

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Historic Architectural Review Board AGHP Workshop Meeting May 18, 2021

The Historic Architectural Review Board met in formal session at 3:30 P.M., Tuesday, May 18, 2021, in the Alcazar Room at City Hall, St. Augustine, Florida. Catherine Duncan, Chairperson, called the AGHP Workshop meeting to order, and the following were present:

1. ROLL CALL:

Catherine Duncan, Chairperson
Barbara Wingo, Vice-Chairperson
Jon Benoit
Paul Weaver, III
Gaere MacDonald

City Staff:

Jenny Wolfe, Historic Preservation Officer
Julie Courtney, Historic Preservation Planner
Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney
Candice Seymour, Recording Secretary
Elyse Anderson, Recording Secretary

Also Present:

Bert Bender, Bender & Associates
Jonathan Lammers, Bender & Associates

2. General Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda

(None)

3. Introduction of AGPA Consulting Team and Scope of Work

Jenny Wolfe referred to the adoption of the Architectural Guidelines for Historic Preservation (AGHP) that was updated last in 2011. The original guidelines were established in 1974. Over the past 5 years there were issues that indicated the need for an update with the AGHP. Ms. Wolfe explained how the public workshops would take place in two phases, and this workshop will be phase one. She added that public outreach would also take place which would include a survey, nonprofit input, professional practitioners, and feedback from the board on how to update the guide.

Ms. Wolfe introduced the consulting team from Bender and Associates, Bert Bender and Jonathan Lammers.

4. Board Members Discussion on the following topics:

4.(a) Identify any missing components of the current AGHP or areas that are too vague.

Ms. Wolfe stated this item was very broad to start with and suggested moving to item 4. (b).

4.(b) Potential for amending thresholds of administrative and/ or expedited agenda items.

Ms. Wolfe referenced a handout given to the board. Items listed were per code 28-89(4). These items could be brought to the staff for review without needing to be brought before the Board.

The board discussed:

- The ordinance needed to state clearly about who would be approving

- Desire to have experts approve within the historical preservation department
- Need to make it easy for people to get the administrative approval or if needed to be brought before the HARB board for approval
- Pre-approved projects should be made clear in the ordinances
- Any project administratively approved should go through historical preservation staff
- Clearly differentiate between National Trust properties and new construction or contributing buildings
- Should be user friendly and efficient
- Provide visual tools for staff and public to establish a design solution quickly
- Impacts on archaeological sites and resources

Ms. Wolfe explained that when an application was submitted that affected archeology and historic preservation, the application must get approval from both areas before proceeding.

The board continued:

- Protect the authenticity of the city
- Two most destructive things for carbon footprint were concrete and steel
- Materials need to be taken into consideration since it could impact the environment
- Be aware that each action created a reaction
- Be mindful of how a property was viewed not just from the street but also within the community.
- Materials that are historically used were important to maintain the historic preservation of the community
- Items need to be thought out with what could be approved and what would be visible

Mr. Lemmers complemented the board on the comments. He stated that he understood the material concerns with compatibility. He suggested creating graphical guidelines that were within the scope and field. He also mentioned sustainability was importation for historic preservation. He requested the Boards feedback.

The board discussed:

- Photographic study would be a good
- Sketches gave you more ability to choose
- Replace window and doors with something compatible
- Need to also address the trim/jam materials
- Must address components for the overall look of the window/door
- Have an outline of what was commonly used when replacing
- Label drawings/photos for people to have a common language

Mr. Bender indicated all styles have historic precedence. Each style has dimensions that could be created. The concept providing graphics was to have information as to what would be acceptable and was not. For replication, people would need to see what was done historically.

The board continued the discussion:

- Have measures or objective guidelines
- Difference with the guidelines for AGHP was compatibility
- Obtain examples from the Secretary of the Interior Standards or from examples in St. Augustine of what would be considered compatible
- Knowledge of allowed HP Zones
- Need to remember the homes vary from each era.
- Evaluate the standards for new construction.

Mr. Lammers pointed out that other jurisdictions from around the country

defined compatibility but differentiated, which has a variety of definitions for different review boards. He noted that St. Augustine proved to be closer to being exact without replication.

4.(c) Prioritize the most significant materials and features that should be preserved to a high degree.

Not discussed

4.(d) Opportunities for use of substitute or composite material and new technologies

Ms. Wolfe referred to the handout from the United States Department of Agriculture, that went into specific details about cost and materials used on historic properties. She suggested reviewing alternative roof materials in the Spanish Colonial districts specifically the HP-4 district. She said the two main areas focused on were wooden shingled roofs and siding.

