
ROCKPORT HERITAGE DISTRICT BOARD MINUTES

On this the 22nd day of August, 2016 the Rockport Heritage District Board of the City of Rockport held a Meeting at 1:30 p.m. at the Rockport City Hall, 622 E. Market Street, Rockport, Texas; and notice of meeting giving time, date and subject having been posted as described in V.T.C.A., Government Code § 551.041.

Members Present

Members Absent

Jim Godfrey – Vice-Chairman
Loretta J. Schindler – Secretary
Anita Diebel
Chad Lee
Bill Fisher

Staff Members Present

Mary Bellinger, Assistant to Building Director
Amanda Torres, Community Planner
Rusty Day, Council Member

Guest(s) Present

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Opening Agenda

1. Call meeting to order.

Vice Chairman Godfrey called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Regular Agenda

2. Introduce new board appointees, Chad Lee and Bill Fisher.

Vice Chairman Godfrey introduced newest members Chad Lee and Bill Fisher to the committee.

3. Appoint Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary.

Member Diebel nominated Jim Godfrey as Chairman. Vice Chairman Godfrey declined due to his busy schedule. Vice Chairman Godfrey nominated Bill Fisher as Chairman, Secretary Schindler seconded. Chairman Fisher nominated Jim Godfrey as Vice Chairman, member Diebel seconded. Chairman Fisher nominated Loretta J. Schindler as Secretary, member Diebel seconded. All voted in favor. Motions carried unanimously. At this time Chairman Fisher took over the meeting.

4. Deliberate and act on approval of Heritage District Board Regular Meeting Minutes of May 12, 2016.

Chairman Fisher asked for a motion to accept May 12, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes. Member Diebel moved to accept minutes as written. Vice Chairman Godfrey second the motion. All voted in favor. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Review Heritage District Zoning Overlay Code and duties of the Board.

Staff member Torres opened with; since we (RHD) have new members I (Torres) wanted to go over the Heritage District Zoning Overlay Codes and the duties of this board. Ms. Torres continued: every city has its own zoning districts, and these zoning districts designate where certain structures can go. Such as residences going into residential zones and retail and general business going into business zones. With that said, if there are certain areas the city wants to protect as far as the character of the building(s) then an overlay is created. This is the reason for the Heritage District Zoning Overlay Code, for the protection of the charm and characteristics of the downtown area. Ms. Torres continued: this downtown area is made up of six (6) to seven (7) different character districts. The overlay makes sure that everything is architecturally uniform, with parking requirements and setback allowances. This will lend itself to walkability and historic preservation. After a brief presentation. Ms. Torres stated: all the things that we are discussing today is in the Heritage District Zoning Overlay Code Book and I (Torres) highly encourage you to take a look at the Codes. Any changes or development within the Austin Street Corridor, Harbor Front Corridor or any demolition within the Heritage District must be presented to this Board. Ms. Torres asked if there were any questions.

A guest from the audience asked: my I speak. Ms. Torres replied: “yes”. Lee Copeland stated: I (Copeland) think many of you are aware that the community has already come forward, along with the then Mayor Todd Pearson to approve the 2012 Master Plan and Overlay Code. Mr. Copeland stated: “no sour grapes here”, but you (RHD) are just an advisory board and for some reason or another we (RHD) were not included in the overall picture. You (RHD) are limited to demolition and the Harbor Front only. Janie and I (Copeland) have fought this for three (3) years. I totally do not agree with appendix “B”, because what it allows the people who may or may not be architecturally savvy to make the decision. When this happens you (RHD) are not able to carry out the intent of the code. I (Copeland) have examples: we (RHD) have had a number of failures approved by staff, i.e., mis-oriented buildings, demolition started on buildings without any review. Most recently the Harbor Motel wanted to do a remodel and the planning department gave them permission. What they did is, took our (RHD) twelve (12) foot sidewalk cut it in half and made half of it a bulkhead so the motel owner could use private property to do two things, he was going to put benches in and now there is a “Pepsi” machine there and there is a car parked on public right-of-way. There is now only three (3) feet of sidewalk left and the master plan says, “we shall have twelve (12) foot sidewalks north to south. I (Copeland) spoke to the Building Director and I (Copeland) told him this is all wrong and not according to the Overlay Code. I (Copeland) insist that if you (RDH) do not have a say, you’re going to get things like the unfinished Bar & Grill, a Motel, demolitions, and mis-orientation of buildings. Ms. Torres thanked Mr. Copeland for his comments. Ms. Torres asked if there were any other questions or comments.

Chairman Fisher stated: I (Fisher) have the same concerns. I (Fisher) spoke to the Mayor the other day and he (Mayor) indicated you (Torres) have changed things a little and now you (Torres) have a pre-site development form that needs to be filled out before anything gets started. Ms. Torres responded: that is correct. Chairman Fisher continued: After talking to the Mayor we (RHD) were

promised we could sit in on any request for development. Ms. Torres stated: I (Torres) haven't had any requests, however I will definitely keep that in mind. Chairman Fisher then stated: I (Fisher) agree with Mr. Copeland with what has happened in the past and we (RHD) are fighting an uphill battle and we are not having much luck. I (Fisher) would like to get things changed where we (RHD) are invited to review anything that is discussed in the Heritage District area. Ms. Torres thanked Mr. Fisher for his comments.

