

A joint workshop with the City Commission and Planning & Zoning Board and a special meeting of the City Commission of the City of Apalachicola was held on Monday, March 16, 2009 at 6:00 PM in the Apalachicola Community Center, #1 Bay Avenue, Apalachicola, Florida.

Present: Mayor Van Johnson, Commissioner Frank Cook, Commissioner Val Webb, City Administrator Betty Webb, City Clerk Lee Mathes, Grants Manager Cindi Giametta, Building Official Gene Osburn, City Attorney Pat Floyd

Planning & Zoning Board : Curt Blair, David Walker, Leon Bloodworth, Sally Williamson, Tom Daly, Mark Browne

Visitors: Beverly Hewitt, Joe Taylor, George Coon, Karla Ambos, Dieter Ambos, Geoffrey Hewell, Nadine Kahn, Catherine Green

Joint workshop opened by Mayor Johnson followed by prayer and pledge.

JOINT WORKSHOP WITH PLANNING & ZONING BOARD

Leon Bloodworth, Planning & Zoning Board Chairman, presented proposal to have Mark Tarmey, an architect from Tallahassee which specializes in historic preservation, to become a consultant to the Planning & Zoning Board. Mr. Tarmey would review permits issued in the Historic District only and building permit applicant would pay Mr. Tarmey's fee. Mr. Tarmey would review application and then make recommendations to Planning & Zoning Board. The architectural review would be part of the building permit process.

Mayor Johnson questioned how the Planning & Zoning Board arrived at the proposed fees for Mr. Tarmey's services.

Mr. Bloodworth stated the Planning & Zoning Board stated these fees are in line with what other cities are charging. Mr. Bloodworth stated this would be no cost to the City. The applicant would be paying the architect directly.

Mayor Johnson asked if the City should bid this out.

Attorney Floyd stated the City should bid this service out since the City will be directing this person to do business with the City.

Tom Daly stated this person will just make recommendations to the Planning & Zoning Board. Planning & Zoning will still make the final decision.

Mr. Bloodworth stated he does not have a problem putting it out to bid, but the City needs to be sure to get someone who has strong historic preservation background knowledge.

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Geoffrey Hewell stated he feels this is a great idea.

Beverly Hewitt stated the applicant would be paying for architectural fees twice.

Mark Browne stated that not all architects are familiar with the historic nature of Apalachicola.

Curt Blair stated he has some concerns regarding the cost of this service.

Commissioner Cook stated one thing an architect would give the City is the ability to perceive what a building is going to look like before it is built. The City needs someone with the knowledge to explain what the project is going to look like when it is completed.

David Walker stated he agrees that sometimes people build structures differently than what was permitted or approved, but he doesn't want citizens to have to pay a \$100 architectural fee just to change out a door.

Commissioner Cook stated the proposed fee schedule is just a guideline.

Joe Taylor stated he knows of cities that have a volunteer architecture review committee that look at historic compatibility.

Mr. Daly stated the architectural review is just a policing mechanism for the building permit process.
Mr. Daly stated the fees are not excessive.

Commissioner Cook stated if you keep forming committees, you exhaust the number of people willing to volunteer. An outside architect that is not performing any work in town would be completely impartial.

Mayor Johnson stated he does not have a problem with this if it can be achieved through the bidding process.

Mr. Bloodworth stated the historic district needs to be protected and the whole building permit application process needs to be improved. This will not cost the City anything, but will cost the applicant more for the permitting process.

Ms. Webb asked how this process would work.

Mr. Bloodworth stated when someone comes in for a permit within the historic district, the applicant will be informed that the architect will review the plans prior to Planning & Zoning review. The applicant will also be informed of the architectural review fees, and all fees must be paid in full before the applicant picks up the completed permit.

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Ms. Webb stated that sometimes people come in without plans. Would these people have to use this architect?

Mr. Daly stated you can't make people use this architect, but you can suggest they use this architect.

Dieter Ambos stated if a person is building a new structure, then he agrees with the architectural review fee, but if a person is just repairing an existing structure, then there is no need for an architectural review.

Mr. Bloodworth stated with the exception of the \$100 basic fee, everything else would require plans. Mr. Bloodworth stated all the Planning & Zoning Board is trying to do is protect the integrity of the historic district.

Mayor Johnson asked if there were architects in town that were knowledgeable in historic preservation.

Attorney Floyd explained that the person would have to be working on behalf of the City. If the Commission and Planning & Zoning feel that permits need to be reviewed by an architect prior to approval, then the architect will work for the City. The City could have several architects on board like we have several engineering firms on board. An architect could be chosen based on who has the most expertise for that particular permit. The City could send the plans to the best architect for the project, and the individual would know of the costs upfront. All the fees would have to be paid before the individual is handed the permit.

Beverly Hewitt asked why the City can't hire an architect, and the applicant pay the City. The architectural fee would just be incorporated into the permit fee.

Ms. Webb asked if the City should advertise to have an architect on board.

Mayor Johnson stated we should do it just like the engineers.

