



C H A T H A M C O U N T Y
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room
July 6, 2011 - 2:00 P.M.
Meeting Minutes

July 6, 2011 Regular CCHPC Meeting

I. Call to Order and Welcome

1. Order

Ms. Lisa White, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance.

II. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

2. May 4, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Attachment: [May 4, 2011 Minutes.pdf](#)

Board Action:

Approval. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Stephen T. Lindell

Second: Jane A. Feiler

Jane A. Feiler - Aye

Stephen T. Lindell - Aye

Pamela Lossing - Aye

Dr. E. G. Daves Rossell - Aye

Lisa L. White - Aye

III. Posting

IV. Consent Agenda

V. Regular Agenda

3. [Overview of the Unified Zoning Ordinance, Charlotte Moore](#)

Attachment: [Article 2.0 Review Bodies & Administrators.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Article 3.0 Development Application Review Procedures.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Article 7.0 Historic & Other Overlay Districts.pdf](#)

Ms. Ellen Harris introduced **Ms. Charlotte Moore, Project Manager**, who gave the overview of the Unified Zoning Ordinance (UZO).

The UZO is the second phase of the Tricentennial Plan. The first phase was to prepare a unified Comprehensive Plan for the City of Savannah and unincorporated Chatham County. The Comprehensive Plan is a state required plan and formalizes the City and County policies into a strategic vision plan. UZO addresses the various goals and objectives in the Plan that have a relationship to zoning.

Ms. Moore reported that the draft ordinance and map were released to the public on Tuesday, June 28, 2011. The public review and comment period will extend from June 28 through September 30, 2011. A lot of information is available online including the draft ordinance as well as a tool called the "UZOOM Tool." The public comment period will allow the staff the opportunity to meet with the neighborhood associations, various boards and administrators to review the particular sections in the ordinance that falls within their realm of responsibility.

As the newspaper has reported, an issue has risen concerning chickens which is somewhat related to zoning. A lot of little things will begin to surface that they will have to address during the next three months. Depending on the type of feedback the staff receives, the public review period may be extended. Ms. Moore said, however, for the past week, the staff has gotten very little feedback. This could be related to the July 4th holiday, but the staff is surprised that they are not getting phone calls, drop-in visitors, etc.

After September 30, 2011, they will begin the formal adoption process upon reviewing all the comments they receive. If necessary, revisions will be made. Then the Plan will be presented to the Metropolitan Planning Commission for a recommendation to City Council and County Commission. Ideally, the new ordinance would be in place by the end of the year, but this may not happen. Actually, the adoption of the ordinance could be a couple of months later. The application will need to be developed and there are some new procedures. The fees must be developed as well.

Ms. Moore reiterated that the entire draft is available online and that notebooks are available here at the MPC office for \$35.00 each. As revisions are made, the draft will be updated. A blog is available also. If someone is interested in a particular zoning district and has a comment or question, the person can click on the Article and provide their comments. The staff will reply to the individual's question.

If someone wishes to see the present zoning of properties and what they are proposed to be zoned in the future, the "UZOOM Tool" on the website will supply this data. To access this information, type in the property identification number or property address. If there is an overlay district such as the Victorian, this information will come up as well. This provides an opportunity for the public to compare the existing and proposed uses and dimensional standards.

Ms. Moore said the staff encourages the public to drop by during office hours. Every

Monday drop-in sessions will be from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. This is an informal session for anyone who has questions relating to property/zoning ordinances to talk with staff.

Ms. Moore said there are 13 chapters in the ordinance. Three of the chapters pertain to the CCHPC. Ms. Harris will review the authority and responsibilities for the CCHPC and the Certificate of Appropriateness process. This Board will become merged with a new board of the City and will look at applications for the Victorian, Cuyler-Brownsville, Streetcar and Pin Point districts.

Ms. Harris informed the Commission that Article Two establishes all the different boards. Section 2.5 specifically addresses the CCPHC. It is proposed that this will be a joint City-County board. It is proposed that ten members will be on this board, five members representing the City and five members representing the County. Essentially, there will be three different types of authority for this board. The first authority will be "General" where the Board will seek to acquire grants and make recommendations on broader preservation policies topics and initiatives. The second type of authority will be called "Review Authority." This is the area where the Commission will make recommendations. These are the things that this Commission presently does such as designating historic districts and make their formal recommendation to the County Commission. This will essentially remain the same, except the recommendation will go to the appropriate governing body. The "Final Review Authority" for things such as Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) and a decision is made on this, it is not a recommendation as the Commission makes the final decision as they do currently.

Ms. Harris said new to this Commission will be the authority to grant variances. Currently, if someone needs a variance even from the preservations standards, they would go to the Zoning Board of Appeals. But under the proposed UZO, this Commission would be granted the authority to grant variances from the specific historic preservation standards, but not other things that deals with uses, etc.

Ms. Harris explained that Article Three essentially establishes all the different procedures that each board will be responsible for which deals with the process. Section 3.18 is Designation of Historic Districts and 3.19 is the Designation of Historic Properties and will follow the same current format. If a community wishes to become a historic district, they follow a formal process which is basically the same process now used within the County. Under the UZO, the City will follow the same process. The only exception under the UZO is that when a community comes forward with a completed application, including the signatures, an interim protection measure will be instituted. The interim protection measure will stipulate that all changes will be evaluated by staff using the Secretary of Interior Standards prior to the adoption of the district by the City or County. They found that in other communities when a designation is pending, there is a rush for demolition. The intent is to avoid this. If a year passes and no action has been taken, the interim protection is terminated.

Ms. Feiler asked what happens if the County passes the CCPHC's recommendation and the City disapproves it.

