

HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
December 4, 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT: Thom Hamilton
Mary Keele
Paul Smith
Kathy Ray
Patsy Edmondson

OTHERS PRESENT: Bruce Fleming, Planning & Zoning Director
Brenda Fletcher, Zoning Assistant
Jackie Guillot

The Monday, December 4, 2017, Heritage Preservation Commission meeting was called to order by Thom Hamilton. The minutes of the November 6, 2017, meeting were reviewed and were approved as printed.

APPLICATION NO: COA-17-7000011
APPLICANT: Vanguard Realty
LOCATION: 218 Trenton St.
REQUEST: Requesting Certificate of Appropriateness for signage on building in the Cottonport Historic District.

Thom Hamilton started the meeting as no one had made it to speak for Vanguard Realty. Mary Keele told the Commission that we had done some research and no previous signs had come before the Commission for Certificate of Appropriateness for a sign as far back as the year 2000. Thom Hamilton told the Commission that the previous business, Something Special, at 218 Trenton St. had signage that was not as big and that the Vanguard Realty has a frame underneath that is smaller. Jackie Guillot arrived at the meeting and told the Commission that her sign guy measured the sign that was there, and it is the exact size as the previous "Something Special" sign. It was pointed out that the sign may have been there before the Heritage Preservation Commission was established. Vanguard Realty had not applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the signage prior to erecting it. Jackie Guillot wanted to know who should have let her know what she could or could not do. Thom Hamilton told Jackie Guillot that the building owner should have told her about the rules of the Heritage Preservation Commission. When applying for a Certificate of Occupancy, she was given procedural information that a Certificate of Appropriateness was required for all exterior changes. Jackie Guillot wanted to know what the size of the sign and the rules were. Thom Hamilton told the Commission that the sign would have to go with period of the building. Mary Keele told the Commission that the Design Guidelines that the City of West Monroe prepared in 2011 explain the requirements. Mary Keele began telling the Commission that signage should be placed in locations historically used for signage and should not obscure transoms, columns, cornices, decorative elements, or architectural features. Kathy Ray asked the Commission if the problem was that it was not in the frame? Thom Hamilton told the Commission that the sign was too large. Jackie Guillot asked what the Commission wanted her to do? Thom Hamilton told Jackie Guillot to put the sign in the frame size that is already up on the outside wall. Kathy Ray wanted to know if Jackie Guillot could cut the sign down without having to pay to get another sign made. Thom Hamilton told Jackie Guillot that the sign was too wide. Thom Hamilton told Jackie Guillot that there is a space above the door and the windows. Paul Smith asked about the color. Jackie Guillot said the sign is the color of her logo and she feels that the Commission is singling her out. Paul Smith told Jackie Guillot that the Commission is trying to work with her. Jackie Guillot told the Commission that she had already heard that the Commission is upset because they a real estate company office located in the downtown Historic District. They discussed another business in the Historic District. Thom Hamilton agreed that the use a realtor's office is a low-attractor use. Patsy Edmondson asked Mary Keele if the colors were historically approved. Mary Keele told the Commission that the Zoning Department has some color charts (or they can be obtained from Sherwin Williams Paint Store). Jackie Guillot told the Commission that she has people come and take pictures there and it's the prettiest building on Trenton Street. The current unapproved sign obscures part of the building. The sign must be reduced to fit into the frame on the building. Jackie Guillot wanted to know if she could keep the colors. Thom Hamilton told the Commission that he thought the colors were appropriate. Kathy Ray asked what they could do to keep this from happening again, because the tenants are not applying for a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior changes including signage. Thom Hamilton told the Commission that anytime a Certificate of Occupancy Application is given for a property in the Historic District, the applicant should be given a copy of the B-4 (Downtown Development District) Zoning Requirements. Thom Hamilton told the Commission that some of the buildings downtown may have been grandfathered in as far as signs and colors. Thom Hamilton asked the Commission if what he described to Jackie Guillot for the sign would be okay. Kathy Ray made the motion to **APPROVE** the Certificate of Appropriateness requiring the removal of the current sign and replacement with a smaller sign in like colors that fits into the existing frame. Mary Keele seconded. All in favor, the Certificate of Appropriateness is granted. Jackie Guillot wanted to know if she needed to come back again to be approved. Thom Hamilton told Jackie Guillot that he would give her his email address, so he could approve the sign. Jackie Guillot asked Thom Hamilton if he was the owner of the Hamilton House at 318 Trenton Street. She asked if the Hamilton House had retail sales. The Hamilton House is a Bed and Breakfast Inn. Jackie

Guillot stated that use is not a high-level pedestrian attractor use. Thom Hamilton stated that the Inn brings a lot of people and events to the area. Jackie Guillot was very upset. Thom Hamilton told Jackie Guillot that he didn't want her leaving with bad thoughts of the Commission. In the downtown district they are trying to produce economic stability where people will be attracted to come. If every building was an office then there would be no retail, so that is why we do not allow it. They can be on the second floor or the back of the building if it's 50% of the building that's retail. Thom Hamilton told Jackie Guillot that issuance of her Certificate of Occupancy was an oversight and that the ordinance should have been provided to her by Tommy Block, her landlord.

Bruce Fleming told the Commission that the Zoning Department had sent letters to all property owners in the downtown Historic District, providing a copy of the ordinance regarding low level pedestrian attractors (50% of the bottom floor had to be retail) and highlighted it. Bruce Fleming asked that if you look at low traffic attractors most of them are not allowed, so why have it in the ordinance. If you want it to be only retail, then make retail the only approved use. It was his understanding that these low-level attractors could bring diversity to bring people downtown that don't customarily come down there and to make them aware of the shopping opportunities. Thom Hamilton pointed out at least fifty percent of the gross ground-level floor space shall be devoted exclusively to higher level pedestrian attractors. Bruce Fleming told the Commission that a bank, catering shop, and office would not be allowed. Mr. Fleming also stated that he has had several people that want to make a building only residential; however, that's not allowed. Thom Hamilton explained that a fully residential building would not be allowed, but the upstairs and back half could be residential, but the street frontage must be fifty percent retail. Bruce Fleming told the Commission that applicants will be denied if they do not meet the requirements. Bruce Fleming asked the Commission what if someone came in and wanted to open one of these low-level attractors and they say we can meet that 50% retail on the first floor, do you feel you should review it like say a floor plan to show the 50% retail. Thom Hamilton felt that it wasn't the Heritage Preservation Commission's duty but if the Mayor appointed them to do so they would. Bruce Fleming told the Commission that from this point on, anyone that applies for a Certificate of Occupancy that is considered a low-level attractor by the ordinance, will be required to submit a floor plan to the Zoning Office showing the percentage of retail.

As there was no further business to be discussed, the meeting was adjourned.