

**MINUTES OF THE
ROSWELL HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
February 8, 2012
6:30 p.m.**

Members Present: Richard Hallberg, Judy Meer, Tony Landers, Lonnie Mimms, Alex Paulson, Mike Walsh and Mary Ann Pepper

Staff Present: Bradford D. Townsend, Jackie Deibel and Sylvia Campbell

Chairman Tony Landers welcomed everyone to the February 8, 2012 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission.

DISCUSSION ITEM

12-0005

RZ-12-03

Text amendment to approve Groveway Community Hybrid Form-Based Code

Brad Townsend stated that what he is here to discuss this evening is the Grove Way Form Based Code Regulations. This is a process that has been going on in conjunction with ARC. They have put together a code, which is included in the Commissioner's packages. A document covers this particular area of the city. The south end of it is Oxbo, Atlanta Street. The northern portion is Norcross and the eastern portion is east of Zion Court. This is a proposal that is going through the process. It was reviewed by the Design Review Board last evening. It will be reviewed by the Planning Commission next week. Then there will be probably multiple readings in front of mayor and city council for then adoption into the code. The way it has been drafted is an additional overlay type of regulations that will allow for additional residential development as well as commercial development in this area. Really the driving force of it is to provide an incentive for redevelopment of the area. It allows for additional height. That is the big incentive. It allows up to 66 feet in height as it is currently drafted, which could be a four to five-story type of building. What it is designed to do is to push the development to the streets, provide the parking in the rear or in decks or structured behind the building. It is designed to have the main fronts of a building to be determined by what type of use they are having. This would be used for non-residential type of developments. Then they have residential type of developments of what their look would be.

In providing it to the Historic Preservation Commission a portion of this area is still in the historic district. So any type of buildings would be brought to the Commission with historical context trying to meld that with...this is now a three-story building with a walk up. How does it mesh together in historical context?

So, before the Commission leaves this evening Townsend will be handing his business card to every one of them with his email address. If they so choose, or he will take comments this evening, that is why he is here. If they have comments on the document that they feel are important that would be passed on to the council members before they adopt this. Townsend is trying to gather as much input as he can. That is why he is going to the boards. They will be drafting or reviewing it with the Planning Commission next week and then giving those comments back to council so they can provide this through the historic process at that point.

Brad Townsend asked the Commissioners if they had any questions.

Tony Landers stated that he wanted to ask a question to Townsend and then he wants to recognize Lonnie Mimms. Is Townsend's question to this body essentially, do they agree with the thrust of what is being proposed here rather than does the Commission have comments about very specific parts of parts of this proposal.

Brad Townsend stated that it probably falls a little bit in both categories because what they do not want to have is regulations on the books which the Commission feels would be directly in conflict with their historic guidelines. If they bring something that a developer walks in, he has assembled property, it is in the historic district, he feels he has met the intent of these guidelines and it comes to the Commission and they say that in no way is approvable by this Commission in dealing with the historic guidelines that they have.

Lonnie Mimms stated that he had a few comments. He wanted to know if they eliminated the CORRO property to the north from being in the district or is this just not reflected on this map?

Brad Townsend stated that this diagram does not include that. That is part of what is being processed through. What Mimms is indicating...when this map went to mayor and city council at a work session it was requested that they include most of the area up in here. It is both sides of Frazier Street, Frazier Street Apartments, the old Southern Skillet site, that whole triangle that fits there. That would be included as currently directed by council as being part of the red mixed use area. And that is in the intent but it is not reflected in this map.

Lonnie Mimms asked for the benefit of the Commission if Brad Townsend could roughly draw a line where the historic district is and where the purview of this Commission is. Just to show the amount of the area that they are really talking about. And just the little bit Mimms knows about what it is the form base here there are some basic features that are pretty much against what they have gone with in the rest of the historic district. Even what Townsend just pointed out as far as 60-foot height. Mimms thinks it is important to know what the scope is of what is in the historic and how that is actually going to impact the view corridor.

Brad Townsend stated that pale pink is in the historic district. The white area is not in the historic area. The blue area is actually in a midtown overlay district so there is a second overlay in that location. So, it comes down Forrest to Oak then cuts over behind Pleasant Hill. He pointed out the cemetery area, this gas station and this location here. So the main developable area is between Oak and Hill from Atlanta to Forrest. This would be the crux of what would be under the jurisdiction of the Historic Preservation Commission. The rest of it would be the Design Review Board criteria and under their jurisdiction.

Lonnie Mimms stated that was great and thanked Townsend.

Richard Hallberg stated that the portion that is within the historic district, mass and scale of buildings 66 feet. He does not think that their guidelines at all...so certainly along SR 9 as one goes up Oak Street he thinks there would be a way to gradually scale building heights up off of SR 9 so that would retain that historic Roswell two-story façade at the street level. They have plenty of elevation changes certainly on the parking lot side that is on the west side of SR 9 that would allow for one or two stories underground. But he thinks they need to try to make sure that there are exceptions written into this form based code that stipulates that the guidelines need to be honored, not this form based code in those areas that fall within the historic district.

