

**HISTORIC DISTRICT BOARD OF REVIEW
REGULAR MEETING
112 EAST STATE STREET**

ARTHUR A. MENDONSA HEARING ROOM

April 9, 2008

2:00 P.M.

MINUTES

HDRB Members Present:

**Dr. Malik Watkins, Chairman
Brian Judson, Vice-Chairman
Ned Gay
Dr. Nicholas Henry
Gene Hutchinson
Richard Law, Sr.
Eric Meyerhoff
Linda Ramsay**

HDRB Members Not Present:

**Sidney J. Johnson
Swann Seiler
Joseph Steffen**

HDRB/MPC Staff Members Present:

**Thomas L. Thomson, P.E./AICP, Exec. Director
Beth Reiter, Historic Preservation Director
Janine N. Person, Administrative Assistant**

RE: CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

RE: REFLECTION

RE: SIGN POSTING

All signs were properly posted.

RE: CONTINUED AGENDA

**RE: Continued Petition of Gunn, Meyerhoff & Shay
Patrick Shay
H-07-3784-2
PIN No. 2-0016-04-003
501 West Bay Street
New Construction Part I Height and Mass –**

Hotel/Condominium

Continue to May 14, 2008, at the petitioner's request.

**RE: Continued Petition of Houston & Oglethorpe, LLC
Richard Guerard
H-07-3832-2
PIN No. 2-0005-30-002
143 Houston Street
New Construction/Rehabilitation/Addition Part I, Height &
Mass, Three-Story Condominium**

Continue to May 14, 2008, at the petitioner's request.

**RE: Continued Petition of Gunn, Meyerhoff & Shay
Patrick Shay
H-07-3916-2
PIN No. 2-0015-01-001
225 East President Street
New Construction, Part I Height and Mass for a Five-Story
Condominium**

Continue to May 14, 2008, at the petitioner's request.

**RE: Continued Petition of Mechelle Gladney
H-08-3958-2
PIN No. 2-0032-16-003
15 West Jones Street
Stoop**

Continue to May 14, 2008, at the petitioner's request.

HDRB ACTION: Mr. Judson made a motion that the Savannah Historic District Board of Review approve the Continued Agenda items as submitted. Mr. Hutchinson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

RE: CONSENT AGENDA

**RE: Amended Petition of Greenline Architecture
Gretchen Callejas
H-07-3840-2
PIN No. 2-0045-19-007
605 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
Sign**

The Preservation Officer recommends **approval**.

**RE: Petition of Stratton Leopold
H-08-3975-2
PIN No. 2-0004-40-003
212 East Broughton Street
Sign**

The Preservation Officer recommends **approval**.

**RE: Petition of Stratton Leopold
H-08-3976-2
PIN No. 2-0044-08-020
720 – 722 Habersham Street
Sign**

The Preservation Officer recommends **approval**.

HDRB ACTION: Mr. Judson made a motion that the Savannah Historic District Board of Review approve the Continued Agenda items as submitted. Mr. Gay seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

RE: REGULAR AGENDA

There were no petitions.

RE: REQUEST FOR EXTENSIONS

RE: STAFF REVIEWS

1. Petition of Greenline Architecture
Gretchen Callejas
H-07-3840-2
605 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
Color Change
STAFF DECISION: APPROVED
2. Petition of Seth Champion
Lenny's Sub Shop
H-08-3966(S)-2
102 East Broughton Street
Color Change/Repair Facade
STAFF DECISION: APPROVED
3. Petition of Joe Dabit
On Time Fashions
H-08-3967(S)-2
26 West Broughton Street
Shutters/Color
STAFF DECISION: APPROVED
4. Petition of Tommy Nickoloff
H-08-3968(S)-2
105 West Oglethorpe Avenue, Unit 403
Existing Windows, Doors
STAFF DECISION: APPROVED

5. Petition of The Spriggs Group
Bryce W. Bounds
H-08-3969(S)-2
545 East York Street
Color Change
STAFF DECISION: APPROVED

