

NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

**506 Main Street
North Little Rock, Arkansas 72114
Telephone (501) 371-0755; Fax (501) 371-8360**

**MINUTES
NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
November 10, 2022
506 Main Street
North Little Rock, AR
5:30 P.M.**

Commission Members Present:

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

Others Present:

**Sandra Taylor Smith, Director
Kelli Peters, Staff
Bob Markman
Carletta Hampton (applicant)
Dwayne Thompson, Freedom Forever Solar
Logan Underwood, Freedom Forever Solar (via
Facetime)
Mike Ables
Jim Sanders, Hardline Solar**

Commission Members Absent:

Mason Toms

Commission Chairman Tom Marr called the meeting of the North Little Rock Historic District Commission on November 10, 2022 to order at 5:30 P.M. and quorum was established. Chairman Marr welcomed guests and asked them to introduce themselves.

CORRECTION AND ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Mr. Marr asked if Commissioners had read the minutes of the October 13, 2022 Historic District Commission meeting. Susan Markman pointed out one correction, that she was the one who made the motion under "New Items" at the last meeting rather than the one who seconded it. Ms. Markman made the motion to accept the minutes as corrected and Charlie Hart seconded. Kelli Peters took a roll call vote to approve the minutes as corrected and it was approved 4-0 moved to approve the minutes of the August 2022 HDC meeting as written. Mason Toms seconded the motion and it was approved 4-0 in roll call vote.

NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Meeting November 10, 2022

Page 2

New Business:

A. 420 Main Street- Glass Sculptures on grounds

Director Smith stated that the sculpture is a beautiful glass sculpture depicting images from the Trail of Tears, and that no one was there to represent the library's application because their representative has a board meeting tonight.

She pointed out that the sculptures are really beautiful; they are planning on putting them on the greenspace at the southeast corner of the property. Smith's concern is that they might get broken.

Chairman Marr asked Director Smith how they should handle the application with no one here to represent the project. Director Smith explained that they need our recommendation that it would be appropriate so that that could be included with the grant paperwork because the grant requires that the local historic district commission has looked at it. She thinks it's appropriate.

Chairman Marr clarified that the group is not approving the application, but just giving their recommendation. Smith answered yes.

Director Smith then clarified the intended location of the sculpture, the back corner of the property.

Susan Markman asked if it would come back to the Commission for approval should they get the grant. Director Smith said that it probably would not. Smith said that she would like to confirm the final location of the sculpture. Charlie Hart then said that it would be hard to see back there. Smith pointed out that there are no street lights back there and it's pretty dark.

Chris Kent has said that the library board has approved it in that location and they're just looking for our approval to go forward.

Debra Roberts asked if any location they choose would be okay with Director Smith. She answered that she thinks it will be a location on the front, or on the south side of the building, and that she's pretty much okay with any location.

Debra Roberts asked if the motion needs the HDC's approval for the exact location. Smith clarified that they're basically just approving the artwork itself and she thinks it's appropriate.

Chairman Marr asked if it would sit on a flat base. Smith answered yes. She pointed out that they haven't even gotten the grant yet but he really wanted this recommendation tonight so that he could proceed with the grant paperwork.

Charlie Hart said that he doesn't really like approving something until we see it. Susan Markman said that we're really not approving it, really, but Marr pointed out that we sort of are.

Director Smith compared it to the metal dog sculptures. Susan Markman said that, in general, art would be an enhancement to the district. Charlie Hart said that the location doesn't affect his opinion of the project. He added that he likes the idea of the Trail of Tears. The discussed the merits of the project. Director Smith pointed out that Main Street

NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Meeting November 10, 2022

Page 3

was a major route that they traveled on the Trail of Tears, this would be an appropriate way to recognize that.

Debra Roberts asked if the motion should include language that it should come back to us if there are any design changes. Director Smith answered yes.

Chairman Marr opened the discussion for public comment.

Dwayne Thompson said that he approves of the project.

Bob Markman asked if we had notified the Talleguah Tribe of this project. Director Smith answered that we have notified them and that they approve.

Chairman Marr closed public comment.

Debra Roberts moved that the project be approved, and if changes are made, they seek re-approval.

Susan Markman seconded the motion.

Director Smith called a roll call vote and the project was approved by unanimous vote.

B. 117 Melrose Divide- Solar Panels on roof

Director Smith presented the project to the Commission, showing color photos of the house on a TV monitor which showed that the house had suffered a fire in 1991 or 1992. Carletta Hampton confirmed that the house had had a fire and had been vandalized, and she bought it. She gutted it and put it back to historic district standards. She said she did get approval for a third bedroom addition and a rear utility porch.

Director Smith pointed out in a photo where the solar panels are intended to go. The house is the last one on the street; Melrose Park is across the street on the other side.

Carletta Hampton reported that the mayor came last October and gave orders to take down 8 trees, and had the City put in new electrical lines because the trees kept damaging the electrical lines during storms. Director Smith added that a storm had caused a tree to fall on her chain link fence, causing damage. It was repaired and put back.

Debra Roberts asked if the brick had been painted. Carletta Hampton, the applicant, confirmed that it was painted in July 2022 and that she tried to keep it a historic color.

Debra Roberts then told Ms. Hampton that the ordinance doesn't allow unpainted brick to be painted. Ms. Hampton told her that she had it painted it when she first bought the house, 27 years ago, and that she thought it needed a fresh coat of paint. Susan Markman asked her if she bought the house before 1993. She said it was in 1994.

Susan Markman also pointed out that the ordinance doesn't allow unpainted brick to be painted.

Susan Markman then advised Ms. Hampton to check with Director Smith before doing anything to the exterior of her house, to make sure it's allowed. Ms. Hampton assured her that she would.

