

MINUTES

A work session of the Heritage Preservation Commission of the City of Waxahachie, Texas, was held on **Thursday, November 7, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.** in the Hatchet Conference Room at the Charles Beatty Municipal Services Building, 408 S. Rogers, Waxahachie, Texas.

Heritage Preservation Commission Members Present: Peggy Crabtree, Chair
Jacqueline Montejano, Vice Chair
Ronald Finch
Adam Graves
Kelly Savell
Mark Gundert
Alex Lohmann

Planning & Zoning Commission Liaison: Marlene Norcross
Heritage Preservation Manager: Eleana Tuley
City Council Liaison: Patrick Souter

1. Call to Order

Peggy Crabtree called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

2. Discuss the historic preservation standards

Eleana Tuley informed the commission that this meeting was organized at their request, and the commissioners are welcome to ask questions or discuss any topics they wish at this time.

Ron Finch praised the group for getting together to get on the same page on several topics. Ten years ago, there were 135 properties that received the historic tax incentive, but there were many more properties that were eligible for the incentive that were not taking advantage of it. He would like to ensure that the commission is not an obstacle for real estate investors. He would like to ensure that the commission also has the support from the business community. Since there are many historic homes owned by investors he wants to make the incentive appealing to them, as well. Additionally, he suggested the commission consider the use of alternative exterior finishing materials for historic homes.

Eleana Tuley explained the historic tax incentive and additional tax credit application process and qualifications to Alex Lohman, Marlene Norcross, and Mark Gundert, as they are new to the commission.

Jacqueline Montejano recommended following the standards published by the National Park Service on *the Use of Substitute Material on Historic Building Exteriors* because they identify circumstances in which the commission could consider using alternative exterior finishing materials without compromising the building's architectural integrity. She distributed copies of the preservation brief and welcomed some flexibility to foster a collaborative process with the business community while following best practices.

Adam Graves said it is also important to identify the correct restoration or improvement process and then discuss alternative solutions based on the hurdles involved in the process.

Kelly Savell would enjoy working with property owners to understand their obstacles and help them find alternative solutions. While it's important for property owners to adhere to best practices, she recognizes that some flexibility may be necessary in certain situations and is willing to work with them in those circumstances.

Ron Finch believes having as many properties as possible in the tax incentive program is a benefit.

Kelly Savell confirmed that the commission is following best practices and national standards.

Adam Graves stated that creating a city-wide list of alternative materials would be challenging because it is difficult to identify every type of material suitable for each historical home in the city. However, having been on the commission for the past year, he noticed that the historic preservation ordinance encourages the formation of committees. He recommended forming a committee to help property owners when they have questions or encounter obstacles with choosing an appropriate exterior finishing material for their homes.

Jacqueline Montejano has noticed that the community is not aware of the city's design guidelines, and efforts may be better allocated to educating the community as well.

Ron Finch recommended reaching out to individual property owners who don't already receive the incentive to tell them that they would qualify for it.

Peggy Crabtree and Jacqueline Montejano suggested that the commission might find creative ways to incentivize property owners to make incremental changes, helping them qualify for the historic tax incentive program in future years.

Kelly Savell stated that the commission needs an outreach and educational committee to inform the community about best practices, historic preservation resources, funding options, and the committee's overall objectives.

Eleana Tuley stated that she recently updated the Heritage Preservation website to enhance public access to historic preservation resources; however, greater outreach is needed to raise public awareness of these resources.

The commission discussed using social media outlets to inform property owners. The committee also discussed reaching out to realtors to make them aware of historic resources. Every quarter or couple of months make a post regarding historic preservation in the city newsletter or local newspaper.

Kelly Savell mentioned that she and several other members of the commission have reached out to applicants whose certificates of appropriateness were not approved. They provided their personal phone numbers to offer assistance with their project.

Adam Graves confirmed that the commission upholds the design guidelines only for the front façade of historic homes. The standards are not required for the other sides of the exterior or for the interior. This should make projects more feasible, as homeowners only need to be cautious about the front façade.

The commission putting the formation of the committees on the next HPC agenda.

Unfortunately, building permits are not required for windows and other aesthetic changes. The commission also suggested reaching out to contractors. The chamber may be a good start to communicating with the community's contractors.

The commission also discussed partnering with Historic Waxahachie Incorporated and other community organizations for community outreach efforts.

3. Adjourn

Peggy Crabtree adjourned the meeting at 2:34 pm.

Submitted Respectfully by Eleana Tuley