

MINUTES
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION
NEW CITY HALL
212 SW 9TH STREET
LAWTON, OKLAHOMA
MAY 13, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Debra Jones, Chair, at 4:07 p.m. in the New City Hall. Notice of meeting and agenda were posted on the City Hall notice board as required by law.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Dr. Suzanne Crawford; Steve Coleman; Kent Jester; Debra Jones; John Jones; Paige Michener; Cherry Phillips (arrived at 4:10 pm)

ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Richard Rogalski, Deputy City Manager; Cynthia Augustine, Planning Department; Donalynn Blazek-Scherler, City Clerk's Office.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

1. **Old Business**

A. Elect a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman

Motion by Jones J., **Second** by Jester to nominate Debra Jones as Chair. **Aye:** Coleman, Jester, Jones J., Michener, Crawford **Nay:** None. **Abstain:** Jones D. **Motion Passed.**

Motion by Jester, **Second** by Jones J to nominate Paige Michener as Vice-Chair. **Aye:** Jester, Jones D, Jones J, Crawford, Coleman **Nay:** None **Abstain:** Michener **Motion Passed.**

B. Approve the minutes of the March 1, 2017 meeting.

Motion by Jester D, **Second** by Michener. to approve the minutes of March 1, 2017. **Aye:** Jones D, Jones J, Michener, Crawford, Coleman, Jester. **Nay:** None. **Motion Passed.**

2. **New Business**

A. Discuss the WPA Parks and take action as deemed necessary.

Rogalski began by stating that no action is to be taken today; this meeting is meant to be a discussion because we are seeking guidance.

The write up and application were passed around. These documents are available in the City Clerk's Office.

Crawford said everything looked good, but there are some grammatical corrections needed.

Jones D stated they will take a moment to look over the documents for those who have not had a chance to do so yet.

Jones J asked if any of the parks were on the City's agenda to be sold.

Rogalski stated no, but that is a good point because the overlay helps to protect the parks survive after the City sells them. He stated as long as the parks are City owned, they are somewhat protected, but sometimes things happen. For example, when the arch was hit at the cemetery, some people said just tear it down.

Rogalski said this is a unique overlay zone because, the way it is envisioned, the intention is not to protect the entire park. The park is full of non-contributing structures, and we only want to protect very specific structures. Other things within the park, like playground equipment, can come and go with no problems. Anything within the park that is protected would have to come before the Commission for approval.

Rogalski stated there are also some proposed guidelines as well. These are the same type of rules that were put together for the original townsite: very specific to the specific structures and very simple.

Jester asked how he would protect specific structures as opposed to the whole park.

Rogalski stated that there are photographs of the structures that are intended to be protected and more photos will be available. The overlay will reference the write up and say the structures pictured are the only protected structures. Rogalski then referenced an old playground in Mattie Beal Park. He stated it's a neat old playground, but it's not protected and probably shouldn't be there because it's unsafe. The way this overlay is set up, we would produce these photos and say, you can tear down that park, but don't touch this.

Jones stated that the write up references a 4.5-acre park.

Rogalski clarified that the write up references the entire 4.5-acre park, but only the pictured structures would be protected. He said if you look at it as a structure like the Mattie Beal House, we aren't trying to protect the hedges or the lawn for that one, but the entire lot is in the overlay. He stated we also need to figure out a way to say you can't build stuff all the way around it. Rogalski asked Jones D if she had any opinions.

Jones D stated she had no comment on it.

Rogalski stated we have been very specific about what structures are being protected and other structures can be modified as needed, provide you don't damage or obscure these protected structures.

Jones J asked if they would be able to survey out the park, and then protect the structure and the land around the structure by protecting the parcels without protecting the rest of the park.

Rogalski said the concern there is they also don't want a big building built right in front of these structures. By surveying out the park and only protecting specific parcels, the view of these structures isn't necessarily protected. The purpose is to protect these structures into perpetuity, and we want these structures to always be looked at with preservation eyes, not something administrative that just says it doesn't affect this piece of land.

Jones D said it would certainly be on the ordinance on the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Coleman asked if it is surveyed, does it affect that analysis.

Rogalski answered if I survey the property and say only this piece is in the overlay, you wouldn't need a Certificate of Appropriateness for the rest of the park. We want the Certificate of Appropriateness to affect a larger area so it's easy for staff to determine what can be done. If we survey and only protect the smaller parcel, you could put a parking lot around an entire structure without the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Jester stated the intention is to put the whole park in the overlay, but we are only protecting the structures.

Rogalski said that is correct.

Phillips asked if there had been letters sent out to the citizens around the park.

Rogalski stated no. He said once we feel like we have everything correct and are ready to go forward, then we can send out the notices for the public hearing.

Phillips stated so we have no citizen input then.

Rogalski said no. We are just trying to see if the write up is enough. He stated that it is very thin and doesn't know if it needs to be much bigger.

Crawford stated that no it doesn't.

Phillips stated that we usually get this type of request from citizens, and then the citizens take care of it. She asked who would be taking care of this.

