

## **Dahlonega Historic Preservation Commission**

Draft Minutes of October 16, 2015  
Called Meeting September 28, 2015

Members present: Lucy Rogers, Chris Worick, BeBe Blount, Larry Mannis, Rich Green, Paul Bennett and Mary Owens. Members absent: none. Staff present: Chris Head, City Manager Bill Schmid and City Attorney Doug Parks.

Chairman Rogers called the meeting to order at 6 pm and noted a quorum present. She announced that due to the anticipated number of attendees the meeting will be relocated to Park & Rec and called for a motion for temporary recess. Motion to have a temporary recess to relocate was made by Larry Mannis and seconded by Bebe Blount. The motion was approved by all.

At Park & Rec a motion to reconvene the meeting was made by Chris Worick and seconded by Larry Mannis. The motion was approved by all and the meeting reconvened at 6:08 pm.

Chairman Rogers noted the next item is the swearing in of new member Mary Owens. Chris Head administered the oath.

Chairman Rogers announced the application for review is for property located at 40 East Main Street and asked if any Commissioner has a conflict with the Applicant. Hearing none she turned the meeting over to Doug Parks for public comment.

Doug Parks announced the beginning of the public hearing portion, with a twenty minute block for the applicant's portion of the hearing.

Jack Bailey, Architect for the applicant, opened by saying they are requesting for the decision to be tabled until the next meeting to allow ample time for consideration of what is said in the meeting. He gave information on his qualifications and noted he has worked on numerous historic properties including several in Dahlonega. He stated he also serves on the Gainesville Historic Preservation Commission. Mrs. Garrett's application is for approval to remove the building at 40 East Main Street and to replace with new building as shown in the drawings. Also shown in the drawing, but not part of the request, is a new infill building and renovation to a structure located at 24 East Main Street. Plans for this area will be submitted later. If the demolition COA is approved the applicant agrees no demolition work would occur until after submission, review and approval of a separate COA for the new structure.

Jack Bailey stated before they can proceed with developing a complete set of plans there has to be a determination on whether the Parks building can be removed. He stated the applicant contacted him to review the structure. He noted he had inspected the building on his own and again with City Officials and Lord Aeck Sargent architect and after these inspections his recommendation again to Mrs. Garret was to remove the structure because of its extremely bad condition. He stated there are problems with foundation, framing, and insect infestation and rot, portions of the building are unsafe to walk on. He stated there has been a thorough investigation and excellent record documenting the deterioration of the structure from reports and photos made

by the City and by the City's consultant. He noted he is in agreement with the Consultant's report determining the physical condition of the building. He takes exception with their conclusion and comment that reasonable measures can be taken to save this structure but then state that the cost of these measures is not known at this time. The cost is part of whether it is reasonable or not. He noted the structure is not a significant example of architecture nor does it not have any outstanding features or details. He stated the building needs to be removed.

Gary Osley stated he is one of the developers of Achasta and has lived in Dahlonega for 12 years and the reason he is here is because Roberta ask him to look at the building and offer suggestions.

He noted there is nothing in the history of the structure that would draw tourists and no outstanding features of the structure. He stated due to the damage and deterioration of the floor system, the siding, foundation and walls his recommendation would be to rebuild and that is what he reported to Roberta.

Doug asked if anyone else was present to speak in favor of the application. No one else rose to speak in favor. Doug described an intent to balance the time as much as possible and suggested thirty minutes for comment by those in opposition. He asked for those wishing to speak to raise their hands and counted seven who desired to speak and asked them to try keep their comments to approximately five minutes apiece. Ten arose to speak as follows:

Johnny Ariemma, Dahlonega resident and business owner spoke in opposition of the request. He stated he has renovated old buildings and felt the building can be saved. He stated this building can be used as a pass through to a new structure.

Carolyn Worheiser, residence unidentified, stated Mrs. Garret has the means to renovate and should have known about the problems before she purchased.

Penny Sharp, a local business owner, noted she uses the building as the first stop in her local ghost tour. During her comments a 12-page handout with cover was presented to HPC members to be added to the record. She stated she started Preserve Historic Dahlonega to help save the building. She stated when it's gone it's gone. She noted that she has spoken to three people, potential buyers who would save the building, but did not name them. She stated if the building is allowed to be removed, the new design should comply with the Historic Guidelines.

