



Cornelia Historic Preservation Commission

Thursday, August 26, 2021 1:00 p.m.
Downstairs Administrative Conference Room

1. Meeting called to order:
 - a. Emily Herrin began the meeting at 12:58 p.m.
2. Approval of agenda
 - a. Motion was made by Shawn Knight to approve, seconded by Perry Rettig, all in favor
3. New Business
 - a. Bylaws and Rules, Ordinance review
 - i. Everyone had a chance to look over the Historic Preservation Ordinance and the rules and protocols. Nobody had any questions or recommended changes.
 - ii. A motion was made to approve and adopt the bylaws by Perry Rettig, seconded by Shawn Knight, all were in favor
 - b. Design Guidelines
 - i. Feedback from homework- review guidelines and recommend changes
 1. Everyone had a chance to look over some of the sample guidelines. Perry mentioned that he liked the ones that show a lot of pictures as examples. Everyone agreed.
 - ii. Joe Rothwell, GMRC, to help with creating guidelines
1. Joe gave a wealth of general information about Historic Preservation Commissions and said that the Historic Design Guidelines from Toccoa are the most recent, the most visual, and the most comparable to Cornelia. Toccoa also has a Do/Don't table in their guidelines, which this board very much appreciated and would like to include in this commission's guidelines. Cornelia can tentatively adopt Toccoa's guidelines and adopt a local boundary to match the SHPO boundary that was provided to the city. A local district boundary can be larger than the National Register. This is the case for Toccoa and Gainesville. Hartwell has a number of NR districts and individual sites and one local district. So, the size and number can vary according to priorities for each city. The NR boundary will always be smaller due to an attempt at capturing and protecting an area with the highest level of integrity.
 1. Joe also provided information about how the process for a historic commission works. The question was posed, "What if they don't do what we say?" Joe said that we would get Code Enforcement involved to help. Additionally, there is an appeals process that the applicant can go through if their application is denied.
 2. As seen in Toccoa's GL's, you'll see the avenue an applicant can take if they wish to appeal and the time frame for such in the flowchart the applicant has for transparency and if a COA is denied they are notified of their rights and how to appeal.
 3. Other notes of information that Joe touched on for the Commission's general information included:

- a. Photo Documentation- always have that. Take as many photos as possible. It's also always good if there are historic photos of the buildings to compare applications with. Lavonia just put out a call for historic photos. They're always a great help in other grant or NR applications.
- b. At some point, the Historic Preservation Commission will need to propose to the City Commissioners that a survey of every building be done by a historic preservation researcher, so that the city has the most information possible to make an informed decision. It also helps when applying to be a Certified Local Government. a windshield survey (conducted by car generally) is pretty quick capturing information on date built, style, architect through research later, etc. The Historic Resources Survey (HRS) (final report shared through Dropbox for Toccoa Phase II) Generally funded from the Historic Preservation Fund grant from HPD for CLG's and is more expensive and time consuming. Some consultants are charging up to \$40-\$50 per building/roughly per hour due to the time, data entry, photography, research, GIS work for the GNAHRGIS database, etc. for completing the four page, 20 plus question form and work that goes into putting together the document. So a windshield survey could be accomplished with students from GSU, UGA, SCAD, etc. while the HRS is more in the realm of a consultant although the Find It program from UGA does some HRS's for unincorporated areas. They did a survey for White County in 2015 that was helpful as the county worked on evaluating if they should form an HPC, have guidelines, establish overlay districts, or just be an advisement body to a lesser degree every few years to the Planning Commission.

https://ced.uga.edu/psso/findit/images/reports/SlickSheets_White%20Final.pdf

<https://www.snca.org/snc/museums/WhiteCountyHistoricResources2015.pdf>

- c. If there is going to be any infill development in the historic district or any new construction, it must LOOK historic and must match the buildings that surround it. Infill should be treated similar to what happens if a building is demolished. The size, scale, mass, design, material are just as important for the district as a whole.
- d. Each building needs to adhere to era in which it was built. For example, if the building was built in the 1950s, the façade must mirror that era. If the building was built in the 70s, the façade must mirror that era. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Restoration, Rehab, etc. in Toccoa's guidelines underscore a lot of the principles of what should be done.