The board discussed:

- Reconstructions built in the 60's and 70's in a colonial style were hard to differentiate between old and new
- National Registered Properties needed to stay wood—providing a patina that could not be replaced using alternative materials
- National Registered Properties should have different standards
- New construction and reconstruction could have some latitude
- Reconstructions should be done using authentic materials.
- Reconstruction should be considered case-by-case having several different types of properties within the city: state properties private, and museum quality
- Wooden roofs demonstrate the history of the community
- Without wooden roofs, the character of the buildings/homes would change

Mr. Weaver spoke about The Kirby Smith house having a slate roof to be after administrative review showed not historic; however, under guidelines there was a certification after-the-fact because of a conflict with the state grant approval and what the city wanted. He said only under those circumstances was it approved.

Ms. Wolfe interjected the slate roof at the Kirby Smith house was approved by the City Commission on appeal and not by HARB. She noted the composite slate roof was currently being replaced by a similar material. She continued reconstructions have different definitions, and some reconstructions did not quality by National Park Service standards. She questioned the board about wood shingled roofs for reconstructions, and for Spanish Colonial buildings from specific time periods or in an HP zone where an alternative could be used. .

Mr. Weaver thought this would be a political decision and having other styles in HP-2 or HP-3, the community/city would need to approve of changes.

Mr. Bender stated there were materials available that could be fire rated and insured, including wood shingled roofs and windows. He said that as consultants, they needed direction on how to assist with the guidelines.

Ms. Lopez advised the board the workshop was to obtain feedback and recommendations. She stated the board did not have the authority to adopted, anything as that was the role of the City Commission.

The discussion continued:

- Each property constructed as Spanish Colonial or Mediterranean Revival would be held to that set of design standards
- Majority of reconstruction downtown was designed Spanish Colonial

- Reconstruction could be limited due to the size of the structure
- Desire was to make the town similar to Colonial Williamsburg
- reconstructions should stay within the colonial era for authenticity
- Colonial buildings should keep wooden shingles and windows

Mr. Benoit asked if the workshop was to also address district lines. Ms. Wolfe indicated that the workshop overall, was to update the AGHP, however, it may require some level of zoning changes. The zoning code contains the building setbacks and suggest the style and references which year to use. Ms. Wolfe added zoning issues could be brought up but might not make it into the AGHP until zoning code matches.

Mr. MacDonald cited the longevity of wooden roofs, stating an alternative material such as Spanish tile would last longer than the wooden shingles.

Ms. Duncan recognized the high property cost downtown; however, historic materials should be used. She indicated that insurance proposed a challenge when applicants came before the board, causing the applicants to want to use alternative materials.

Mr. Bender noted guidelines he worked with in the past had an appeals process. He mentioned appeals were a person's right if not satisfied with the outcome. He stated because an applicant could not obtain insurance was not a reason to relax the standards.

Ms. Duncan reiterated that many applicants who come before the Board wanted to use alternative materials due to not being able to obtain insurance. She asked Mr. Bender if there were products that could be covered by insurance and Mr. Bender replied in the affirmative.

Mr. MacDonald agreed, claiming a requirement of the building department was for it to be fire rated. He said the insurance premium may be higher, but it could be insured.

Dr. Wingo pointed out that buyers who purchased property maybe unaware of the requirements to maintain, or a family who owned the property for 50 plus years may not be able to keep up with the maintenance. She said being on a limited budget and owing an older home could be problematic. She reminded the board that the focus should not always be on the wealthy or a developer but remember the people who are just trying to do the right thing with their homes that just happen to be within a historic district.

Mr. Lemmers added that in other areas low-cost loans from the city were offered to help facilitate the replacement of materials.

Ms. Duncan agreed that incentives would be good for people to maintain their homes and especially for people who have lived in their homes for a long time.

Ms. Wolfe said it was not necessary to speak on the other two topics. She advised that if the board had specific comments for the topics that it could be discussed.

5. Public Comment

(None)

6. Closing Summary

(None)

7. Schedule of public outreach campaign with the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions

Ms. Wolfe informed the board about the public outreach taking place. The staff was working on a survey that would be around 7-8 questions, to include photographs or images. She stated along with the National

Alliance one in person and virtual workshop would take place and more public workshops would be held on the design's guidelines.

Dr. Wingo asked if there was a detailed timeline. Ms. Wolfe indicated Phase 1 would be completed by the end of the year; adding a survey was being completed now and targeted to hold a public workshop in August. She stated she would provide more information when scheduled.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 P.M.¹

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Duncan', written over a horizontal line.

Catherine Duncan, Chairperson

¹ Transcribed by Elyse Anderson