

Downtown Historic Preservation Task Force Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2015

8:30 AM

South Side on Lamar Leasing Office Conference Room

1409 South Lamar St.

Dallas TX, 75215

Task Force Members Present:

Jack Matthews, Matthews Southwest; Scott Remphrey, Brytar; Connie Cooper, Cooper Consulting; David Preziosi, Preservation Dallas; Brian Keith, JHP Architecture/Urban Design; Larry Hamilton, Hamilton Properties; Robert Meckfessel, DSGN; Katherine D. Seale, Task Force Chair

Task Force Members Absent:

Mitch Paradise, Paradise Development Partners; Brian Adams, Callison; Todd Watson, Hunt Consolidated

City Staff Present:

Jennifer Anderson, Historic Preservation Planner; Marsha Prior, Historic Preservation Planner

Katherine Seale called the meeting to order at 8:38 am with a quorum present.

Overview – Katherine Seale

Katherine Seale briefly introduced Jennifer Anderson and Marsha Prior, Historic Preservation Planners with the City of Dallas, and introduced the topics for the day's meeting. Katherine reviewed the idea that the Task Force believed that the recommendations should be a "call to action." She also stated that there are two types of approaches to preservation that have been identified to date, the holistic approach used currently by the City of Dallas; and the integrated approach, used by other some cities, that utilizes preservation as a way to achieve greater goals. The integrated approach is being used by cities considered to have very strong preservation programs. Katherine then reviewed the place of preservation as an integral part of the 1966 Goals for Dallas. She reiterated that the goal of the Task Force is to move toward a more integrated approach, which is especially effective when there is a public undertaking.

Discussion: Identification of Critical Issues and Possible Recommendations

Task Force members emphasized that the recommendations issued must be supported by the Mayor and City Council, given that this Task Force was created out of a "call to action." They noted that we will risk losing momentum if it is not turned into a long-term lift. A 20 second message and strong summary are needed, which will contain more "carrots" than "sticks" to sell the recommendations. They noted that the key to gaining support will be advocacy, which will need to be taken up by supporters of the recommendations. The recommendations should show what we have lost, and what we could still lose, with an emphasis on graphics to clearly illustrate our ideas, including an emphasis on the urban fabric with successful local examples. A phased approach should be used to present the recommendations so that there are short term and long term milestones.

The Task Force noted that the emphasis of the report should be on how preservation and economic development go hand in hand, and how our historic buildings give us a competitive advantage over other cities. Our unique resources cannot be squandered.

The Task Force discussed the need for the proposed interdepartmental partnership. One Task Force member expressed the idea that the role for advocacy may be best born by Preservation Dallas instead of creating a new group that would have a formal role within the city. David Preziosi explained that Preservation Dallas is not always privy to information under the current structure, and does not know what is being planned for historic buildings unless it is specifically brought to the organization's attention. Katherine Seale further explained that the recommendation is that the city's historic preservation program should become part of discussions at city hall, giving the example of the proposed Harwood Park. Our preservation program is based on landmark designation, so unless the buildings are designated or in the process, the preservation program has a very limited role it can play. One Task Force member asked why there is no way to comment, or if there are perceived barriers that do not actually exist. Katherine explained that there are many examples of the city demolishing or altering historic buildings with no coordination with the preservation program. The lack of staff and a director for the program is part of the problem. But historic preservation is viewed by many at the city as the "lowest rung on the ladder" because its only role is designation. The Task Force discussed the impacts that city parks and the current park plan have on the historic fabric and buildings of the city. They noted that parks go street to street, or sometimes propose the closing of some streets. The suggestion was made for more pocket parks like Paley Park in New York that carry a lot of impact, and would retain the historic grid.

The Task Force discussed a more specific time period for the recommended demolition delay, and recommended a phased approach, wherein more interested parties would be notified and be given the opportunity to comment during an "early warning" period. If concerns are raised during the early warning period, the delay could be extended to provide time for discussion of alternatives. Parties to be notified include the historic preservation program, Preservation Dallas, and the public. It would be posted in the same manner as a zoning change, with notices on the buildings and to neighbors. The Task Force discussed, then agreed that a demolition delay should be for buildings 50 years old and older since that is the most recognized and defensible date cutoff. The phased delay could extend to up to 120 days. The geographic area that would be subject to the delay is Greater Downtown, as defined by Downtown Dallas, Inc.

The Task Force then discussed streamlining designation, noting that designation could be processed more quickly, especially in cases where the owners request it.

One Task Force member suggested that the Historic Preservation Program could be relocated to under Economic Development or the Urban Design Studio so that shared goals could be more recognized. The ability for the Urban Design Peer Review Panel to review preservation for non-designated buildings was introduced.

The task force agreed to reconvene in two weeks to provide time to draft changes and incorporate any additional suggestions from the task force members before voting on the recommendations.

Approval of March 4 Minutes

Jack Matthews moved to approve the minutes from the March 4 meeting as amended. Bob Meckfessel seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 am.

Minutes by Nicky DeFreece Emery

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3/18/2015