Ms. Webb stated the City could have several architects on board for expertise.

Attorney Floyd stated the architect would be a continuing service.

Commissioner Cook stated the architect would be reviewing the work of the architect that drew up the plans. The advantage of two people reviewing something is good.

Attorney Floyd stated that Planning & Zoning can either accept or reject the architect's recommendations.

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Commissioner Cook stated that Planning & Zoning is still responsible for the decisions. The City needs an architect reviews that are impartial.

Curt Blair stated having an architect review the permits would increase the permitting standards, but the permits will costs more and it will take longer to process the permit.

Mayor Johnson stated he wants to raise the permitting standards also, but does not want to put an undue burden on the citizens.

Discussion held.

Attorney Floyd stated that even though an architect review the permits, Planning & Zoning Board still has the final say, and they are still the decision makers.

Leon Bloodworth stated the Planning & Zoning Board is trying to bring a level of expertise to the board so that better decisions can be made.

Mark Browne that the Planning & Zoning board wants to make sure everything is historically correct.

Sally Williamson stated that when someone makes an application in the historic district, they should be given a copy of the historic guidelines.

Joe Taylor stated in most cities, the City gives you rules not guidelines.

Discussion held concerning proposed fees.

Leon Bloodworth suggests that if the City wants an architect to review historic permits, then let Planning & Zoning be the selection committee. The fees could be advertised, and the architect would just a consultant to the Planning & Zoning Board. If the City is looking for an architect to have on board, then we will go a different route.

Mayor Johnson stated the City needs to go through the RFQ process.

Leon Bloodworth stated he and Ms. Webb will work out details and have recommendation at next City Commission meeting.

Workshop closed and special meeting opened.

SPECIAL MEETING

HIRING OF LIBRARIAN

Motion to hire Catherine Green to fill librarian position made by Commissioner Webb, second by Commissioner Cook.

Motion carried 3 to 0.

Voting Aye: Webb, Cook, Mayor Johnson

Voting Nay: None

Ms. Webb stated that Carrie Kienzle is the certified librarian and Ms. Green would be working under her supervision.

HIRING OF CLASS B WASTEWATER OPERATOR

Motion to hire Mark McQuaig to fill the Class B Wastewater Operator position made by Commissioner Cook, second by Commissioner Webb.

Motion carried 3 to 0.

Voting Aye: Cook, Webb, Mayor Johnson

Voting Nay: None

VETERAN'S/RIVERFRONT PARK DISCUSSION

Cindi Giametta that the FRDAP deadline is April 30th and she needs direction on whether the City is going to dedicate the park to the veterans or seafood workers.

Mayor Johnson stated the park was supposed to be a waterfront park honoring the seafood workers.

Commissioner Webb stated the City already has a very nice park dedicated to the veterans, and we don't need two parks of similar nature.

Commissioner Cook asked what the new name would be if not Veteran's Park.

Ms. Giametta stated the original application was Apalachicola Riverfront Park.

Mayor Johnson stated the park needs to be dedicated to the seafood industry, but is not totally sold on the River Way South idea.

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Ms. Webb stated she has received a letter from the Howell family, and the family does not want the park named after Bobby Howell.

Commissioner Cook stated a procedure needs to be put in place for naming parks and streets.

Ms. Giametta stated the City has several FCT properties that also need to be names.

Commissioner Cook recommends to give Planning & Zoning the project of coming up with a system to name public places.

Mayor Johnson stated he agrees that a procedure needs to implemented, but feels that City staff could come up with a procedure.

Ms. Giametta stated that staff could come up with a procedure, and then take it to Planning & Zoning for their review.

Commissioner Cook stated a criteria needs to be set for any City owned street, structure, or park.

Ms. Giametta stated she hopes the Holy Family site will be opened by next fall.

Commissioner Webb stated that maybe a room in a building could be dedicated to a person.

Commissioner Cook recommends reverting back to original name of park dedicating the park to Apalachicola seafood workers.

Motion to officially name park on Water Street the Apalachicola Riverfront Park and dedicate park to seafood workers made by Commissioner Webb, second by Commissioner Cook.

Motion carried 3 to 0.

Voting Aye: Webb, Cook, Mayor Johnson

Voting Nay: None

POLICE/FIRE STATION

Attorney Floyd stated he has not been able to settle an agreement with Baskerville-Donovan. No agreement can be reached regarding liability coverage and terms of contract. BDI does not get paid for services unless the grant funds are awarded.

Ms. Webb recommends proceeding with one of the other engineering firms on board.

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Attorney Floyd stated that BDI has put the City in great disadvantage as far as time.

Ms. Webb stated the City is working with the CDBG funding source of this project to get that rolling while the USDA application is being processed. Ms. Webb stated she has talked with Mary Miles of USDA and they will pay for additional architectural work, but not additional engineering work.

Mayor Johnson stated he hopes the City can work out an agreement with another engineering firm.

There being no further business, special meeting adjourned.

Van W. Johnson, Sr., Mayor

Lee H. Mathes, City Clerk