

**MINUTES  
HISTORIC ZONING COMMISSION  
BELLE MEADE CITY HALL  
OCTOBER 30, 2019**

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mal Wall, Chairman, at 3:00pm.

**Commission members present**

Mal Wall, Gavin Duke, Ron Farris, Bunny Blackburn and Jeanette Whitson by phone.

**Staff members present**

Beth Reardon, City Manager                      Doug Berry, City Attorney  
Lyle Patterson, City Official                      Edie Glaser, City Recorder

**Consideration of the Minutes**

Minutes of the HZC meeting held October 16, 2019

**Motion to Approve with corrections: Farris              Second: Duke              Vote: All aye**

**Old Business: None**

**2. Introduce Phil Thomason, Preservation Planner, of Thomason & Associates**

Philip Thomason of Thomason and Associates, who will be preparing Interim Design Guidelines for the city-wide Conservation over-lay was introduced. Thomason addressed the Commission with suggestions they could consider when establishing the City's guidelines, such as identifying what residents want, what the Commission does not want to see, what is in or out of character with the community, what is compatible or incompatible with the neighborhood. This would involve new construction, demolitions, and additions to historic properties. The majority of additions or renovations would not be appealed to the Commission but would be approved by the Building Official through a consent agenda. P. Thomason stated he would like to have a set of interim guidelines and examples of appropriate/inappropriate design elements that everyone is satisfied with by mid-December.

**3. Discuss Guidelines for Project Reviews that come before the HZC.**

L. Patterson sent P. Thomason eight to ten photos of homes in Belle Meade as examples of design elements the Commission would not like to have in the City. P. Thomason will be preparing photos for the power point presentation at the November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. The presentation will show streetscapes and neighborhood examples of what would and would not be in the design guidelines set forth by the Commission. Photos from other communities of designs to avoid will be presented along with a series of drawings and illustrations to analyze.

R. Farris liked the suggestion made by P. Thomason to have a set of visuals to show the applicant when applying (good designs & inappropriate designs). He and G. Duke highly recommend that, as a part of the applicant's criteria, they should review the book, A Field Guide to American Houses, by Virginia Savage McAlester. P. Thomason suggested that the Commission should consider making their guidelines broad enough to allow discretion and leeway, so that they can work proactively with the homeowner.

B. Blackburn asked if there was a way to restrict having duplicate home designs built. P Thomason said it was not so much the repetitiveness of the design but to have a good design. He went on to say the City of Belle Meade currently is not consistent in design by street. Design guidelines may want to include the context of the street and if a design will fit. For example, the core area of the City could have strict guidelines and the edges be more creative or modern.

G. Duke and R. Farris agreed that the application should be judged on the elements of scale, proportion and composition of their design and the quality of the product and its proportions. P. Thomason stated the context of the street should dictate the design criteria. Examples of what is right should be given, and a level of "shalls" and "shoulds" should be written into the design guidelines.

B. Blackburn asked P. Thomason if landscaping is ever considered in the guidelines? P. Thomason responded that the Commission could comment on a plan that comes in, especially if the landscaping is acting as a privacy fence. L. Patterson reminded everyone that the only regulation on the front of homes is a fence.

Criteria for applicants requesting a tear down will be prepared by the Historic Zoning Commission. P. Thomason used an example that if an applicant can make a case and have sufficient evidence that a house needs to be torn down it can be passed. Applications submitted for a tear down will go to L. Patterson first before coming to the Commission. Applicants will be given a set of criteria prepared by the HZC (date the house was built) making a case for demolition of a house. P Thomason stated the Commission needs to determine criteria for historically significant legacy homes, such as age (identify "period of significance" for Belle Meade), style, and architectural design (built by noted family or designed by noted architect).

R. Farris expressed some concern on the amount of work the additions submitted would be on the Commission. D. Berry commented that most additions within certain guidelines are approved by L. Patterson (staff) and could be submitted to the HZC on a consent agenda. L. Patterson will then determine if it needs to be sent to the HZC for their review. L. Patterson commented that the Board of Zoning Appeals tends to be lenient on additions to encourage the rehabilitation of a home and not a demolition. P. Thomason stated the Commission should write their guidelines regarding additions using a "light touch" and focus on only reviewing additions that are incompatible with the existing structure.

R. Farris asked if the HZC should have a building materials list in the design guidelines. L. Patterson stated that the current Zoning Code contains a materials list and it is enforced. P Thomason said the HZC could expand on this in their guidelines, but it is better for the guidelines to be broader, which allows for more discretionary rulings by the Commission.

P. Thomason stated the Commission also needs to establish By-laws, which will be a separate document that lists what the appellant must bring to the HZC when appealing their case.

Mrs. Stephanie Galanter, 215 Paddock Lane, expressed her concern of large homes with very little green space. R. Farris responded that bulk regulations are working. New homes are maximizing their space and the ratio is the same for all. She also asked if the HZC will replace the requirements to go before the BZA and/or the MPC? L. Patterson stated requirements for appeals to BZA and MPC will not change, and these Boards will be the first step, with the HZC being the last step in the process.

**4. Establish Date for the Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm at City Hall

**5. Adjourn**

**Motion to adjourn at 4:28pm: Wall Second: Farris Vote: All Aye**

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Chairman Mal Wall

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City Recorder, Edie Glaser