Rogalski said that the Parks and Rec Division has been taking care of it, but the difference would be that if they decided to change something, it would have to go through the Board and there would have to be an appeals process.

Crawford stated the only controversy that they will probably run into are the two wading pools. They will want to substitute splash pads for the wading pools.

Phillips asked if these are rock or brick structures.

Rogalski stated they are stone.

Phillips asked if they get damaged, who's going to pay for them.

Rogalski stated that is a good point, so he will talk about the arch at Highland Cemetery. That arch has been there for nearly 100 years, but it was recently hit by a garbage truck and is now in an unsafe condition. He said we have a stone mason who worked with a local engineer to come up with a plan on how to fix this. He stated there will be some disassembly of this structure and then it has to be rebuilt because structural integrity has been disrupted. The plans would be to either put it back just how it was, put addition stone under the columns to make it taller, or to close this entrance to vehicular traffic altogether. I think that last one is a terrible idea, but I'm not a policy maker.

Jones J asked when they repair the structure, will they leave some of the original structure there.

Rogalski stated he thinks most of the top part will be able to hold, but the columns have to be rebuilt because of the structural integrity. It is the proper way to do it. It's not a cost issue, it's a question of what's the correct thing to do.

Jones D said the applicant is the City, so the City needs to determine these things in their guidelines. It sounds like you aren't settled on your guidelines, and frankly, a lot of them probably deal with finance. That's the Council. She stated she won't comment on the application because she is uncomfortable anytime they get out of a public hearing status and start giving direction. She stated Dr. Crawford is the historian, so what she says is good enough for her.

Dr. Crawford stated the write up is sufficient, but it needs some grammatical changes. It does establish the historical significance and the photos are a good idea. She stated the last time she read something that was brought up by the Planning Department, there was a lot on the WPA, which was wrong. She stated you don't need to write a whole text. She stated it only needs to say when it was built and how we know this. Dr. Crawford also stated the one on Mattie Beal also

needs to be changed to at least make it grammatically correct. Aside from that, the write up is just fine.

Jones D said the City needs to hash out how to define the monument and put in the guidelines what triggers it to come back to HP. She stated that she doesn't believe the ordinance really authorizes that, but she would leave it to legal to determine that. She stated HP does Certificates of Appropriateness and doesn't believe it says anywhere whether or not they should render an opinion to something. She said she's having a hard time seeing the enforcement of this.

Phillips asked if Jones D meant in the designing of the structures.

Jones D stated that guidelines should tell you how to replace or repair something and it should be vague. She stated when you start having other construction or additions to the park bring in the HP Commission again, you may need to change the ordinance to read that way. Then you can put it in your guidelines that if staff determines that the proposed construction may have direct impact on the monument, then go to HP to get their opinion, and then send it on to Council.

Jones J asked if this was done prior to the cemetery arch being repaired, how does that affect the City and would it have to go back through this same process again.

Rogalski stated it would be the same processes as when someone wants to make changes to their home when they live in the overlay district. There are 3 levels of approval: it goes to staff, then a subcommittee of HP, and then....

Jones D stated that when you are dealing with a monument, a Certificate of Appropriateness will take you wherever you want to go. What concerns her is the criteria that trigger a certificate for a proposed changed to one of the impacted monuments.

Rogalski said he agrees that that is very difficult. It is very easy to say you can't do anything to the bridge, but how do you stop someone from building a fence around the bridge.

Jones D said the overlay district in and of itself is a control. She believes the struggle for the City right now is the guidelines for that district and trying to limit them to the impact on the monument. She stated they will need to provide the procedure for that in the guidelines that is satisfactory to the Council, and they may need to amend the powers of the HP to provide for that.

Jones D stated she has given all the guidance she can give on this topic. She doesn't believe the guidelines are ready to go to a public hearing.

Phillips asked where HP fits in as far as damage.

Rogalski stated it goes through the same process as everything else: somethings can be done administratively, and some things have to come back to HP for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Jester stated during the normal procedure, a citizen fills out the application and provides the guidelines.

Rogalski stated he has a draft for some examples.

Jester asked if the City is at the point where they are just seeing if HP believes this is worthy and interested.

Rogalski stated since the City is the applicant, we are asking for some input from HP, and they have provided some really great guidance on that.

Jones D said if she goes back to Rogalski's example of the Mattie Beal house: she does believe there should be some protection for exterior improvements beyond the footprint of the house, like a fence or carriage house.

Rogalski stated he agrees; anything that is a structure would be covered.

Jones D asked Rogalski that if they change the ordinance, to please put it all on one meeting, and to do the same thing with CPC.

3. Discussion

Debra Jones asked that the following statement be included in the minutes of this meeting:

“We lost Richard Smith. He was a vital part of the Commission, he was a gifted architect, and he had a terrific background in historical preservation. We will sorely miss him.”

Jones D said they do now have a vacancy in that position, and we assume that Council will take care of that.

4. Adjournment.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

Motion by Coleman, **Second** by Phillips, to adjourn. **Aye:** Jones J, Michener; Phillips, Crawford, Coleman, Jester, Jones D **Nay:** None. **Motion Passed.**