Tony Landers asked Richard Hallberg if when he says honored does he mean that one would have precedent over the other. Hallberg stated that the guidelines would have...

Brad Townsend stated that if he takes Hallberg's comments he would say supersede.

Richard Hallberg stated that was just a personal opinion. There are other Commissioners up here. But he thinks to retain the look and feel of their district between Canton Street and the square; he thinks it is really important that they stay in mass and scale requirements of the guidelines. And that is 30 feet at the ridge.

Judy Meer stated that she feels the same way. They wouldn't want to have five-story buildings right there in a very sensitive part of town even though across the street they are talking about the church up on the hill that may actually get to that elevation.

Brad Townsend stated that what is interesting about this area in the historic district is how tall is the water tower?

Judy Meer stated that there were also different design elements of buildings that might not be really appropriate right in that area either. So, again, would then the

historic district guidelines supersede anything that is in here? And would that be specified in here so that if someone is looking at developing something right there they don't go to a lot of trouble to do what they want to do and then come to the Commission and find out that is not what they want at all.

Tony Landers asked Brad Townsend if in his mind can these two sets of guidelines, can they co-exist in a compatible way?

Brad Townsend stated that with the architecture that he has seen as a directive from the Grove Way committee, he would say yes. Because they are looking at it providing a pedestrian scale of the buildings. He thinks there is a desire to push to the street but not to overwhelm to the street. He thinks there is a desire in the design. Maybe the store front is at the street and the second floor is also at the street. But the third and fourth levels are pushed back further into the property where it is over the parking deck or it is only one story of residential and they have open roof area, which is their patio out front. In the historic context they can fit together. So the simple answer is yes. But it is going to be a creative architectural design that is going to look at all of these components and say, "What am I going to pull from Canton Street that makes sense?" Is there an historic building that he is trying to retain? Is there a way to incorporate Krispy Kreme's building into something that now is more in context with what they are looking for development-wise. The desire is assemblage. Can there be an assemblage of property that this auto repair building that is metal and tin and no significant value any more. What does one change that whole piece of property into that has significant value and meets the criteria that they are looking for?

Lonnie Mimms stated that he was a little bit confused at the work session. Did he hear it right that the developer is going to be able to choose which set of rules they want to fall under, whether it is the historic or whether it is the new overlay district?

Brad Townsend stated that they will not be able to choose between whether they are in the historic district or not. They will be able to choose whether they use the underlying zoning of C-1 or Industrial or this overlay. Then they will be required whichever location that they are at, Design Review Board or Historic Preservation Commission.

Lonnie Mimms stated that there are a lot of players in this game.

Mike Walsh stated that he had two comments that he would encourage the other Commissioners to look at. The actual area that is historic and what areas they are talking about where they could potentially do higher buildings. He thinks they have picked good locations in terms of relationships to the more historical areas within the historic district. He is actually kind of encouraged by that but he also thinks they have to consider how the area that they will review is going to be in relationship with these other areas because one will be going through the

historical area to get back into this area. With that in mind, Walsh is a little surprised how clustered it is. He would have expected to see a little more mixture in the residential. There are a lot of town homes clustered together, then single-family instead of a mix and it doesn't sell very well right now.

Tony Landers asked to what degree is his observation...what is the intent of this? Is it to be illustrative or prescriptive? Brad Townsend stated that was a good question. He thinks it was originally designed to be illustrative. He thinks the more and the more that the stakeholders in the committees and the council members got a hold of it; it ended up being more prescriptive. When one takes for example, a true form based code. It really doesn't concern itself with uses. Townsend stated that he has a list of 74 different uses of the mixed use category. Thirty-two of them are conditional. So, the directive from the council was after the committee got through with this list of saying this is the way they wanted it, the council then says they don't really want it that way. They now want them to go back and say how many of those can be permitted. So, re-drafting as to which ones won't cause someone to have heartache if it ends up next door to them and someone didn't have to have a public hearing that cost four months of time and council gets to say yes or no to. Townsend thinks that it ended up more prescriptive than being illustrative to this is what they were getting.

Lonnie Mimms stated that at the meeting the mayor was pretty clear that he wanted more of the things to be permitted. So, obviously that would give more flexibility. Mimms' concern with the whole program is that there are so many different little piddly parcels within this area. He has run into the same problem in other areas where one is trying to do something to create change for the good and there are so many different owners and everyone has their own agenda. To actually have any of these things happen, Mimms honestly thinks it is going to be a miracle. But to give as much flexibility to the owners as possible is an incentive. And to not have them have to come in front of a committee or actually it sounds like it is going to be several committees no matter which way they go to get anything approved in this area. When one adds the city council to that it kind of just puts an exclamation mark on the whole thing. Mimms does like the form base. He thinks that maybe they are not going to want to hear this but maybe some kind of a modification of the form base that is at least within a certain stretch along Alpharetta Hwy. Maybe they could get a little more liberal if it is off of Alpharetta Hwy. But that is the main corridor. That's the character of the whole district. If they can't tone it down and enforce basically a very close to what they have, Mimms thinks it just ruins the whole thing. But he would personally be much more open to getting looser in areas that, is the AT&T building historical? No, get real.