Ms. Harris answered that it is at the discretion of each jurisdiction. If it is in the unincorporated county, the County Commission has the final word. It would not have to go

to the City Council. Within the UZO as a whole, if there are differences between what the County Commission would like to see and what the City would like to see, it would be noted in each individual section. Hopefully, they will not have many of these differences.

Ms. Harris explained that Section 3.20 concerns Certificate of Appropriateness which is something that the CCHPC is already familiar with. Essentially, this process will remain the same with the exception that currently there are staff level reviews for minor changes. During the process of researching and writing the UZO, they found that this typically does not meet the state's enabling legislation. Only the Board has the authority to grant certificates of appropriateness and staff does not have that authority. Consequently, they are proposing to eliminate the staff review. Staff recognizes that this will possibly create a burden on applicants when they have minor changes and that there will potentially be a delay in time to make it into a formal process. Therefore, it is being planned to do similarly the same as the Metropolitan Planning Commission and the Historic Review Board which is to have a consent agenda in addition to the regular agenda. The consent agenda is for the minor things where they don't expect any controversial and can be passed with one motion.

Ms. Harris said the final section she wanted to inform the CCPHC is a new section that is not in the County nor City. The section is called "Prevention of Demolition By Neglect." She explained that a demolition by neglect occurs when perhaps a tree limb falls and usually when a property is vacant and the repairs do not take place. Through the passage of time, the building becomes neglected and structural failures surface and it needs to be demolished for safety reasons. This has happened both in the City and the County. Staff wanted to create a process that tries to stop this before it gets to a safety issue and, therefore, must be demolished. The Prevention of Demolition By Neglect section identifies the characteristics that this would constitute before it gets to this point. For example, a hole in the roof, unsecured open doors and windows. When properties such as these are identified, the Planning Director or his designee will meet with the property owner or developer with a rehabilitation plan. They will also work with other groups such as Historic Savannah Foundation, etc. that may have funding and grants available to get this taken care of within a certain timeframe. If it is found that property owners are uncooperative or uninterested, this will be an additional tool where it could be considered a change in appearance without a certificate of appropriateness. Therefore, the property owner could be cited in the same way if they made a change without receiving a certificate of appropriateness. This will be used as a tool to prevent demolition. This will be Section 3.22.

Mr. Rossell wanted to know how the threatened buildings are identified.

Ms. Harris explained that the process of identification is essentially reactive. They are identified by staff or members of the public can inform staff. But, they do not have a proactive monitoring process for buildings within the City and County.

Ms. White asked if this would only apply to designated districts.

Ms. Harris confirmed that this section only applies to historic districts and properties.

Mr. Rossell inquired about the status of buildings that are essentially demolished by neglect in non-district areas.

Ms. Harris explained that this would be dealt with through the Property Maintenance ordinance.

Ms. Harris stated that under the Historic Overlay District, the newly joint Preservation Commission would be the historic property section. As they know already, there are two historic properties listed. They are Maridon on Wilmington Island and New Ogeechee Missionary Baptist Church. Instead of having separate sections for each of these, they were combined into one. Therefore, as new properties are added, this one section will be amended. Ms. Harris said it may, however, become necessary in the future if properties are different from each other that they would need their own break-out sections. But, presently it appears the best way to accommodate this is to classify them under one section. The different overlays within the City include the Victorian, Cuyler-Brownsville, and Streetcar which is currently known as Mid-City. In the County, the overlay district is Pin Point. They are anticipating that on Friday, July 8, 2011 at the County Commission meeting that Pennyworth Island will be designated as a local historic district.

Mr. Rossell asked what caused the district's name to be changed to Streetcar.

Ms. Harris answered that the area now known as Mid-City is based on the National Register Historic District which is the Thomas Square Streetcar Historic District. When the local designation was proposed, there are actually several neighborhoods within the boundaries of the Thomas Square Streetcar Historic District, with Thomas Square being one of those districts. The other neighborhoods within the area objected to the naming of the entire area in reference to Thomas Square. The option was to call the area Mid-City as a more generic name. They found, however, that Mid-City is too generic. It does not mean anything to anyone. There is also a neighborhood called Mid-Town. Therefore, they went back to the National Historic Register and proposed a name change to Streetcar Historic District as it does not refer to a specific neighborhood.

Mr. Rossell said there were some other streetcar neighborhoods that are not in this location. Would not this cause confusion also?

Ms. Harris said Mr. Rossell was correct, but as far as she is aware, there is no National Register names that use the term "streetcar."

Ms. Harris reminded the CCHPC that as Ms. Moore stated if they have comments or suggestions, please let the staff know.

VI. Request for Extensions

VII. Staff Reviews

4. [COA20110607-12-1 9924 Pin Point Avenue Sign](#)

Attachment: [20110607-12-1 Staff Approval.pdf](#)

Ms. White explained that this staff review does not require any action by the CCHPC.

VIII. Other Business

New Business

5. [Introduction](#)

Ms. Harris introduced **Ms. Liz Williams and Ms. Megan Sease** two interns working with her this summer. The interns are working on the Sandfly Historic District. They will meet with Mr. Herbert Kemp next week to talk about the specifics.

IX. Notices, Proclamations and Acknowledgements

6. [SCAD Museum Tour](#)

Mr. Steve Lindell will go on the tour which will be held on July 19, 2011. The tour is approximately one hour. The bus will pick up at the MPC office between 10:30 and 10:45 a.m. **Ms. Feiler** is interested also in going on the tour.

X. Adjournment

7. [Adjourned.](#)

There being no further business to come before the CCHPC, Ms. White adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 5, 2011 at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris
Cultural Resource and Urban Planning Manager

EH:mem

which are adopted by the respective Board. Verbatim transcripts of minutes are the responsibility of the interested party.