6. Petition of Frank K. Peeples, Jr.
H-08-3970(S)-2
21 East Broad Street
Color/Shutters/Windows, Doors
STAFF DECISION: APPROVED

7. Petition of Greenline Architecture
Monica Mastrianni
H-08-3971(S)-2
18 West Bryan Street
Existing Windows, Doors/Sign
STAFF DECISION: APPROVED

8. Petition of Coastal Maintenance Services, LLC
H-08-3972(S)-2
122 West Broughton Street
Awning/Color Change
STAFF DECISION: APPROVED

9. Petition of Coastal Canvas Products, Inc.
H-08-3973(S)-2
408 West Broughton Street
Awning
STAFF DECISION: APPROVED

10. Petition of Gunn, Meyerhoff & Shay
Patrick Shay
H-08-3974(S)-2
7 Drayton Street
Existing Doors
STAFF DECISION: APPROVED

11. Petition of Dawson + Wissmach Architects
Josh Ward
H-08-3977(S)-2
310 West Boundary Street
Awning/Existing Windows, Doors
STAFF DECISION: APPROVED

RE: WORK PERFORMED WITHOUT A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

RE: NOTICES, PROCLAMATIONS, AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RE: OTHER BUSINESS**a. Unfinished Business**

Dr. Watkins stated that a notice was sent out approximately one month ago about the Historic Revisions Committee meeting, that Mr. Thomson and Staff had done a phenomenal job, and it had been a huge learning opportunity. He said that tonight and tomorrow night a draft ordinance was being worked on and the meetings were open to the public. The information and documentation is listed on the website.

Ms. Ward stated that the Historic District Revisions Committee was convened by the Mayor and Aldermen to look at the Historic District Ordinance. She said there were problems with the height map and the interpretation of the height map, there were no standards for large-scale development, and they were getting a large influx of large buildings, hotels, and condominiums. The Board has been trying to apply retail standards to hotels and apartment buildings. A 19-member Committee was appointed by the Mayor to review the ordinance and the Committee was working to reach a consensus recommendation to amend the ordinance. It would be presented to the MPC for a public meeting and recommendation on to City Council. Meetings have been held every Monday since February 25, and this week there would be meetings to draft the actual ordinance language. A meeting would be held on April 14 and 21 in the Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room and meetings have been held in the Jerry Surrency room. She said that the public was invited to all meetings and were provided an opportunity to speak, make comments on the presentation, and interact with the Committee. Some were invited to sit in on the small group discussions to give input. Everything was provided on the website at www.thempc.org along with all of the meeting notes, summaries, maps, information, and email comments that had been received. They drafted a purpose because the Committee strived to provide a clear and balanced ordinance that enabled the preservation and protection of the authentic and unique qualities as a National Historic Landmark District and adjacent areas, while providing for excellence in new design and urban development. It would keep them focused as they moved forward while accomplishing the task. They had to consider parallel efforts with the existing ordinance and past planning efforts, but the Downtown Master Plan was scheduled to be adopted this year and they wanted to make sure what the Committee did would not conflict with what was already being done. They were taking the design principles being recommended from the document and crafting it into ordinance language when possible. The Unified Zoning Ordinance update was ongoing and they were using the ordinance revision to bridge the divide between the existing ordinance and what would be updated in 2009. It would be closer to what it would look like when the Unified Zoning Ordinance was updated.