Brad Townsend asked if the mini-storage across the street have any real significant value. Lonnie Mimms stated that there are a lot of industrial buildings within this district. There are a lot of automotive uses. He does not place the same kind of value on that historical as being on the main corridor. If he was

picking his battles he would say that Alpharetta Hwy. or SR 9 is the critical area for him. Brad Townsend agreed.

Richard Hallberg stated that he had one particular comment and he will send Townsend emails with a number of things. One of the things that he did notice in there that he thinks is totally in error is they were setting the eave height as the building height. One can build a roof that is another 30 feet high. Hallberg thinks building height should be building height. If it is a sloped roof it is the highest point on that roof. If it is a parapet, it is the parapet height. He thinks that is one particular item they need to...Alex Paulson stated that it makes it easy for the architect. Richard Hallberg stated that was on page 15. He thinks that is something that probably would work better all the way through the city of Roswell quite frankly. A building is as high as a building is high and no fading and shading.

Just a general statement Hallberg mentioned that he really likes the idea of the form based code. He like more usage, deciding what goes in there as opposed to the city of Roswell trying to decide what someone does that makes economic sense.

Alex Paulson asked Tony Landers if he would entertain the idea if the Commission sent their comments, after they have had a chance to digest this more to him or to whomever he thinks is appropriate so they can collect it together. Tony Landers stated that would be his suggestion in that regard. Before he says that he wants to ask a question. Is Brad Townsend anticipating something coming from this Commission that is directive or provides any kind of guidance or response collectively? Is he inviting individual comments from members of the Commission with regard to this form base code?

Brad Townsend stated that if the Commission as a collective body can make a recommendation, that would be fabulous. But he knows it has been a short time frame. They have not really digested most of this as to what they feel. So that is why he is giving the Commission the opportunity with his business card and his email address to at least provide him individual comments. If they feel collectively as a Commission that they want to provide some clear direction to the council, that would be fabulous. But that is not needed and required this evening.

Tony Landers stated that he was not sure. He thinks everyone would be comfortable giving Townsend their input. One question that he would have for the Commission is it is his understanding in reading sort of into what was said that's happening with mayor and city council. Form based code has some parameters and is grounded in some principles that have to do with form rather than use. If one tinkers with it too far into use, then his question would be, as Richard Hallberg just said, what is the point? What has he accomplished over what he currently has?

Brad Townsend stated that he appreciates Landers putting that on the record. That has been his comments for about eight months in dealing with this process.

Tony Landers stated that he would say to the Commission that would be of value. One could take a position just saying something generally that they support the idea of the form base code but it should be form base rather than use.

Brad Townsend stated that was correct. That could be in the form of a motion if the Commission wanted it.

Tony Landers stated that Lonnie Mimms has volunteered to take another crack at a motion.

Motion

Lonnie Mimms made a motion regarding the Grove Park Overlay District. It is a modified form based code as it was presented. The Historic Preservation Commission is in support of having more of a true form based code without regard to use. They are also very much in favor of maintaining the historic code in regard to at least the frontage on SR 9.

Tony Landers asked if there was any discussion.

Mike Walsh seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Brad Townsend thanked the Commission.

Tony Landers stated that there is a resolution that supports those tenants that Mimms outlined. He asked Brad Townsend if this was going to be valuable. Townsend stated it would be. Any type of feedback will be valuable to him. Landers stated that given Mimms' motion as read, will those who read it transcribed understand what they are trying to get at

Brad Townsend stated that if they do not, he will try to purvey the Commission's sentiment as clearly as he can in dealing with anyone who wants to hear him. What did HPC do when they did that? That is why Townsend came; he wanted to hear it for himself.

Unless there is anything else with this, Townsend stated that he will give the Commissioners his business card so anything afterward subsequent to this meeting he can include.

The city of Roswell is interviewing for Cherith Marshal's position. They hope to have it filled probably within the next two or three weeks. They have some very qualified people that know or have historic preservation master's in dealing with

that. They are looking for someone specifically to make sure that this area of the city is well looked to for and someone's eyes are always on it.

Townsend stated that he appreciates all the HPC does as a Commission and thanked them very much.

Tony Landers stated that the input that Townsend then gets from members of the Commission will be considered as just that. Individual input. Because as a consensus he thinks they have expressed their input as a body of the whole.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Tony Landers asked if there were any comments about the January 11, 2012 minutes of the Roswell Historic Preservation Commission.

Judy Meer stated that on page 15 under Further Business, that was when she stepped down to present Cherith with the award from the Roswell Historical Society. The wording here was "she has two little pieces of paper that aren't as fun." Meer does not think she said that. She thinks she said probably something about two pieces of business are fun or just for fun or something like that. But she does not think she said "aren't fun".

Tony Landers asked Judy Meer to make a suggestion as to how the minutes as transcribed read. Meer stated two additional pieces of business and just remove the "off the fun" part.

Richard Hallberg made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Lonnie Mimms seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

ADJOURN:

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Tony Landers, Chairman

CC: mayor and city council
community development
applicant's files