

CITY OF MONTGOMERY
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 5, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Simpson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Tom Czulewicz, John Fox, Daniel Gazda, Bill Simpson, Merriam Walker

Absent: None

Also Present: Dave McCorquodale, Director of Planning & Development

PUBLIC FORUM:

None at this time.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Approval of the October 1, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Motion to approve the October 1, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes as submitted was made by Tom Czulewicz and seconded by Merriam Walker. **All in favor. (5-0)**

2. Consideration and possible action on a proposed sign for H-Wines located at 14351 Liberty Street in the Historic Preservation District.

Mr. Steve Hari, owner of H-Wines, said he just opened a new restaurant and needed to have a new sign added stating it is a restaurant so there is no confusion.

Motion to accept the sign as presented for H-Wines located at 14351 Liberty Street in the Historic Preservation District was made by John Fox and seconded by Daniel Gazda. **All in favor. (5-0)**

3. Consideration and possible action on proposed exterior building renovations at 905 College Street located in the Historic Preservation District.

Mr. McCorquodale said the information given looked complete enough that the Commission has the ability to make an approval now but you do not have to. If you would just like to provide enough direction that it gives the owners the certainty to engage an architect to come up with final drawings that is certainly appropriate as well. He said the information is fairly thorough and he believes there is enough to make a decision but that is completely up to the Commission.

Mrs. Brooke Tobaben said her and her husband recently purchased 905 College Street. She said they have wanted to purchase a historic home for a long time and want to add a bit more character to the home. There are some minor changes they want to do for square footage. Upstairs the rooms are a little small and in two of the rooms you can only fit a twin size bed. They would like to get some construction done before they move in. She said they will finish

out the school year in Houston for their oldest son and are not planning on moving here until the summer which gives them some time as they are engaging with an architect to get things done. They do not want to have to do a lot of change plans so they would like to get some feedback from the Commission before they actually have any official drawings done.

Mrs. Tobaben said they want to add some space but do not want to change the look of the house. They have played with multiple ideas of what to do with the dormers. It seems like the best way to keep that look is to keep the two gables. Anything that was solid and straight across made it look like the modern farmhouse look, but that is not the look they are going for. They want to try and keep with that style as much as possible. She said they are open to suggestions too. It is not a historical home to Montgomery but it is in the Historical District. They do want to try to add a little bit more character into it. If you saw the inside they did a really great job of adding tons of shiplap and using old antique doors. They just want to add a bit more to the exterior.

John Fox asked, in the character of the dormer, if they were extending the second floor forward. Mrs. Tobaben said there are already dormers there. There are two dormers that are existing so between the dormers and between the second far left there is about a five-foot space. One is four foot nine inches and the other one is five and a half feet and they are wanting to encompass that space. They are not going to come any further than the current dormers. The way the look is it is almost like a bit staggered so in the room you are going to see it staggered but exterior wise it is going to look cohesive. When it was made straight across, something about having just that slight staggered look with having the shared rooms in between just gives it more character and dimension. John Fox asked if they plan on using the split shingles for the Nantucket appearance. Mrs. Tobaben said they have looked at that and actually have a plan where they have done different types such as cedar shingles and having the wood look and have done the same exact siding that is there currently. She would like to play with a different shingle so they do not have to worry about matching it up perfectly.

Tom Czulewicz said he likes everything. He likes the color concept, the doors, and really likes the rails for the porch up front. Mrs. Tobaben said they already have all those and have had them for a couple of years. She said they were going to build new and make it look old. They have been trying to buy in Montgomery for about five years. She said they have family out here and each time they looked at a home they called them and asked what can they do and what can't they do because whatever they bought they wanted to keep that history and make it work for their family. John Fox said he agrees and Mrs. Tobaben has made a real good presentation and does not see anything wrong with it at all.

Daniel Gazda said he loves the doors and likes changing the stairwell over. Mrs. Tobaben said that was the first thing when they saw the house. She said something kept bugging her and she thought they just needed a different set of doors because it does not match with the history of the home and to also move the stairs over to be able to see the doors. Daniel Gazda asked if the barn would be the same color. Mrs. Tobaben said yes they played with different colors and at one point they were looking at the traditional color red for the barn, but it was her mom that said when going with one color it gives it a more stately look than breaking that up because it is going to look like two separate dwellings on the property. Daniel Gazda said he agrees.

