

Smithville Historic Preservation and Design Standards Advisory Committee (HPDSAC) Meeting

Minutes: Wednesday, February 15, 2023

PRESENT: Sarah O'Brien, Caroline Noya, Walter Winslett, Monica Poss, Susie Cannon, Jill Strube (via Zoom)

Absent: Victoria Allen, Faith Franklin, Nancy Catherman, Bonny Joplin

Other Non-Committee Members Present: Andy Esquivel

Called to Order: by Sarah O'Brien at 5:05pm in the Smithville City Council Chambers and via the city's YouTube channel.

1. Introductions – Welcome New Member – Susie Cannon is the new Executive Director of the Smithville Area Chamber of Commerce. She is replacing April Daniels who resigned from the SACOC in August, 2022 and Gina Chronis-Bayer, who was the Interim Executive Director of the SACOC who resigned in January 2023. Welcome, Susie, as the SACOC representative to the Smithville HPDSAC Committee!
2. Announcements/Presentations/Proclamations/Awards: None
3. Minutes:
Monica moved and Walter seconded that the 10/27/22 minutes be approved as submitted. It was unanimously approved by the present members.
4. Committee appointments: Nancy Catherman has decided to step down as Vice-Chairman of this committee due to personal reasons. Sarah O'Brien nominated Caroline Noya to be the Vice Chairman to replace Nancy. Caroline reminded Sarah that she was currently serving as Secretary. Sarah nominated Victoria Allen to replace Caroline as Secretary. Monica seconded both motions; the members voted and these changes passed unanimously.
5. Updates on Main Street Ramps/First Street sidewalks and EPIC Requirements: Jill reported that TXDOT/EPIC Requirements "deputized" a local group of advisors for when they do construction work near historic properties. The Contractor works with Jill, or a City staff designee, regarding any concerns and Jill goes to TXDOT with said concerns. The City of Smithville received a grant from TXDOT for improving ramp work from 1st Street to the Library (6th Street). There would be no new sidewalks. Construction is tentatively scheduled to begin in the Fall of 2023. The design plans are approximately 30% complete. Sarah said that she would like TXDOT/EPIC and TX Historical Commission members to attend future meetings so they can share more information.
6. Historic Preservation Awareness in the Historic District: How to inform people about this information. Monica and Victoria worked on this and felt that this was not a "one and done" thing. They felt this should be a monthly project where specific topics were addressed in a brief but explanatory manner. Ideas for information distribution included, but are not limited to, the Chamber to circulate the topic information in its monthly column/newsletter, the City Manager to include it in his monthly report, door hangers for the Downtown merchants, etc. Funding options for the door hangers are not decided yet. Topics tentatively assigned are:
 - A brief history of Smithville – Faith Franklin
 - What is the HPDSAC? – Sarah O'Brien

- Why do we have design standards? – Monica Poss
 - What is a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)? – Walter Winslett
 - What is the approval process? – Jill Strube
 - Downtown Commercial district map – Monica Poss
 - Retaining and replacing historic elements – Susie Cannon
 - Demolition by neglect – Caroline Noya
 - Restoration/Reconstruction – (not assigned yet)
 - New Construction – (not assigned yet)
 - Building elements (facades, parapets, awnings, windows, façade doors, signs, lighting, site features) – (not assigned yet)
7. Marker Application and Program Update: Faith was not present at this meeting. The information is not needed now, but we want to make people aware as this pertains to residential and commercial buildings. It was noted that the Heritage House does not have a marker now but that it needs to get one before/by May (Historic Preservation month). Sarah spoke on this.
8. National Historic Preservation Month (May): We want to make sure that the Heritage House gets recognition as a historical structure and that we need to ask for a proclamation for it to be presented at the May City Council meeting. Preservation Awards program in partnership between HPDSAC, SACOC and Heritage Society to handful of structures who have done a good job in preserving their building was discussed.
9. Future agenda items and meeting dates and times: Our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 19, 2023 at 5:00pm in the Smithville City Council Chambers.
10. Open discussion:
- It was noted that there is not currently a city ordinance regarding “demolition by neglect” (vacant buildings, on/off registry). We will be talking with Robert Tamble about this since he and the City Staff are currently working on revising/updating these.
 - Monica wants to see some of the South side properties/events recognized. Sarah stated that regarding the Marker program that the South side has distinctly different character/designs/styles. In order to get this done, funding has to be set aside to designate an area of the South side as historic first. The cost to designate any specific part of a city as “historic” runs between \$7,500 - \$75,000. We could also look at other areas as historic.
 - Monica commented about the general lack of audience participation. There was a brief discussion about trying to drum up interest in our meetings.
 - Sarah said that we could possibly get a local historian to come and tell stories to drum up interest. Jill commented that she, or her designee, could talk about historic preservation.
 - Sarah will meet with Robert and at the April 2023 meeting will make a presentation on “Demolition by Neglect”, update on the May Preservation Month proclamation, Historic Marker application, and Jill will talk about historic preservation. Any downtown historic building owners were encouraged to get their COA done after discussing the process with Jill.

Adjournment: With no further business for discussion, Sarah adjourned the meeting at 5:39pm.

Respectfully submitted: *Caroline Noya*