

Blanco Historic Preservation Commission

May 17, 2021 Meeting Minutes

308 Pecan Street

Virtual Public Meeting

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Commission Members present were:

Roxanne Sorrell, Chair

Hollis Boatright, Vice Chair

Jim Bunte

Wendy Cambridge

Pamela Prescott Capps

City Staff and Consultants present were:

Will Davis Code Compliance

Rudy Nino Historic Preservation Officer

Retta Martin, Advisor

Roxanne Sorrell welcomed everyone. She called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD- No citizens spoke.

Quorum established – enough members present.

Action Items.

1. Announcement: we had an additional COA turned in but not in time to add to the agenda; it will be addressed in a future meeting.
2. Call March 29 meeting to a close: Roxanne noted the meeting ended abruptly and so needs to be ended before we can proceed with the new meeting. Jim moved the meeting be closed; Hollis seconded. Unanimously approved.
3. Rudy Nino Finding of Fact sheet: Rudy discussed how facts from fact-finding documents can be interpreted differently by people. One of the challenges is establishing historical background on specific issues through the use of photographs, hearsay, etc. Rudy noted that your COA (approved) should be a final answer to any property owner as to which design is approved (or not). "Documentation beats conversation." Wendy noted that "historic" means 50 years or older; questioned if we have multiple images of a property, which one should serve as the historic guidance? Roxanne noted, are we trying to make properties look like they did in 1900 or 1950? Which? Rudy noted that the most current UDC is the final determination element in any of these questions. Jim noted things like ADA compliance will trump historical precedent, as these rules must be followed by law and code. Rudy agreed. Jim moved to accept Rudy's Finding of Fact sheet template; Wendy seconded, vote unanimously to approve.
4. Reimbursement of \$1.42 to the City of Blanco for the mailing cost of violation letters. Wendy motioned to approve the reimbursement; Hollis seconded.

5. Hollis noted that the commission would like to review violation letters prior to their issuance and mailing. Ruddy noted he hadn't sent out any violation letters lately, his only correspondence with property owners focused on what the code is and providing them with references. Discussion on streamlining the process by using email communications to review materials, then vote in public to make a final determination. All agreed this was a good way forward. Rudy noted the UDC specifies any official violation communication must be by certified letter. Jim noted it would be nice to call it something other than a "violation," some general agreement on this. Will noted it is a "notice of violation" and it typically refers to a code enforcement infraction, a document that comes from the City, not BHPC. Hollis agreed we need to take violations seriously but that we could approach how we handle it better. Wendy noted we should address the letter that goes out, soften the language to be better suited to a small-town approach. Some discussion of Texas Regional Bank's security light in the back of the facility possibly exceeding the Texas Night Sky ordinance, but Will noted that regulation is currently on hold due to other legal issues. Back on subject, the group agreed to review the language of notices of violations and to not send any without prior BHPC review and approval.
6. Rudy's Finding of Fact for 405 Third Street, Blanco Underground poker lounge. Owner and applicant Mike Arnold was present to answer questions about his signage banner to replace the existing banner for the previous tenant. No harmful modifications will be made to the historic structure, using only existing hardware and a quality outdoor banner. Five feet by 3.5 feet is the new size. Rudy presented the information from his FoF document. Jim moved to approve Rudy's FoF; Hollis seconded. Approved unanimously. Roxanne asked for someone to move to approve the CoA; Jim motioned to approve; Wendy seconded. Unanimous approval.
7. Texas Main Street Community: Roxanne noted this was discussed last meeting somewhat. Rudy noted that membership in this organization can complicate the solicitation and receipt of grant monies under certain conditions. Will elaborated on this, citing the example of how one particular grant must be used for sidewalks primarily, and very little else. This can conflict with TMSC goals. No further action taken on this at this time.
8. Reviewing HPC Commissioner applications: Roxanne and Will both noted that we are currently unsure of the expiration dates of any / all commissioners. Discussion from Retta noted that in 2017 the decision was made for terms to end all at the same time, in June of an odd-numbered year, meaning that all sets may be up for reinstatement in June 2021. Will noted he will further research and get back to us with a final determination on which seats expire when; at that time we can take up the applications again for consideration.
9. Discussion of workshop priorities from the event in April: goals included completing the planning for the Gateway sign; Will circulated a preliminary version of the sign concept (a monument-style sign featuring stacked limestone with an interior sign to be determined, but the sign must include the phrase "Historic Blanco." Also discussed was the Facebook page, which Roxanne has created. Hollis noted she may have a monument sign location just past Petersen's Tire. Rudy noted we should ask for a refund from the original person contracted to design and build the sign through former commissioner Richard Standifer. Discussion about possible costs of the project; Jim estimated about \$15,000 per sign; with the goal of having one at each city entrance on US Highway 281 (north and south). Will noted we need to be wary of possible 281 widening projects that could take out or force relocation of either of these signs.
10. Another part of the workshop priorities was creating committees; Roxanne asked if we want to discuss this at this time. Hollis and Wendy noted that we should consider publishing a list of possible committees (using website, social media), and asking people for volunteers to help with the committee work. Jim noted we need to build our own BHPC

website, as a repository for historical photos, for guidance on how to properly decorate / paint / remodel a historic home; forms for CoAs and of course all issues related to the Commission. He has volunteered to build the site for BHPC. Hollis noted she is in possession of a large number of old Blanco photographs and is working with the elderly donation source to properly identify the people and places in the photos. She will provide those images to Jim for his use on the website. Jim note we want more than just photos but any Blanco historic ephemera that we can photograph and tell a story about on the website.

11. Further discussion of standardizing the complaint / violation process. Will notes the city has this; you can go to City Hall and fill out a complaint about any business, residence, etc. and the City will follow up. If it relates to the BHPC, it will be forwarded to the Commission for review. Will agreed that we need a Standard Operating Procedure.
12. Walking Tour brochure: it was brought to our attention that there are many grammatical and typographical errors in the current brochure. Jim agreed to edit the source files once obtained from Marcy Westcott, the designer of the document. Retta to provide contact information on Marcy to get files.
13. Historic Preservation Month: Rudy noted the month of May is our month but rains and other issues have prevented us from having the planned events as scheduled. Rudy noted the Pioneer Museum on Pecan Street is planning on having a preservation event Memorial Day weekend (end of month); and we can participate if we wish.

Adjournment

Wendy made the motion at 710PM and **Jim** seconded. Motion passed.

APPROVED:

X _____

Roxanne Sorrell by the
Chairman

X _____

HPO