CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Planning and Zoning Board Special Meeting
June 27, 2023

The Planning and Zoning Board met in formal session Tuesday, June 27,2023, at 1:00 p.m. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Mike Davis, Chairperson and the following were present:

1. Roll Call:

Mike Davis, Chairperson
Charles Pappas, Vice- Chairperson
Carl Blow (left at break)
Christina Griggs
Matthew Shaffer
Ashleigh Barnes

Absent: Jon DePreter

City Staff:
Amy Skinner, Director, Planning & Building Department
Jacob Fredriksson, Planning & Building Planner
Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney (arrived at 2:18)
Ron Brown, Attorney (left at 2:18)
Reuben Franklin, Assistant City Manager
Julie Courtney, Historic Preservation Officer
Elyse Wiemann, Recording Secretary

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2. General Public hearings for Items Not on the Agenda

(None)

Ms. Skinner thanked the Board for their time and dedication. She noted Ron Brown, Attorney was filling in for Ms. Lopez until she could arrive. She asked the Board if they wanted to modify the agenda to hear the parking code prior to the partial demolition recommendation.

There was a brief discussion; however, no objection to the modification.

MOTION

Mr. Blow MOVED to modify the agenda to discuss the City Parking code first and the partial demolition second. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Pappas.

VOTE ON MOTION:
AYES: Blow, Pappas, Shaffer, Barnes, Griggs, Davis
NAYES: NONE
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Discussion and Recommendation Related to Drafted Language Regarding Partial Demolition Code Amendments

Heard after item 4.

Ms. Skinner introduced the topic and provided a brief overview. She said before the Board were the proposed definitions that would be included in the code and the latest addendum and features of the building code. She said they were working on the update to the Architectural Guidelines for Historic Preservation (AGHP).

Ms. Courtney reviewed the topic with the Board and advised the partial demolition ordinance language needed to be

addressed. She said they were in the middle of the Architectural Guidelines for Historic Preservation (AGHP) update; however, there had been delays. She said in the past several years they noticed a shift in the historic buildings due to hurricanes, storm events, and new investors. She provided some different options to the Board to consider and advised they did not want this to be a cumbersome for property owners.

Public Comment was opened:

Melinda Rakoncay said the type of materials used should not be changed as it will change the look and feel of the City. She said people moved here for the charm; however, people should understand preservation was important to the City.

Public Comment Closed.

Board discussion:

- Agreed with keeping the character on the historic homes in the historic districts
- More concerned with the contributing buildings and what the qualifications were
- Did not want to restrict the people who purchased the homes as things changed with modern times
- Felt there were double standards with contributing homes and homes that were not in historic districts for owners
- Demolition by neglect should not be allowed
- Regulated structures could be administratively approved unless there was a more drastic change then they would need HARB approval
- Questioned what was defined as a regulated structure

Ms. Lopez replied a regulated structure was a building or part of a building not located within the Historic Preservation (HP) District but was individually listed as a local or nation landmark or contributing on the National Register.

Mr. Davis asked if a home fifty-one years old in the Fullerwood neighborhood would have to Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB).

Ms. Courtney replied that would depend on the contributing status of the home.

Mr. Davis said there were around 1,600 or 1,700 homes in the City that were contributing with the majority in HP 1 district; however, the concern was the HARB review had been stretch to other neighborhoods that did not have contributing factors but were under that review. He mentioned two past cases and asked why they had to be reviewed by HARB.

Ms. Skinner replied those two homes were contributing and the proposed work was inconsistent with what they were replacing and that was the reason for the review.

Ms. Courtney said the Fullerwood neighborhood had 1950's buildings and earlier, which showed the development pattern. She said the language from the National Register was included on how to apply the National Register criteria for evaluations. She said the criteria noted districts and buildings did not need to be considered eligible if all the components lacked individual distinction, but the grouping was significant as a whole within the historic context. She said historic preservation was more of a philosophical approach and looked at individually to determine if they were contributing.

Mr. Davis his major concern was taking away an owner's property rights.

Ms. Lopez noted if listed as a regulated structure, in Fullerwood, Lincolnville, or another HP district, it was identified as a contributing structure. She said it would be categorized as an architecture feature with limited review. She said this did not mean the owner would have to go to HARB unless there was a change with a significant architectural feature.

Mr. Pappas stated the homes were not historical but were created to be, which made the homes frozen in time and not contributing to the future which could take away the history from the future.

Ms. Skinner said the neighborhood was determined to be a National Register District based on facts and conditions. She said if the National Register District designation was lost that was fine; however, it had benefits such as grants and federal money but only if it was a National Register District.

Mr. Pappas said the National Register District noted the mass and not particular features of the building and thought the designation would not be lost as long as the mass of the buildings were kept.