- e. GICH- These are incentives for residential units inside the Historic District. GICH, just as Plan First, Rural Zone, Main Street, DDA, etc. are all programs that complement each other.
- f. When demolishing a historic building, the property owner must salvage as much material as they possibly can. Ex. Doors, windows, historic bricks, fireplaces, doorknobs, sinks, etc. At a minimum if the structure is safe to enter and safety forms are signed releasing anyone from liability, then there's no reason a lot of a historic building couldn't be salvaged.
- g. There is a Historic Preservation Tax Credit that the property owner is eligible for the total project cost. There is a state tax credit and a federal tax credit. Then, the property owner may apply for an individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Additionally, the property owner gets a tax freeze for 7.5 years. NR listed or eligible to receive tax credits. There's a form that the applicant fills out prior to determine eligibility. Doing work beforehand or changing the project scope and using different materials can jeopardize and applicant getting the credit in the end when the project is concluded and requesting approval from HPD.

State: <https://www.dca.ga.gov/georgia-historic-preservation-division/tax-incentives-grants/state-tax-incentives>

Federal: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>

- h. There is a grant that the State Historic Preservation Office gives annually of \$100,000. Certified Local Governments can apply for a portion of this grant at a 60/40 match to be used to repair historic buildings, or even restore murals. \$100,000 is a ballpark figure. This year 9 CLG's will receive \$109,000. There's about 100 CLG's.
- i. It should be in the city's five-year plan to become a Certified Local Government and have the surveys of the buildings done. Joe said that the consultant we hired to help create the district is a good consultant to also do the surveys. I just put out an RFP for a similar Historic Resources Survey for Hartwell (300 estimated historic properties) who received \$7,200 for the HPF grant (\$12,000 total including city match). There were about two dozen firms from HPD's consultant list that we're soliciting bids from to do this, so it will be interesting to see how many respond during the thirty day window to receive bids. Hartwell will review bids and select a consultant at their October HPC meeting.
- j. Jessie said that she doesn't think anyone will read a document of guidelines that is over 100 pages. She asked if there is some way we can condense the guidelines to a table, brochure, tri-

fold, etc. to help clarify without the applicant having to read the entire document. Joe said that can be done. In addition to the trifold, for the other HPC's we've assisted, we've always tried to underscore the fact that an applicant for a COA may only need to rely on a chapter or two but not the entire document, nor having to print out the entire set of guidelines.

- k. Realtors need to know that the city now has a Historic Preservation Commission and needs to know that there are specific guidelines the potential buyer will need to follow for design. Realtors need/should understand and communicate a building a client is interested in is in a district, may have guidelines, may require further review prior to work being undertaken, and that overall this is a means to protect and enhance the value of these historic properties and not an effort to undermine or undervalue it/or a potential owner's property rights.
- l. Joe said that the building department will need to work closely with the Historic Preservation Commission to make sure that no permits are issued in the Historic District without the approval or knowledge of the HPC. Jessie said she will schedule a meeting between the City Clerk, Building Inspector, Fire Marshal, and herself to explain the new process. If you can ever attend Hartwell's HPC who have been operating as an HPC and CLG for more than thirty years then I recommend it. It's the second Tuesday of the month at 4 at City Hall in the council chambers currently. Code Enforcement and DDA often attend a majority of the time and the applicant understands that once a COA is approved, the permits department will have their application ready for work to begin the day after. So everyone is working together on the same page and on average they have 3-5 COA's per month related to signage, renovation, etc. The September meeting on the 14th will begin at 3, due to a demolition request received at August's HPC meeting. The city doesn't currently have design guidelines adopted yet, so Jessie asked what do we do about property owners doing work to their buildings until the guidelines are adopted? Joe recommended placing a moratorium on any exterior work until the guidelines are adopted. The guidelines must go before the City Commission, be posted for thirty days for public comment, and can then be adopted. Emily Herrin made the motion to create a moratorium until the guidelines are adopted, seconded by Perry Rettig, all approved. Jessie will get the moratorium proposal on the City Commission's agenda for September.
- m. The Toccoa HPC meets September 2, and Jessie suggested that the HPC attend their meeting. She has corresponded with Toccoa who has shared their agenda and documents with this

commission for review before the meeting. Generally the guidelines are stock language other than the history of the city, photos, and an evaluation if some of the guidelines won't be applicable from city to city. So omitting any reference to Toccoa and using these as a baseline for the next 1-2 years could be one way to go while new guidelines are developed according to what works for Cornelia.

4. Next Regular Board Meeting: **Thursday, September 16** at the Downstairs Administrative Conference Room at 1:00 p.m.
5. Adjourn- Motion was made by Emily Herrin, seconded by Perry Rettig, all approved at 2:27 p.m.

Present: Emily Herrin, Shawn Knight, Jessie Owensby, Perry Rettig, Joe Rothwell

Absent: N/A