

**Historic Preservation Commission
Minutes
February 28, 2023 6:00 p.m.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Allyson Whittaker, Clayton Penhallegon, Marcus Breeden, Rhonda Kendrick, Melinda Glenn

MEMBERS ABSENT: Myra Riles

OTHERS PRESENT: Steve O’Neil, Jessica Hicks, Chip Hall, Tyler Thomas, Anna Murrah, John Wells, Amanda Glover, Rhonda Kendrick,

I **I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

I **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Commissioner Penhallegon made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 24, 2023, meeting. Commissioner Glenn seconded it and it passed unanimously.

I **III. OLD BUISNESS**

Steve Oneil advised that the decision of voting on a chairman for the board needed to be decided. Commissioner Penhallegon made a motion for Allyson Walker to be voted in as chairman. Allyson denied the motion stating she couldn’t be the Chairman. Commissioner Glenn made a motion for Penhallegon to be voted in as Chairman and Allyson Whittaker be voted in as Vice Chair. Motion was passed unanimously.

I **IV. NEW BUISNESS**

A. Public Hearing(s)

- I. **COA-2023-003** | *226 Florida St*: Applicant Bainbridge Media, LLC. is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of the structure located at 226 Florida St. The property is 0.25 acres.

John Wells, General Manager of The Post Searchlight – standing in for the owner of the property due to them being out of town. Wells was informed that the property was going to be issued a tax due to the dwelling almost being condemned. Owner had two companies come in to give quotes on how much the restoration would cost. Long Construction quoted \$145,700.00. Dechildren Construction quoted \$66,000.00 for just the exterior of the building. The Post Searchlight determined that the pricing was more than they were interested in paying due to the fact they have no intentions of renting, building on or selling the property. Wells, stated that the dwelling being so close to the rear of the Post Searchlight would not only be extremely noisy, they also feel that it could be a safety hazard. The intention is to demolish the structure and use the land as a green space and to keep the space well maintained.

A staff report was given by Steve O’Neil using the exact criteria used by the Historic Commission to make their decisions on the project in question. O’Neil could not find any historical significance except for being listed on the 1924’s Sanborn Map. O’Neil cannot find any state or US history pertaining to this dwelling. O’Neil determined that this dwelling is most likely the last remaining historic house on the block. It would be somewhat easy to recreate this house. There is nothing significant about the architecture. Commissioner Penhallagen asked about the plans for the property pertaining to the current construction on Chason Park. O’Neil stated that there would be a trail running right next to the property. O’Neil believes that the dwelling is currently structurally sound, however will become compromised if it continues to go unmanaged.

Wells stated, to his knowledge, no one has lived in the house for at least 50 years. Whitaker asked if there has ever been a discussion about making the dwelling into a museum. Wells stated that they don’t have the resources to put in the building to generate the income for upkeep of the dwelling.

Commissioner Whitaker made a motion to approve the certificate of appropriateness for 226 Florida St. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Glenn and was unanimously passed.

- II. **COA-2023-004** | *215 Donalson St*: Applicant Tyler Thomas is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of the structure located at 215 Donalson St. The property is 0.55 acres.

Tyler Thomas, the owner of the property, stated that the main purpose of purchasing the property was to restore and live in the dwelling. Due to the effects of inflation, the cost of repair has doubled from the original quote. Thomas has already invested about \$15,000 getting it prepared to remodel. Hall Contracting came back out to give an updated quote for the remodel. The quote came in at almost \$400,000. In order to complete the construction, Thomas would have to leverage their house or one of his businesses, which at the current state of the economy, Thomas don't feel like that would be a wise decision. Thomas has had to deal with a squatter that keeps returning to the dwelling and has been arrested on five different occasions for multiple felonies. He and his wife are now considering the dwelling unsafe for their children.

Thomas and Halls Construction has determined that the house is not structurally sound. There is not a lot of original materials left in the dwelling, however Thomas and Hall are passionate about saving any antique materials and repurposing the materials for new construction around the city. The property is currently on the Blight Tax list.

A staff report was given by Steve O'Neil. O'Neil believes that the structure does contain some historical architectural features that would be difficult to find anywhere else. The house appears to be original with a few small additions after finding the structure in the 1916 Sanborn maps. O'Neil was unsure about the local and state history on this structure. It is one of the last remaining historical structures on the block. Reconstructing this house would not be impossible, however it would be extremely expensive and difficult. O'Neil believes that its quit possibly the last remaining historic design in the city.

Thomas advised that the current plan for the property is to sell the property and use any earnings to complete the back yard restoration on his property. Thomas noted the Port City Bank is extremely interested in purchasing the property. They would demolish the structure and wants to build rental housing/office front structures on the property. Whitaker opened the floor to the public for questions or concerns for either item on the agenda. Commissioner Penhallagen made a motion to approve the certificate of appropriateness for 215 Donalson St. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Glenn and was unanimously passed

I **V. ADJOURNMENT:** There being no more business, Commissioner Whittaker moved to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Miller seconded. The motion unanimously passed.

BY:

Chairman Allyson Whittaker

ATTEST:

Secretary, Jessica Hicks