Lamar Bates, Lumpkin County resident stated according to the Chamber of Commerce approximately 250,000 people visit Dahlonega. He noted this is one of the oldest buildings and does have history and this should be reason to deny.

Catherine Ariemma, Dahlonega resident, business owner and former history teacher spoke. She stated she has lived all over the world; and people keep their historic buildings. She stated this structure does not have to be demolished. We need to preserve our buildings. She stated she objects to the rebuild design presented is what might be, not what will be.

Carey Carson, Dahlonega resident stated she has Bachelor's degree in Historic Preservation from Savannah College of Art and has lived in Dahlonega for 10 years. She stated she is opposed to the removal of historic properties. Structures should not be removed and replaced with faux façade. In this situation the report from LAS states the property can be saved. She noted the property owner was aware of the location and condition prior to purchase. She said that current property owners should be made to follow the laws regarding maintenance and upkeep of buildings.

Katie Sessions, Dahlonega resident, lives on the square has questions about what will happen to the rear of the property, porches, chimney, greenspace, etc...

Diane Bates, residence unidentified, stated she read the following on the City's website: "The historical, cultural, and aesthetic heritage of the City of Dahlonega is among its most valued and important assets and the preservation of this heritage is essential to the promotion of the health, prosperity and general welfare of the people." She asked the HPC members to please remember this in the decision and say yes to preservation.

Judy Broad, residence unidentified, asked where are the parking spaces for the cars going to be. She stated the guests will be using the downtown parking spaces.

Miss Leeds, residence unidentified, stated she grew up in Dahlonega and also went to School of Environmental Design at UGA. She stated we have a beautiful downtown and need to keep it.

A presentation projector brought by speakers in opposition was not used.

Doug asked if there was anyone else wishing to speak in opposition. Seeing none he said there is approximately 13 minutes remaining for the applicant.

Jack Bailey clarified the owner understands that any rebuild has to be approved by the City and plans will meet City requirements. He stated there is precedence in many places for approval to remove structures in historic districts and gave examples He stated it is understood that if removal is approved, a complete set of plans would be submitted and approved by the Commission prior to actual removal of the structure.

At this time an overview presentation including the Lord Aeck Sargent Report, Fire Department Letter and City's Condition Assessment was projected on the wall and presented by Chris Head. She noted the property is not in the Downtown National Register District and not a listed National Register property; however, it is in the local historic district, which makes it subject to review by the Historic Preservation Commission. Her review of the reports noted similar physical condition assessments, particularly with regard to the poor condition of the foundation. At this time Doug Parks noted the floor is open for questions from the Commission.

Chris Worick asked if Mr. Osley had prepared a cost estimate for renovation. Mr. Osley stated he only looked at the foundation and exterior. He noted various types of wood are not readily available, would have to be specifically milled to match historic dimensions, the building leveled

up, all interior walls, floors, systems, etc. would have to be replaced. He stated he did not prepare an estimate.

Mr. Parks asked Ms Rogers if she would entertain one or two questions from the audience. She agreed to two additional questions. Three or four spoke.

Someone in the audience asked Mr. Osley if he performed his assessment before Mrs. Garrett purchased and he replied no he did not.

Previous speaker Ms Worheiser asked Mr. Bailey to clarify statements she viewed as conflicting regarding plans for whether the replacement building would or would not be done prior to approval of destruction of the building. Mr. Bailey responded that plans for replacement would be cost prohibitive if they did not know if they would be able to remove the building and that he is sure if the removal were approved there would be more opportunity for public comment of the new plans prior to its actual removal.

Someone else in the audience asked if the current owner bought the building with the intent to tear it down. Mr. Bailey replied that he was asked by the current owner to evaluate the building to see if it could be restored and his opinion is that it cannot.

Bebe Blount asked the age of the structure as Penny Sharp noted in her comments it was 1855. Mr. Schmid clarified the Architect and Building inspector find the building was built at various times in multiple stages.

There being no further comments Doug Parks closed the public hearing and turned the meeting over to Chairman Rogers. Chairman Rogers stated the applicant has requested for the item to be tabled and will entertain a motion. A motion to table was made by Rich Green and seconded by Larry Mannis. The motion was approved by all.

Chairman Rogers announced this item has been tabled and will be heard on Wednesday October 21, 2015 at 6 pm.

There being no further business to conduct a motion to adjourn was made by Bebe Blount and seconded by Chris Worick. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

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Patricia L. Head, Secretary