Ms. Courtney said the National Register language looked at the physical features and did not note the other features as irrelevant. She said it was relevant to the whole district and each individual house would have to be reviewed.

Ms. Skinner said HARB developed the five characteristic that were important to the integrity of a building which were the roof structure, porch, siding, windows, and cladding material. She said that was what helped them agree to this document and if consistent with these important features, staff review or limited review could take place.

Mr. Davis said another issue was if the homeowners had been notified of what was taking place.

Ms. Skinner replied in the affirmative and said letters were sent out.

Ms. Courtney said there were over 4,000 buildings within the City that were over fifty years old, and around 1,659 structures that contributed to the National Register Districts, which would continue to be reviewed; however, some could have items administratively approved. She noted some buildings that were not contributing went before HARB because historic materials were being removed.

Mr. Pappas said a better job of letting homeowners know what was taking place and what it meant was necessary.

Ms. Skinner said that was the intent of this and once they moved forward to adopt an ordinance, they would put out a big effort to inform everyone.

Board discussion:

- Felt National Historic District designations were very valuable and should protect them
- Unsure if removing the requirements as it could affect status
- Should make the requirements clear and help homeowners understand without making it a burden
- Questioned if most of the buildings in a district would have to be contributing

Ms. Courtney replied to be a National Register District it was normally 50% of the neighborhood. She said these districts had maps with clear boundaries defined. She said if there was a questioned if a home was contributing, that could be provided. She said before, those homes would have had to be reviewed by HARB and now with this new language, there would be a less stringent review or requirement

Board discussion:

- New language did help to improve it, but thought more could be done
- Should provide homeowners with information as to why their home was considered contributing
- In favor of the material change
- Felt the public did not understand if their home was historic or contributing and education should be provided

Ms. Lopez said the Board had options which were stay with the current code of fifty years or compromise and confirm last year's draft amendment, or the Board could direct the staff make it less restrictive or less restrictive than last year's draft.

Board discussion:

- Should preserve the historic integrity of the City but felt education was needed.
- Was a desire to remove some of the administrative cost burden
- Was more in favor of the proposed language with some modifications to include overlays
- Wanted to move forward but questioned what could make it easier to have more items administratively approved
- Problem was property rights for homeowners and not having an appeals process
- Wood today did not last as long as the older wood
- Felt the process should be easier and not a burden
- Leaned towards the staff recommendation

Ms. Courtney noted the proposed new language did not modify the items that had been approved previously but expanded the historic preservation code language to make it more organized. She said she felt materials mattered; however, understood what had been approved was a compromise and was better than not doing anything. She noted they would try and be more proactive with educating the public. She said this was to narrow down how many houses were affected.

Mr. Pappas asked if there was concern if this were recommended, the contributing buildings would not be considered by the National Historic District and that was the reason for the ordinance pertaining to contributing buildings.

Ms. Courtney said what was difficult was if all the material were replaced with new, would it still be considered a historic house, and if the massing and overall elements were still present could it be considered a contributing building. She said she thought overtime it could be a look and feel change to the district.

Mr. Davis said each neighborhood was different in age, type of structures, and demographic.

Ms. Skinner advised surveys of other neighborhoods were being done and there was a list of potential contributing buildings. She said the Mayor had asked them to submit two grants regarding Mid-Century Modern contributing buildings, and they were continuing to identify history.

MOTION

Mr. Pappas MOVED Readopt August 2022 Historic Preservation Code Language to include the partial demolition ordinance language and the addendum included as part of the Architectural Guidelines for Historic Preservation. The motion was SECONDED by Mr. Shaffer.

VOTE ON MOTION:
AYES: Pappas, Shaffer, Barnes, Griggs, Davis
NAYES: NONE
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY[1]

4. Consideration and Discussion Related to Updating the City's Parking Code Regulations

Ms. Skinner introduced the topic and briefly reviewed the parking survey. She noted the different options available which were as follows:

- Keep the current code and make no changes

[1] Carl Blow left after parking discussion

- Proceed with the parking plan drafted by Jonathan Paul, NUE New Urban Concepts
- Staff proposal- hybrid between current code and added in other options available
- Staff proposal- changing minimum to maximum

4. (a). Review of the Survey Results of the recently conducted Parking Code Survey focused on Input from the Business Community and Comparison to the Previous Results

Ms. Skinner introduced the topic and said the surveys sent out were tailored more towards the business community. She noted there were 266 survey responses and the information was provided in the packet. She said after reviewing the responses there were similar concerns and responses as before.