Council Member Rusty Day stated: it appears to me (Day) that the important part of your work lacks the teeth to oversee development before they even get started so as to avoid the type of development we have seen on Austin Street. The part I (Day) have a problem with is we (Council) have not had a development report. We (Council) no longer get a report of the permits that have been issued between Council meetings. I (Day) have talked to the City Manager and Mr. Donoho repeatedly and don't know if we will ever get those reports again. Mr. Fisher, you said the Mayor had indicated you would be invited to the meetings. That seems pretty weak to me (Day), because you (Fisher) are not part of the governing body who grants those permits and that means you are just sitting in the back making comments and anybody can do that. I (Day) think you have been casted by the people to be part of this governing body to make these kind of decisions. Fixing this, you are all going to be pushed to the back of the bus whether you agree or disagree when it comes to making decisions. Mr. Fisher asked: Mr. Day can you present this to council? Council Member Day stated: it has been brought before council in the past and City Manager Carruth and Public Works Director Donoho have said that staff is capable of making these decisions. I (Day) feel that this board needs to have a copy of every permit issued within the Heritage District so you (RHD) have firsthand knowledge and you (RHD) can go to the City Manager and the Director of Public Works and say "STOP" we don't agree with this. I also feel you should be invited to attend any development meetings to give your input. You should have the ability to have a called-at-will meeting. The staff are not the experts at this overview, you are. Mr. Fisher stated: also, part of the problem is the applicant doesn't have a site plan or elevation plan and they (staff) just issue the permits. Mr. Day stated: they (staff) may play fast and loose with other parts of the city but in the Heritage District you (RHD) need to have a say, to protect the Heritage area and right now there are no safeguards in place for this area and it is wide open. You don't have the authority to do anything and I (Day) would not sit on this board. Chairman Fisher asked Ms. Torres: do have an Architectural Degree? After all we (RHD) are relying on you to make these decisions. Ms. Torres responded: I have been a planner for over a year and have many staff members that I (Torres) rely on when making decisions. Ms. Torres asked if there were any more questions or comments. Hearing none Chairman Fisher moved onto item six (6).

6. Deliberate and act on recommendation to City council on the Certificate of Appropriateness Application submitted for 410 and 412 N. Live Oak Street.

Lee Copeland and Janie White gave a brief history of the church and the property it sits on. Ms. White indicated the church building itself has historical value and is thankful that Mr. Gimler and Ms. Marbach are keeping it. Mr. Copeland stated: the building to be demolished is called the Carter House and does not have any historical value to the community and I (Copeland) feel it meets the Overlay Code criteria. Mr. Copeland stated: there has been an addendum to the request to include the remodel of the remaining buildings. Mr. Copeland reminded the board that the remodel is not part of their (RHD) authority, unless staff feels the board needs to review. Ms. Torres stated: I visited with Vice Chairman Godfrey and it was determined that the remodel needed to be reviewed

by the board. Mr. Copeland indicated that a portion of the church that had been added on will be removed and will be placed on the location of the "Carter House" which is scheduled to be demolished. Mr. Copeland stated: the applicant is going to do everything possible to preserve the natural look of the church and also restore the surrounding buildings to match the main building. This will be used for many venues, i.e. weddings and family gatherings.

Ms. Marbach stated: Mr. Gimler approached my husband and myself regarding this project and I (Marbach) said let's do it. The original building will be completely restored and is going to be the chapel and will be called "Heritage Place". There is another building on the property which was used as a hall. We are keeping this building and it will be called "Heritage Hall". The choir room which was added onto the church will be removed and placed where the "Carter House" was. There will be a bridal suite as well as cottages for the bridal party to stay. After a brief discussion Chairman Fisher asked if there any questions or comments. Hearing none Chairman Fisher asked for a motion.

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Godfrey moved to accept the Certificate of Appropriateness Application for the project located at 410 and 412 N Live Oak Street. Secretary Schindler second the motion. With five (5) members present. All voted in favor. Motions carried unanimously.

7. Deliberate and act on determining agenda topics for next meeting and set meeting date.

After some discussion it was determined that the board would meet the second Wednesday of the month at 10:00. Ms. Torres asked if there were any topics the board would like to discuss. The next meeting was scheduled for October 12th, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

Member Diebel moved to accept the next meeting date for October 12th, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. Member Lee second the motion. All voted in favor. Motions carried unanimously

Adjournment

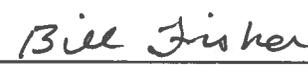
There being no further business, Chairman Fisher adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:30 p.m.

Prepared By:



Mary Bellinger, Assistant to Director

Approved By:



Bill Fisher, Chairman