Historic District Regulatory Board
Minutes of September 21, 2023 Meeting – DRAFT VERSION
City of Lake Wales
201 W. Central Avenue, Lake Wales, FL 33853

A regular meeting of the Historic District Regulatory Board was held on September 21, 2023 at 5:15 PM in the City Commission Chambers at the Administration Building.

Chairman Brandon Alvarado called the meeting to order at 5:16 P.M.

Agenda Item 1. Roll Call
Members Present: Brandon Alvarado (Chairman), Tammy James, Tina Peak, and Scott Crews. Tiffany Davis was absent.

Staff Present: Brian Herrmann, Growth Management Director, Autumn Cochella, Deputy Growth Management Director, and Christina Adams, Assistant Planner & Recording Secretary

Agenda Item 2. Chair and Vice-Chair Nominations
Ms. James nominated Mr. Alvarado for the position of chair and she nominated Mr. Crews for the position of vice-chair. They both accepted the nominations and the positions were approved by a vocal vote from all Board members present.

Agenda Item 3. Approval of Minutes – April 20, 2023
Chairman Alvarado asked if there were any suggestions or edits that needed to be made to the minutes from last month's meeting.

Ms. James made a motion to approve and Ms. Peak seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by a vocal vote from all Board members present.

Agenda Item 4. 245 E. Park Ave. – Exterior Demolition

Subject: Approval of Non-Historic Façade Demolition

Presenter: Autumn Cochella

Ms. Cochella read the staff report that was prepared by Megan McLaughlin.

Erika Runkle, property owner, addressed the Board and stated that she was excited to be here and has been wanting to go through a façade restoration process for ten years and is thrilled the CRA has offered a façade grant to help reach that goal.

Mr. Alvarado opened the floor for the Public Hearing. With no movement, he closed the Public Hearing and asked the Board for a motion.

Mr. Crews made a motion to approve the application with conditions and Ms. James seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vocal vote from all members present.

Agenda Item 5. 244 E. Park Ave. – Exterior Restoration

Subject: Approval of Historic Façade Restoration

Presenter: Autumn Cochella

Ms. Cochella read the staff report that was prepared by Megan McLaughlin.

Mr. Crews recused himself from this item and Mr. Gibson presented a packet to the Board relating to historical downtown design guidelines and gave Ronni Wood with Lake Wales Maine Street the remaining packets.

Mr. Gibson addressed the Board and discussed the process of the interior renovations at the property so far and his plans for the future. Ms. Peak stated she wasn't aware the second floor would be residential units. Mr. Gibson stated it was originally planned to be open space and that has changed. Ms. James asked how the exits would be handled for the second-story and Mr. Gibson responded that the building did not have an interior stairway and they plan to do something similar to the Main Street office across the street with iron gate exterior stairways. He stated there used to be one on the right side of the building and one on the alley way and he plans to re-establish and keep both.

Mr. Alvarado stated the rendering showed an off-colored base and asked if that was the rendering or if it would actually be different and Mr. Gibson responded that it was just the rendering. Mr. Gibson stated that the State requires the saving of all original brick and matching to it when restoring or painting to match if unable to find the same brick.

With no more questions from the Board, Mr. Alvarado opened the floor for the Public Hearing. With no movement, he closed the Public Hearing and asked the Board for a motion.

Ms. James made a motion to approve the application with conditions and Ms. Peak seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vocal vote from all members present.

Agenda Item 6. <u>211, 213, & 215 E. Park Ave. – Exterior Restoration</u>

Subject: Approval of Historic Façade Restoration

Presenter: Autumn Cochella

Ms. Cochella read the staff report that was prepared by Megan McLaughlin.

Ms. Cochella stated that the applicant requested tinted windows which is against a condition of approval listed in the report.

Mr. Alvarado stated he had concerns that the third portion of this building façade, which has a different property owner, would be an issue if they were not on board with restoring their façade as well. Ms. Cochella stated that without the applicant present, we are not able to hear if they engaged with the neighboring property owner. She stated that she has heard that they have but were unsuccessful. Ms. Cochella stated that she has a concern that the Board approved the demolition request for their portion of the building knowing that they would be coming back for a step two approval request. She stated that the applicant is trying to meet the intent of the Code and set an example of doing the best within the property the own and staff would hate to discourage future applicants.

Ronni Wood, with Lake Wales Main Street, addressed the Board and stated she met with the applicant's representative Candace Holladay. She stated that her impression was that they would only be restoring the façade only on their portion according to historical photos. She stated that she believed the intent would be to restore similar to figure 2 of the staff report which caused confusion. She stated that she personally met with the owners of the third portion to discuss the façade grant and they were excited about the idea, but were not committed to applying. Ms. Wood stated she understands the Boards concerns.

Mr. Alvarado stated that he believes this item is not ready especially if there may be confusion with what they submitted and he would recommend a continuance. Ms. Wood stated that the contractors were eager to start which caused the submittal to be rushed. She stated that the applicant's sense of urgency was based on road closures in the downtown.

Mr. Alvarado stated that he wanted a look at the lasting impact of the façade and doesn't want the buildings to be mismatched. He stated that if he had to vote, then he would vote no. Ms. Cochella stated that it may be a good option to continue the item and give the applicant an opportunity to update and clarify their intent. Ms. Wood stated that she believes she can get the final third on board.

With no more questions or comments from the Board, Mr. Alvarado opened the floor for the Public Hearing.

Robin Gibson, who lives inside of City limits, stated that he agrees with the Chair. He stated the only thing to do is to preserve the opportunity to get this façade eventually restored. He stated they would not be able to apply for any tax credits or state incentives. Mr. Gibson stated that the only option is to complete the restoration even if it's only two-thirds.

Mr. Alvarado stated that he would entertain a motion to continue. Mr. Crews made a motion to continue this item and Ms. James seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vocal vote from all members present.

Agenda Item 7. <u>Other Business</u>
The Downtown survey was completed but is still in draft form and was given to each Board member. Ms. Wood stated that they surveyed over 100 buildings and that the next step is the nomination process for expansion of our Historical District. Mr. Alvarado asked if that would change the Board's jurisdiction area and Ms. Wood stated it may. Ms. Cochella stated that it should expand the area the Board has jurisdiction over.

Brian Herrmann, Growth Management Director, introduced himself to the Board and stated that he was happy to be in Lake Wales.

Agenda Item 8. <u>Communications and Petitions</u>
None.

Agenda Item 9. <u>Adjournment</u>

The meeting was adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

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Brandon Alvarado, Chairman

Attest: Recording Secretary