Merriam Walker commented on the vinyl fencing that Mrs. Tobaben had said she had wanted to do and asked what other fencing is in that area that she got her idea to want to do white vinyl. Mrs. Tobaben said there is no vinyl. On that street when you go down there is the wood fencing at Lone Star Estates which they like but they also liked what they saw on the Magnolia home

which was the picket fence. She said as you go down the street, fencing stops for a while and then at the end of the street it is back to the ranch with the horizontal rack fencing. Merriam Walker said the thing they talk about the most in Planning and Zoning is setting the precedence, asking permission before asking for forgiveness, and what goes along with what the historical community already looks like. She said there has to be a happy medium to keep it in the aesthetics of what the Historic District looks like because the things that are coming, people are going to drive up and down that street and there is going to be a bit more traffic so when they make this decision they want to make sure it sets a tone. Mrs. Tobaben said it will not hurt her feelings if you say it has to be picket or the other as they like both. She said she is a big fan of all fences should match. Merriam Walker said they just asked recently another person in the Historic District to take their fence down. There was a question about vinyl. She said cost effectiveness, hardiness, and weatherwise, it is simplest to get up. Mrs. Tobaben said she would be fine if they said the Historic District has this type of fence and this is what it is going forward as that does not bother her. She said they are more concerned with the back section and if they could do something that is semi-solid because of their child's situation. Merriam Walker asked if she wanted a privacy fence. Mrs. Tobaben said partially. She said they are wanting solid four-foot up that you can see. There are the houses that face Cedar Brake Park behind them and they can look in. It would help everyone to have some privacy but they do not want to obstruct any view and want to keep it white.

Merriam Walker asked Mr. McCorquodale what are the restrictions on the fence. Mr. McCorquodale said it needs to go with the house but there is not a specific like it needs to be done to that time period. He said the picket fences in the Historic District were the anomalies back then because they were a rural community. He thinks they have a little more latitude there in terms of the history and what you feel like is an acceptable norm. Mrs. Tobaben said they are fine with the picket fence. Bill Simpson said he thinks with the size of the lot the three rail fence would look a lot more open. Mrs. Tobaben said they are asking to go five-foot in the back with the fence so it will be solid four and then there is this top open that is like an open panel. There is a version that has lattice and they also have one that is a picket that can match the picket in the front. She said her son has never tried to climb out of the fence but they do not want to find out. They were looking at the four-rail as it gives them more height and in the event they find in the front they need to attach a wire mesh the four-rail helps that so you do not have to open at the bottom. Merriam Walker asked if she wants it four-foot solid and then have something decorative at the top. Mrs. Tobaben said it actually comes that way and comes in four different versions. Merriam Walker asked if it was four-foot in the Historical District. Mr. McCorquodale said for back fences there is no requirement. Mrs. Tobaben said she did not see a lot of construction on the back fence but because they have neighbors that can see in, even though he said it is a private drive, it is an alley way, they do not want to make anyone upset and want to get along with their neighbors. They are just wanting it to look good and pass, but it is mostly about their son.

Motion to approve the proposed exterior building renovations by repainting the house and barn, new second story dormer windows to enlarge the interior rooms, new front porch railing and new steps, and a new entry door and exterior fence was made by Daniel Gazda and seconded by Tom Czulewicz. All in favor. (5-0)

4. Presentation and discussion on a proposed new home at the west end of Caroline Street in the Historic Preservation District.

Mr. McCorquodale said this one is different in scope of what they are looking at. What they are looking at now the owners have found an elevation but before engaging an architect they are looking for feedback, not approval from the Commission but feedback on the general style.

