

Historic District Regulatory Board
Minutes of April 20, 2023 Meeting
City of Lake Wales
201 W. Central Avenue, Lake Wales, FL 33853

A regular meeting of the Historic District Regulatory Board was held on April 20, 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 Tiffany Davis. Scott Crews' absence was excused. Ms. Peak departed at 5:33 P.M., prior to meeting adjournment.

Staff Present: Jasmine Khammany, Senior Planner and Christina Adams, Assistant Planner & Recording Secretary

Agenda Item 2. Approval of Minutes

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.

Agenda Item 3. 211, 213, & 215 E. Park Ave. – Exterior Demolition

Subject: Approval of Non-Historic Façade Demolition

Presenter: Megan McLaughlin

Ms. Khammany explained this project would be similar to the Robin Gibson project on Park Avenue in the sense that it would be a two-step process requiring two Certificate of Appropriateness applications. Ms. McLaughlin presented the staff report to the Board and clarified that if the item was approved today, the approval would not include the phase two renovation or approval of a historical tax credit.

Mr. Alvarado asked the Board if they had any questions prior to opening the Public Hearing. He asked how they intended to restore the façade if a portion of a unit was being utilized by another business. Candace Holladay, agent, stated the proposed design is what the architect imagines would fit, but they won't truly know what they will be able to do until the existing façade is removed. Scott Taylor, contractor, stated he went into the ceiling and was able to see the original windows still.

Ms. Holladay stated she has known the Story family for a long time and she has worked on historic projects all over the state. Mr. Taylor stated that he has been a contractor for over 30 years and historic facades are his wheelhouse and with each project you never fully know what you're working with or able to do until you uncover what was added.

Ms. Holladay stated that the business next door appears to have encroached into the building and their architect suspects it was close to 11 feet but it is not known if a true encroachment exists.

Ms. Davis asked if this would become a domino effect to make things easier or other property owners on Park Avenue. Mr. Alvarado stated he understands that the Story family owns only part of this property façade, if there is a true encroachment, and asked what the possibility would be for staff or the Story family to reach out and see if they would be willing to explore as well. He also asked if that would affect their eligibility for a tax credit in the future and Ms. Holladay stated she has met with the representatives from the state and they gave guidance of the process and what would be needed. Mr. Taylor stated that the neighboring owner is a contractor and may be interested in exploring and restoring but only if he would be able to do the work himself. Mr. Alvarado asked if it would be possible for staff or Main Street to reach out to him and Ms. McLaughlin stated he spoke with staff a few months back and was open to the idea of a façade update but has not reached out since.

Ms. James asked how this affects the CRA façade grants and Ms. Khammany stated that grant is still being worked on and would get an update from CRA staff.

Ms. Holladay asked the Board how they felt about the restoration and Ms. James stated that they supported it and the investment would reap greater rewards in the long run. Ms. Davis stated that the downtown currently looks dead and this restoration would help liven things up. Mr. Alvarado stated this property is in the row of worst offenders for unoriginal facades and he is inclined to support this step.

Ms. James stated that Robin Gibson, who is doing a similar project, has been having issues finding specific bricks that match the original historic façade on his building and Mr. Taylor stated that is a major fear.

Mr. Alvarado asked if the item is approved today, what would be the timeline to doing the exploration and asked if the Park Ave street renovation affects anything. Mr. Taylor stated that he would wait for the Story family to give him authority to apply for the demolition permit and the City has a turnaround time of around four weeks and once issued he would be ready to start work. He stated they would build a tunnel under scaffolding for the salon next door and the salon owner has already agreed. Ms. Davis asked how long construction would take and Mr. Scott stated it would depend on what they find during phase one. He stated the first step is to demolish as needed and clean up and let the architect design based on what is found.

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. Davis made a motion to approve the application with all staff recommendations and conditions. Ms. James seconded the motion.

Agenda Item 4. Other Business

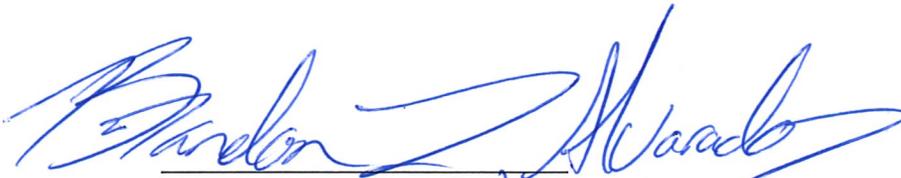
None.

Agenda Item 5. Communications and Petitions

None.

Agenda Item 6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.



Brandon Alvarado, Chairman



Attest: Recording Secretary

