



Town of Lake Park, Florida

Historic Preservation Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 02, 2023 at 6:30 PM

Commission Chamber, Town Hall, 535 Park Avenue, Lake Park, FL 33403

Richard Ahrens	—	Chair
Jon Buechele	—	Vice-Chair
Evelyn Harris Clark	—	Regular Member
Gustavo Rodriguez	—	Regular Member
Patricia Leduc	—	Regular Member

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE AND BE ADVISED, that if any interested person desires to appeal any decision of the Historic Preservation Board, with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, such interested person will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations in order to participate in the meeting should contact the Town Clerk's office by calling 881-3311 at least 48 hours in advance to request accommodations.

CALL TO ORDER

6:30 pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Board Member Leduc

ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Vice-Chair Jon Buechele,

Board Member Evelyn Harris Clark,

Board Member Gustavo Rodriguez,

Board Member Patricia Leduc,

Chair Ricard Ahrens was absent and excused.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made to accept the agenda made by Board Member Harris Clark, Seconded by Board Member Rodriguez. Voting Aye: All.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

JULY 10, 2023 SPECIAL CALL HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes made by Board Member Rodriguez, Seconded by Board Member Leduc.

Voting Aye: All

NEW BUSINESS:

QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARING

23-002: QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARING ON A PETITION TO RESCIND THE LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION, GRANTED IN 1998, FOR THE ARNOLD BUILDING LOCATED AT 918 PARK AVENUE, LAKE PARK, FLORIDA, 33403 (8PB9607), AND TO REMOVE IT FROM THE HISTORIC DESIGNATION SURVEY AND FLORIDA MASTER SITE FILE.

Town Attorney Baird asked the Board if they had any ex-parte disclosures.

Vice-Chair Buechele had no ex-parte disclosures.

Board Member Harris Clark had no ex-parte disclosures.

Board Member Rodriguez had no ex-parte disclosures.

Board Member Leduc had no ex-parte disclosures.

Town Attorney Baird swore in all witnesses.

Town Planner Karen Golonka provided a presentation to the Board (Exhibit A).

Mr. Rich Heisenbottle from RJ Heisenbottle Architects provided a summary of their review assessing and making recommendations to the Town that the building has maintained its architectural qualities (Exhibit B). Mr. Heisenbottle referenced the historical designation report from 1998 which lists the reasons for the historical designation (Exhibit C). Petitioner, Mr. Glen Spiritus, Phd., Project Partner thanked the Town with their assistance with their project. Mr. Spiritus advised the Board that the designation in 1998 required the written consent from the owner of the property, but that written consent was never obtained and feels that the property was wrongly designated. Mr. Rick Gonzalez, President from REG Architects spoke about the designation report from 1998 and stated that the report was flawed based on changes to the building from the time it was built. He stated that the report was based on the original façade of the building. Mr. Spiritus spoke about the criteria for approving demolition of designated properties. Ms. Ada Baez, Professional Engineer provided a structural report on the property (Exhibit D) with references to current Florida Building Codes.

Ms. Baez spoke about current building damage and stated that the building is in danger of collapse from a storm. She also spoke about mold and decay. She stated that the original rear wall has no headers over the doors with no support to the second floor. She believes the building has no structural integrity. She stated for the record “this building is not safe”. Mr. Spiritus stated that the architect advised that the building is not able to be rehabilitated and also adds that they would be willing to install a historical marker at the site with an historical presentation.

Town Planner Golonka provided rebuttal and spoke about the criteria for historical designation and the criteria does not include the condition or structure of the building. She stated that just because records may not exist today, doesn’t mean they didn’t exist back in 1998. She went on to say that the Resolution in 1998 allowed 180 days for the property owner to appeal the designation and no appeal was filed. Town Planner Golonka stated that based on a report from REG Architects in 2017, there were several “minor” changes to the exterior of the building but over-all the building retains a moderate degree of historical integrity. In 2023 REG reported that many “significant” changes had occurred with a list of the same items as the 2017 report. Town Planner Golonka stated that there had been no changes to the building from 2017 to 2023 except possible deterioration due to lack of maintenance from the property owner and based on the consultant’s report, the Town does not support the petition for De-Designation of the building.