4 (b). Discussion and Recommendations related to potential updates to the City's Parking Code to incorporate mobility concepts adopted in the City's Mobility Plan and the Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Fredriksson reviewed the proposed parking code updates and how it would relate to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. He discussed the history of the parking code over the last 90 years and noted the last time the parking code was updated was 1988. He went in depth regarding the options available to help address the parking code.

Public comment was open:

Melinda Rakoncay asked where cars would be pushed to if there was a change in the parking requirements. She said it was great to encourage garages and shuttles to limit the number of vehicles. She said if the density were increased for housing the number of vehicles would be increased causing more traffic.

Bryan Lieberman spoke concerned with parking and hoped the requirements would change as downtown businesses did not have the same the requirements as he did at his current location. He said this needed to change in the West King area to help his and other businesses thrive.

Public Comment was closed.

4 (c). Planning and Zoning Board discussion

Staff and Board discussion:

- In favor of shared parking, however, concerned with the reduction in parking and unsure of where the vehicles would go
- Current parking code encouraged large surface lot development
- Questioned the parking fees and how that could take place
- Formula had not been developed; however, the proposed fees would help pay the difference in having the spaces for use and not having the physical space
- Collected funds would go towards building other parking facilities or updating the parking locations near the businesses
- If parking requirements were not reduced, then centralizing parking and shuttles would not be viable
- Hoped to reduce the congestion and the pressure on the neighborhoods
- Opposed to reducing the parking requirements
- Could reduce the parking space size and structure for drive isles which would increase the amount of parking available
- Questioned what it meant by reduction according to the San Marco Design Standards

Ms. Skinner replied in the San Marco Design Standards, there were some residential structures used for commercial use and written into the parking code to help maintain the residential nature to reduce the parking

requirement by twenty-five percent to avoid parking in the front yard. She said this was a proposal to expand the theory into other neighborhoods that were commercially zoned.

Discussion continued:

- Not in favor of parking once; however, in favor of encouraging multi-model transit, shared parking, mobility hubs, and valet parking
- Not opposed to the parking fee but did not like the loss of parking spaces
- Did not want to reduce parking east of US1 but open to a reduction to the west
- No issues with reducing parking as that could help cure the 100-year problem
- Neighborhood stores parking could be reduced as less was needed
- Could identify areas in the City where parking could be eliminated
- In favor of the parking fee if it went to the mobility fee
- Parking was not a new issue in St. Augustine
- ITE manual trend was less than what was in the current code; however, it was updated regularly
- Should not require more parking than the actual need of the business
- Requirements for downtown should be kept the same but other neighborhoods should be reviewed individually
- Should work with West Augustine regarding parking as it was a growing business area
- Understood the parking fee in lieu of a parking space; however, unsure how much it should be and how it could affect small infill development
- In favor of shared and reduced parking and how it could fit into the standards
- In favor of encouraging biking but did not want a bike rack to take up a parking space
- Should protect private property values and homestead exempt properties
- Had two type of visitors in the city day trippers and overnight visitors; should be more concerned with overnight visitors as they spend more
- Unsure if encouraging people to use the shuttle services would reduce the economic activity
- Questioned how ride-share was affecting parking
- Felt ride-share decreased the number of vehicles on the road
- Questioned how parking was viewed downtown
- Suggested people may not be aware of available parking even thought that was being addressed by the City through an app
- Parking fees made sense; however, thought more options should be made available to the property owners
- In favor of parking once and using the multi-model transportation options
- In favor of the setback reduction if the landscaping standards were met as long as it did not change the floor area ratios where imperious area went up
- Like the idea of reducing parking by region or neighborhood as all were different
- Needed a solution that aggressively dealt with the parking issues
- In favor of the more progressive mobility ideas
- Felt this was a way to provide access for residents

Mr. Davis asked if option three was the one the Board was leaning towards.

Mr. Blow replied in the affirmative and noted from experience any time a fee was charged in lieu of something the difficulty was making sure the monies collected would be spent correctly. He said mitigation fees should be clearly defined and used for purpose it represented.

Mr. Pappas advised the mobility fee was reviewed every year.

Mr. Shaffer understood the concept of the fee but thought other finance options should

be explored to have access to these options now. He said residents wanted more of a livable City. He said the ITE standards showed the trends for less parking; however, that was not the case here and that should be addressed later.

Mr. Pappas said parking was not changing but changing the parking requirements for buildings in the future. He agreed option three was the best fit even though it was not a one size fits all and each neighborhood should be reviewed separately.

Mr. Davis noted another issue was parking on Anastasia Island, and he felt it needed to be addressed. [2]

5. Adjournment

Having no further business, Mr. Davis adjourned the meeting at 4:05 P.M.[3]

Mike Davis, Chairperson

[2] Break from 2:34p.m.-2:42p.m.
[3] Transcribed by Elyse Wiemann