They had considered recent issues of concern such as gut rehabilitations and interiors being lost to the extent that buildings collapsed. They had identified some guiding principles so everyone could move forward and make sure that what they came up with was defensible under state law. The MPC staff, as well as City and the Savannah Development Renewal Authority (SDRA) staff, have been present at the meetings to make sure that the guiding principles are met. She said that the topics being looked at were numerous and were duplicated from the Downtown Master Plan design principles. Several topics were added by incorporating items such as lighting and paving. Maintenance referred mostly to vacant properties with regard to how long should a building stay boarded up, demolition by neglect, and rehabilitation. They wanted to make sure that they could fold into the Unified Zoning Ordinance. Because of that, the recommendations were in a new format and would be in a new template for use after it was adopted. The review process was examined and an adoption for Site Plan Review in the Historic District was created that would become a part of the ordinance. Any new construction had to go through the Site Plan Review process and it would be clarified by placing it in the ordinance. Past Planning efforts like the 1966 Historic Preservation Plan that identified the visual compatibility factors were currently used in the ordinance to evaluate new construction. It was a great tool and would continue to exist in the new ordinance. The Chadbourne study, as well as the height map study, were used in the past and they were still building upon. They took the information from the Downtown Master Plan with the nine principles that dealt with the public arena which had a lot of public input, and worked it into the effort to come up with good and solid recommendations. They had produced a lot of data and maps, and Mr. Christian Sottile was the consultant on the project who

provided many visual aides and had case studies and representations of what the forms and shape of new buildings could look like if they required step backs. All of the information was available on the website. She said that through the process they had updated the historic building map and had identified all of the parcels in the district that could become large-scale development by meeting the threshold that was currently in the ordinance.

She said that April 21 was the last official Committee meeting and that there were a few place holders in May and June, but it would be the end of the first rigorous schedule with the final draft ordinance going to the Committee. They would receive feedback and open it up for public comments. They were hosting a blog to link to on the website with the ordinance and it was how they hoped to receive most of the comments along with the Board being able to see at what the public had stated. It should create a dialogue, could be checked every day, and it would notify her when someone had entered information. They will be hosting two public open houses at the MPC with all of the visuals, have copies of the ordinance, and would be present to answer any questions. At the end of May the Revisions Committee would meet and incorporate the public comments into the document. On June 3 they were hoping to make the recommendation to MPC but there might be a scheduling conflict because the consultant would be out-of-town for the first part of June. The dates might need to be reworked but it was the current schedule, and then it would go to City Council. She said that the schedule was subject to change at any time and invited the Board members to come.

Mr. Meyerhoff stated that he did not see anything in the presentation that related to enforcement or penalties.

Ms. Ward stated that it would be discussed on Monday and there were sections in the ordinance to address the issues. She said that it was important because they could create rules but if there was not a guide to enforce it then it would not matter. Tonight and tomorrow night they would go over the basic draft, would be meeting in the Jerry Surrency room from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m., and it was open to the public.

Dr. Watkins stated that Mr. Meyerhoff's question was critical in terms of getting more Board participation to come out and see what had taken place and the issues being addressed, and to look at how the discussions affected how the Board would function in the future. He said that he had learned a lot from participating and his learning curve had increased exponentially. How the Board was perceived overall throughout the community by dealing with preservation issues was important for each Board member to focus on raising their level of competency by being able to address historic preservation issues. An issue might come across where one or two people make a comment, then the Board votes, and all of the members don't have an opinion to express. He wanted to emphasize that it was important for all members, those who have been present longer, and the new members to become involved to project a professional representation to the community.

b. New Business

- Emergency Removal of a Portion of Stone Parapet at the Green-Meldrim House

Ms. Reiter stated regarding the parapet around the top of the St. John parish house that the building dated from the 1850's. She said that over the entryway the parapet had come away from the building and was about to fall. It was a floating parapet and was only attached to the building every three or four feet by a metal rod with space in between the bottom of the parapet and the cornice. It was an unusual design and they would have to take down a portion of it. They had applied for a Getty grant to do a complete study of the situation and would be taking down a portion of the parapet before it falls and breaks or creates injuries. She wanted to make the Board aware of it and said that it would be an in-kind restoration but that it would be missing for a while. She was not sure if it would take a vote from the Board, but it had to come down because it would come down one way or the other. They had the experts who were performing the work at the Andrew Low House to look at it and the Getty grant would hopefully bring in national experts.

Mr. Gay stated that the Board should approve because it set a precedent that when something needed to be done someone could just do it and he would want them to come before the Board.

Mr. Meyerhoff asked if there were any documents submitted.