Mr. Heisenbottle also provided a rebuttal and stated that the building may not be in good structural condition but it is restorable.

Mr. Gonzalez spoke again and stated that in 2017 he had represented the Town but at that time he was not aware that there was a 1998 report and explained that this was the reason for the discrepancy between their opinions from 2017 to now.

Board Member Clark Harris stated that the Board is not looking at the structural integrity of the building and asked if the previous owner requested to have the historical designation. Town Planner Golonka stated the designation was made in 1998 and the owner in 2017 applied for site plan approval and was awarded a certificate of appropriateness to make changes as long as the changes were consistent with the historical form of the structure and added that the building was sold in 2021 and was sold again in 2022. Board Member Harris Clark asked if staff would expect a property owner in this situation to determine what they would want to do with the property and would the staff advise for appropriateness.

Town Planner Golonka said yes, that is how it typically works. Board Member Harris Clark asked if there was a certain percentage of the façade that could be re-done. Mr. Heisenbottle explained that this property although there have been changes, has retained its historical integrity.

Board Member Gonzalez asked if an owner is required to maintain or secure property to avoid deterioration. Mr. Heisenbottle stated that an owner is not permitted to allow a historically significant structure to be neglected. Board Member Gonzalez asked if the Town has any enforcement of this in place. Town Planner Golonka stated that standard building code enforcement would apply and that there is nothing specific in the designation that would call out the owner for any requirements. Mr. Heisenbottle also stated that the unsafe structures are the responsibility of the owner. Board Member Gonzalez asked how many code violations have been issued on the property since its designation. Town Attorney Baird stated that code violations are not relevant to this proceeding. Board Member Gonzalez asked Mr. Spiritus if it was the intention once they purchased the property to preserve the property. Mr. Spiritus stated they were encouraged by Town staff to purchase the property and that getting the property de-designated would be a simple process. He stated that the Town suggested hiring a structural engineer to ease the process. Mr. Spiritus stated that they saw evidence that work had been done on the building since 1998 and no violation or permits were issued.

Board Member Leduc asked Mr. Spiritus what he was told about the historical value of the property when they purchased it and what their intentions were knowing that the building had a designation. Mr. Spiritus stated again that at the time, staff led them to believe that a de-designation would be an easy process and they trusted those people at that point. He stated that as responsible owners, they believe the building has to come down for safety reasons. Board Member Leduc asked if he was aware of the designation at the time of purchase. He stated that they were aware and they were told that it would not be a problem and not difficult to de-designate based on the condition of the building. Board Member Harris Clark asked the applicant if there were any discussions with staff and architects to possibly use a percentage of the façade to maintain the Mediterranean look and history of the building and then the back of the building would be open to whatever plans they had. Mr. Spiritus stated that the façade cannot be saved. Mr. Gonzalez stated that a reconstruction of the façade might be a possibility to be explored but he is concerned with the safety of the building.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dianne Sophinos 338 Bayberry Drive, spoke about the Lake Park Historical Society's mission within the Town and feels it would be a shame to have this building demolished.

Terence Davis from Riviera Beach spoke about his childhood in Riviera Beach and Lake Park and also about records that were not presented to the applicant.

BOARD COMMENTS

Board Member Harris Clark stated that after listening to both architects she does not feel that there has been enough due diligence into the possibility of salvaging the historical aspect of the building. She would like to see the applicant and staff come together to meet the goals of the Town.

Board Member Rodriguez spoke about the criteria for designation and if the property still meets the criteria. He spoke about some of the history of the building and believes that the building still holds historical value.

Board Member Leduc spoke about the criteria for designation and the historical value of the building. Vice-Chair Buechele had no comments.

"Motion to approve staff's recommendation to keep the historical designation for the 918 Park Avenue building" made by Board Member Leduc. Seconded by Board Member Harris Clark.

Voting Aye: All

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Buechele adjourned the meeting at 8:21 pm

_____, Chair

Town Seal

Town of Lake Park Historic Preservation Board

Town Clerk, Vivian Mendez, MMC

Deputy Town Clerk, Laura Weidgans

Approved on this _____ of _____, _____