

RIVER DISTRICT DESIGN COMMISSION

MEETING OF

October 24, 2013

Members Present

Peyton Keesee
George Davis
R.J. Lackey
Sheri Chaney
John Ranson
Justin Ferrell

Members Absent

Courtney Nicholas

Staff Present

Ken Gillie
Renee Burton
Scott Holtry
Christy Taylor

Mr. Gillie called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Staff introduced themselves to the Commissioners.

I. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Gillie opened the floor for nominations for Chairman.

Mr. Keesee made a motion to elect Mr. Davis as Chairman. Mr. Lackey seconded the motion. Mr. Davis was elected Chairman by a 6-0 vote.

Chairman Davis now presided over the meeting.

Mr. Davis opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chairman.

Mr. Lackey made a motion to elect Mr. Keesee as Vice Chairman. Mrs. Chaney seconded the motion. Mr. Keesee was elected Vice Chairman by a 5-1 vote (Mr. Keesee voted in opposition).

Mr. Davis opened the floor for nominations for Secretary.

Mr. Ranson made a motion to elect Mrs. Chaney as Secretary. Mr. Keesee seconded the motion. Mrs. Chaney was elected Secretary by a 6-0 vote.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Gillie explained the position of officers.

Mr. Gillie stated everyone has received a copy of the Design Guidelines. Does anyone want them electronically?

Mr. Ranson stated I would like an electronic copy.

There was discussion about establishing a meeting date and time.

The Commission agreed to meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Gillie asked what would you like to see as a Board?

Mr. Gillie provided examples of what cases go before the Commission of Architectural Review.

Mr. Keesee stated I would hope this would be a common sense Board.

Mr. Ranson stated on CAR we were trying to establish a threshold where staff review would be acceptable, but I can't remember what that level was.

Mr. Gillie stated it was like kind replacement. If it was material exactly the same as what was there we could approve it. Deviated materials had to come.

Mr. Ranson stated then I would say a deviated material that wasn't an approved material. The guidelines list approved materials.

There was discussion about hypothetical situations that could be approved by staff.

Mr. Davis stated people will go to staff and ask them what can and cannot be done and basically come before the Board if there is any indecision or if they disagree with the guidelines.

Mr. Gillie stated they do now.

There was further discussion about hypothetical situations and how the guidelines would apply.

Mr. Ranson stated if you guys don't know what to do that would be a trigger for review. We have professional staff and there is a level of trust, but at the same time we are the ones responsible for it.

Mr. Davis asked if someone approaches you and there is ambiguity and it comes before us and we make a decision, can it be overruled by anyone in the City?

Mr. Gillie responded they can appeal your decision to City Council. City Council can overturn that decision. If they don't like the decision of City Council, they can go into the court system.

Mr. Lackey stated I think you should err on the side of conservative until we feel it out. I don't think any of us know what issues we are going to see and what issues we are

going to have. I would say err on the side of bringing stuff to us until we say you don't need to bring this to us ever again.

Mr. Ferrell asked it is possible to change in the future what we establish today?

Mr. Gillie responded yes. They are guidelines. As you see things change you may look at cases differently.

Mr. Keesee stated if they don't like what you say, they can come to us.

Mr. Gillie stated it happens a lot.

There was further discussion about what staff could approve verses what the Board could approve.

Mr. Ferrell asked are we going to treat the districts differently?

Mr. Gillie responded that is up to you.

Mrs. Chaney stated there are buildings in the River District that have an historic aspect. The CAR has their own set for historic type, which in the River District we don't necessarily have to follow the CAR rules. We can use those as guidelines as well toward historic buildings.

Mr. Ranson stated they reference the Secretary of Interior Guidelines. That is really the Bible.

There was discussion about particular buildings downtown and maintenance issues that may or may not require review.

Mr. Ranson asked if someone is going for tax credits in this district they are going to have to jump through numerous hoops to get to that point. Are we going to review those projects as well?

Mr. Gillie responded yes because usually when they are going for tax credits they are doing substantial renovations to qualify. Those renovations would come to you. In those cases, we suggest that they apply for those tax credits first and see what the state is going to allow them to do. Once they have that and then bring it to you.

There was discussion about the tax credit programs and the state guidelines that applicants must follow.

Mr. Gillie stated you are going to have to look at each building individually based on where it is at. That is why a lot of things seem open ended on the guidelines. We left it

that way on purpose because this area encompasses so many architectural types. If you would like we will give you a report saying this is what they have asked for and these are what the guidelines say. We usually don't make recommendations. If you would like us to we can. We try to avoid that because we don't feel that our role is to say what goes on in that district.

Mr. Keesee asked does everybody that has a business or building downtown know that they are in the River District?

Mr. Gillie responded we hope so. We sent it out to all property owners telling them that they were in it. We also sent it to all property owners within 300 feet of the area telling them that this was going to occur. We notified them at least five times. We did everything in our power from television shows, website, newspaper articles, short of knocking door to door. Page 2 of the guidelines has a map of the area.

Mr. Davis asked how long are we on this Commission?

Mr. Keesee responded 3 years.

Mr. Gillie stated you are supposed attend 75% of the meetings. City Council can take an act to remove you if you do not attend at least 75% of the meetings. Do the best you can to be there. We think it is a 3 year term.

Mr. Lackey stated the City Attorney told me 3 years.

Mr. Gillie stated you serve as a volunteer Board. No one gets paid. If you end up getting a parking ticket, let me know. I may be able to get that taken care of. There is no fee to apply for anything in the River District. Would you consider establishing one?

The Commission decided not to charge for applications.

Mr. Davis asked do we ever have to report directly to Council?

Mr. Gillie responded if someone appeals your decision and goes to Council, then the Chairman is responsible to be at the City Council meeting to discuss why the Board acted the way they did. If the Chairman is unavailable to attend the meeting, then the Vice Chair should attend, if not then the Secretary. Staff is also there and most questions will be directed toward me.

Mr. Gillie introduced Corey Teague, Economic Development as the Downtown Coordinator.

Mr. Ferrell asked will we have any communication with the other Downtown Committees so we will all be somewhat on the same page?

Mr. Gillie responded we can provide information to you on what they have done. If more than two of you are in the same place at the same time discussing business then it is considered a public meeting. That is why we don't have any of the Boards meet together. We will keep you abreast of what is happening.

Ms. Teague stated the DDA is not really involved at this level on redevelopment projects. Right now they serve as support for merchants. I don't foresee them in the near future getting involved at this level.

Mr. Gillie asked the packets of information; do you want hard copies or electronic versions?

The Commissioners request hard copies. Mrs. Chaney and Mr. Davis stated that emailed copies would be fine.

The next meeting was scheduled for November 14, 2013 at 4:00 p.m.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Approved