Ms. Reiter stated that there would be restoration drawings brought to the Board but that they were still trying to figure out the extent of the damage.

Mr. Meyerhoff asked if they were doing the demolition portion.

Ms. Reiter stated they would have to or God would do it. She said it was incredible because it was leaning way out.

Ms. Ramsay stated that they were replacing the original copper boots and flashing with tar and felt.

Mr. Reiter stated that what was why it was falling off the building because of the past repairs. She said that someone tried to tie the cornice back in the 1940's with rods. The rods have rusted out and pulled away from the building and were useless. It was just like the Tower of Pisa and would go on its own accord because it was pulling away from the roof.

Ms. Ramsay asked if the Board was approving any specific work.

Ms. Reiter stated that the Board was not approving any specific item to go, back but that a portion of the parapet would not be there for a while.

Mr. Gay stated that the Board was approving the portion that was dangerous that was coming down and then it would be put back up the way it was.

Ms. Reiter stated that before it would be put back up the Board would hear more.

Mr. Judson stated he understood Mr. Gay's concern that the Board should do something procedurally so it was not perceived that people could just say it was about to happen. He said he was also concerned procedurally that the Board did not have a petition to act upon for approval.

Dr. Henry asked if it could be a Staff request.

Ms. Reiter stated that it was declared an emergency and they brought the building permit over.

Mr. Judson stated that he was comfortable with approving it and leaving it in Staff's hand to approve the specifics but that there needed to be more of a document trail.

Mr. Meyerhoff stated that the Board could make a motion and under the circumstances that the Board approve the taking down of it. Then it would be on record that the Board knew.

Mr. Thomson stated that replacement in-kind did not require approval by the Board.

Ms. Reiter stated that it did not but she felt if the cornice was removed from the Green-Meldrim house that people would freak out. She said she felt the Board needed to know that it was going to happen because they wanted to take it down Monday and she told them to wait.

Mr. Thomson asked what approval did Staff or the Board need to give to do the work.

Ms. Reiter stated that she needed to initial the building permit, but wanted the Board to know.

Mr. Gay stated that the only approval was in taking it down and not putting it back up. He said if they could replace it in-kind then they really did not need approval.

Mr. Thomson stated that under the Historic Review Board Ordinance the Board did not have to act. He said that Staff's intent was to inform the Board but if the Board did act, Mr. Judson's point was that it should have an agenda item on the regular or consent agenda approval. Staff could bring it back.

Mr. Gay stated that they wanted to take it down now and not wait until next month.

Mr. Thomson stated that if it was in-kind that at some point someone had to take off the old wood and put on the new wood or take out the old windows and put in new windows. He said in the same kind did the Board approve it before it was done.

Ms. Reiter stated that she would let them know that it was in-kind and let them do it.

Mr. Thomson stated that the Board did not need to act. He said if Staff wanted to bring it back to the Board for confirmation they should do it at the next meeting. They did not advertise it on the original agenda and procedurally he would suggest it.

Dr. Watkins stated that since the Board had an agreement that they would leave it in Staff's hands, when they receive a petition they could act upon it at that point.

- o Revisions Committee Meetings Update

Dr. Watkins stated that there would be an upcoming Board retreat to provide training for Board members; he wanted to see how the Board members felt, and to see if they would support it.

All attending Board members were in agreement.

Dr. Watkins stated that the Board should put forth an appropriate representation to the public when Staff makes a decision and the Board voted to go in a different direction, then the Board should be in unison on why they were going different directions and be aware of it. They should be held to some type of standard versus being arbitrary.

Ms. Reiter thought that May would be a good time for a retreat and they could explain the ordinance.

Ms. Reiter stated that Mr. Mark McDonald would be taking Mr. Greg Paxton's place at the Georgia Trust.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING
March 12, 2008**

HDRB ACTION: Mr. Gay made a motion that the Savannah Historic District Board of Review approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Ramsay seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

RE: ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Historic District Board of Review the meeting was adjourned approximately 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Reiter,
Preservation Officer

BR/jnp