The owner, Mrs. Cates said she found this elevation and has searched high and low but cannot find a plan or anything. She said she just loves the look of it. They have a friend that use to be an architect who looked at it and is even working on rendering to get an architect. He told them their layout that she drew is wider than the front of the house and told them they either have to modify this a little bit or change the inside. She said they are working on that but mostly need to know if this look is acceptable. Mrs. Cates said it is small, 1,400 square feet down and open and then a loft with 200 square feet. They will not have the fireplace as they are looking for ways to save money wherever they can because they want to retire here. She said she went through the guidelines and gave as much information as she could as far as composition roof which is most likely hardie plank siding but that could possibly change and is not sure yet without investigating what the cost of cedar versus hardie plank is but it would be that look. Mrs. Cates said they will be adding a carport that will be attached. She provided two options for the carport and likes the one with the gable on the front but their friend who use to be an architect said that really is not drainage wise smart and said they need to go with the other one. Merriam Walker asked if they plan on fencing. Mrs. Cates said not at this time. Merriam Walker asked if they looked at the homes that are going to be beside them. Mrs. Cates said yes. Bill Simpson said the style fits in with the area and the homes in that area. Mrs. Cates said they are a little more separated from the others because there is a bit of a gully there and then there are the rails across. She said she was actually there all day when they cleared that lot. It belongs to her son and they are subdividing it as he is going to sell them a portion. She left a buffer on that corner where that rail is and where the trash can goes so you will not really be able to see their house but not to say that trees do not die or fall but they wanted the intimacy of that lot that it has. Merriam Walker said some of those trees out there are old and asked if they would remove those. Ms. Cates said they might lose some of those sage trees because of where the house is going to be. She said the one in the front is the biggest and looks the healthiest but she is hoping they can keep as many trees as they can. Bill Simpson said that home is not that big of square footage that you want to take up that whole lot either. Mrs. Cates said that is why they shifted it over to the left. She said they had a builder go out there and do a soil test. The builder said it needs to be pushed back because of drainage reasons and not to have to do retainer walls. They also shifted it to the left because of the gully. It does not appear there is any problem with water or ever has been but you never know in Montgomery County.

John Fox asked Mr. McCorquodale if the town creek originates at the cemetery and crosses over. Mr. McCorquodale said there are a couple. He said this piece is a tributary that leads into town creek but the primary origin of town creek is west of here going toward Napa. There is another tributary that crosses by Napa south of the road but town creek ultimately starts around by the stadium. John Fox asked if this is across the street from the Langley's. Mr. McCorquodale said the property is but we are talking about the south end of the property so the north end is not where they are building their house. It is basically on the Cedar Brake Park side.

Merriam Walker said she thinks this is a cool house and knows it is going to be in the woods, but she does not think it goes in line with the houses that are coming up to it. The one street is going to be extended and a subdivision is coming. Mrs. Cates asked if they are in the Historic District. Mr. McCorquodale said they are not.

Bill Simpson said he feels there is enough information here that the owners can go ahead and get the architect and renderings.

John Fox said he thinks the elevation according to the picture that the glass looks more modern than it does country. There is also glass in and around the front doors and there is really a lot of glass for a country house. He said they might duplicate the cedar in some way and will have to look for something different because the cedar is out of place. Mrs. Cates said the hardie plank does come stained and she likes the warmth of it. She also said she does not know if they can afford cedar and want to maintain cedar. Merriam Walker said she thinks it is the glass. She said to her it is more like a glass house and it is beautiful but in her mind all she sees is downtown Montgomery and the difference of the housing and what they are doing there. Bill Simpson said this will give her something to start with. Tom Czulewicz asked what they thought about multi-pane windows downstairs. Mrs. Cates said this one to the right she liked and it would work. It would give it a little more country look. John Fox said it is a great house but you have to think about how it would look like in 1860. He said if your architect can get that in line and make a few changes it would be good. Mrs. Cates said they will probably not get cedar because they are beyond maintaining these places. They will have a small yard but the rest will be more natural. Merriam Walker said she read until you finish it out that you are going to have a different type of road. Mrs. Cates said their other place she knew exactly where she wanted the driveway and curved it on purpose because the stream went over it and it was a ribbon driveway. It was gravel. She said they loved it for 20 some years but until they can afford to maybe do something else they like that look. Merriam Walker asked if that is okay because there was a thing with the church. Mr. McCorquodale said commercial cannot be gravel but for residential it is appropriate. Mrs. Cates said they may blacktop it later or even use concrete but for now they are good with gravel because they loved what they had before.

Mr. McCorquodale said they will bring all this back once they get the drawings. Mrs. Cates said when the builder looked at her layout he said she made the house too wide with the elevation and he started working with different widths to match her layout but she did not like it. She said they have to figure out a way to keep this look. They might have to modify and stretch it out but it will be the same look. Bill Simpson said they have the go ahead to start.

COMMISSION INQUIRY:

None at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

Tom Czulewicz moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m. Merriam Walker seconded the motion. All in favor. (5-0)

Prepared by: Diana Titus Date approved: 12-3-2024
Diana Titus, Deputy City Secretary

Bill Simpson
Bill Simpson, Chairman

Attest: Ruby Beaven
Ruby Beaven, City Secretary
Director of Administrative Services