. Mr. Hart added that there are possibly two others, too. Ms. Smith stated that they are not going through the City for approval. Tom Marr asked if they are permanent and Ms. Smith answered that they are. Mr. Marr replied that the Historic District Commission needs to review those. Mr. Toms said that they must be getting approval from somebody but Ms. Smith told him that they weren't seeking any approval from us; in fact, they were quoted in the newspaper as claiming they didn't need permission because the signs were being installed on private property. That way, they wouldn't have to deal with the City. Mr. Hart added that that's what they said about the lynching sign and then he pointed out that everything the Historic District Commission reviews is on private property. Ms. Smith added that no one bothered to tell us or ask us about it. Ms. Roberts added that the Sign Board approves signs on private property. Ms. Smith added that our issue is that it was erected with neither our approval nor the chance to review the wording.

Ms. Smith then added that this group also wants to change the name of 6th Street to Homer Blackwell Street, and that his name was Homer Blackman, not Blackwell. They indicate that there could have been two different names. There was a dedication of the sign this past Saturday morning, October 7. She added that, as a result of this, Alderman Linda Robinson is going to make a motion with the City Council that any historic signage that goes up has to be reviewed by the North Little Rock History Commission before it can be erected. She added that the History Commission will get to comment on street name changes, and the History Commission opposes the changing of this street name.

Mr. Hart said that we need to find out who's putting up the planet signs. They're on the sidewalk and the group agreed that they're located on public property. Ms. Smith said that she doesn't think the City would have approved those without talking to us first. Being on City property, the City would have had to approve it. Mr. Marr asked why the signs are about the planets but none of them knew.

Ms. Roberts asked Sandra to let them know when Alderman Robinson makes the motion to the City Council about the signage because one of them needs to be there. Ms. Smith assured her that she would let them know. She reminded the group that we were totally overlooked on getting approval on putting up the sign or whether or not the wording was correct. Mr. Hart asked if we have proof that the sign is incorrect. She told him that she would have Cary take a photo of it and go over it with a fine tooth comb to make sure everything is correct. She told them that the sign is very large, just like the Civil War markers that are located all across the state.

Ms. Smtih told the group that when the Argenta Branch Library got approval to put up the glass sculpture commemorating the Trail of Tears, Crystal Gates, the library director, asked Sandra if she thought the wording was correct on it; Sandra checked with a man at the

## NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

**Meeting October 12, 2023**

**Page 6**

Sequoia Center, who is the authority on the Trail of Tears in Arkansas, and he soundly rejected the information as incorrect so the sculpture was never erected. At least we caught that before they put it up.

Ms. Smith then told the commissioners about an application she received from Chris Kent & Stan Jackson for a 30-foot gate and a man-door to be erected at the south end of Argenta Plaza. The purpose is to keep people from walking back & forth between the Plaza and Bob Hardin's parking lot, close to the public restrooms, and keep the homeless people out. She spoke with Karen Trevino and Karen is nixing the project. The gate would require a key for access which would be a safety hazard for us. Also, it wouldn't keep people out of the Plaza. Mr. Hart pointed out that it's not to keep out the homeless population. It's to keep the event organizers from having to keep staff in that area to watch the area. If they have a gated fence, it limits the access points to the events. Ms. Smith told them that they are now locking the bathrooms because the homeless people are living in them.

Ms. Smith told them that 304 W. 7th Street will be presented at next month's meeting. Mr. Hart asked about the woman who just bought the house at 231 Melrose Circle so Ms. Smith told him that she will get an application from her for a really neat storage building.

After determining there was no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:16 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

---

Sandra Taylor Smith, Director