Ms. Hampton then told them that she needs to repaint the wooden gable ends and trim. They assured her that painting wood is fine. Debra Roberts pointed out that if she needs to

NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Meeting November 10, 2022

Page 4

replace any wood that's damaged, she needs to come before the HDC for approval. She agreed to do that.

Director Smith reminded everyone that the application is for solar panels. Dwayne Thompson explained the project, both the product and the location of the panels on Ms. Hampton's house. He then asked if anyone had any questions about the project. Charlie Hart told him that staff has recommended that the project not be approved because the panels will be visible from the front of the house, and they are not historic and are not allowed. Dwayne Thompson then asked them to clarify which side is considered the front of the house.

Director Smith pointed out the front of the house, and stated that the HDC has never approved solar panels that are visible from the street. She noted that there are panels throughout the district but they are not visible from the street. Debra Roberts pointed out that they are always on the back.

Charlie Hart asked if mounting the panels on the shed roof in the back would be an option. He said that location would be acceptable. That would be a west exposure.

Chairman Marr suggested another option of a ground-mount panel. Ms. Hampton said that it would take up too much of her yard.

Charlie Hart then brought up that eventually there would be solar shingles. Dwayne Thompson then pointed out that they are not a good option yet because they are inefficient, expensive to manufacture, they don't work very well, and they're very expensive to maintain (hail damage, etc.). He agreed that they would blend in much better than the panels but the technology isn't there yet.

Susan Markman said that she is normally an advocate for green energy but she thinks this one is a question of the visibility.

Charlie Hart then suggested that the solar panels be put on the shed roof at the rear of the house, and asked if she would consider doing that instead. Ms. Hampton said that she would be fine with that. The rest of the Commission agreed that the shed roof would be an appropriate place for the solar panels.

Charlie Hart clarified that they don't want to say no (to the original proposed location), but they have to (because of the ordinance).

Director Smith asked Ms. Hampton how many years it would take for her to recoup her investment. She said about 20 years. They then discussed alternate locations for the solar panels.

Susan Markman said that she thinks they would be able to approve the panels if they're put on the shed roof of the rear porch addition, but if not, then they unfortunately would not be able to approve it.

Director Smith told them that we had another application on Melrose Circle earlier this year, or last year, and they wanted to put solar panels on both sides of the roof. The rear shed roof of that house never saw sun so that was not an option. Because both sides of the roof were visible from the street, that application did not go through.

NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Meeting November 10, 2022

Page 5

Dwayne Thompson then suggested that Ms. Hampton could build a pergola or gazebo in the backyard, and put the solar panels on that. They then invited Ms. Hampton to come back for approval if she decides to do that.

Ms. Hampton then explained that she would like to build a shed in the back yard. She then asked if it would be permissible to put the solar panels on the roof of the shed. It was the consensus that this would be acceptable but that the design and materials of the shed would need to be of wood, and approved by the Historic District Commission before being built.

Debra Roberts suggested to Ms. Hampton that, in addition to consulting with Director Smith, she might consider consulting with the solar technicians so that they could advise her on the best orientation of the proposed building, to get the most benefit out of the solar panels.

Director Smith recommended that the application be tabled until plans for a new shed and alternate location of the solar panels can be presented to the HDC. Susan Markman moved to table the application (see above). Debra Roberts seconded the motion. Director Smith called a roll call vote and tabling the project was approved 4-0.

Director Smith then advised Dwayne Thompson that the deadline for applications for the December meeting is Wednesday, November 16.

Thompson, Hampton, & Sanders then left the meeting.

Staff Report/Comments/Discussion:

Chairman Marr called for the staff report to be read.

EXHIBIT/ALTERNATE MEETING SPACE

Director Smith told the Commission that the downstairs will be closed for the next several months while we get ready for the new permanent exhibit.

She pointed out that next Wednesday Director Smith will know what applications she will have for December and asked if everyone is okay with meeting upstairs, using the elevator.

Susan Markman asked if the elevator is working. Director Smith said that it is.

Chairman Marr suggested City Hall as another option for a place to meet.

Director Smith told them that the City had offered the use of the new City Services building on Pershing Blvd. as an alternate place to meet.

BROCHURE MAILOUT

Director Smith reported that we will send out the new brochure early next year (probably in January) for a "Happy 2023." She clarified that we wanted to wait to mail them then so that they wouldn't get lost among all of the political and holiday mail people were getting.

OTHER

Debra Roberts told the group that she will have knee replacement surgery on December 30.

Director Smith told them that she will have cataract surgery on Monday, November 28.

PENDING APPLICATION

Director Smith reported that she has been contacted by a lady who has bought the house at 501 W. 5th St. who wants to paint the (brick) house but Smith advised her to hold off on

NORTH LITTLE ROCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Meeting November 10, 2022

Page 6

painting the house. Debra Roberts suggested sending a letter to the property owner specifically about the issue.

Director Smith asked the Commission if they want to review the rear porch replacement at 501 W. 5th St. They all said they did.

AIR BNBs

Director Smith reported that the City has put a moratorium on new Air BNBs in the city through the end of 2023. They then discussed various properties throughout the district that have been operated as Air BNBs.

OTHER

Charlie Hart said that the owner of the blue house next to him can't afford to rehab the house.

Mr. Hart then asked about the house at 108 Melrose Divide.

VIOLATION

Director Smith then told Mr. Hart that the HDC would go after the owner of the house on W. 7th St. after Thanksgiving (after the deadline for correcting his violation). They then discussed the importance of legal involvement. Chairman Marr stated that he might know of a contractor who could renovate it.

MEETING ADJOURNED –

After determining there was no further business to discuss, Debra Roberts moved to adjourn. The Commission seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 6:42 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra Taylor Smith, Director