
Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2023

Members present: Cody Blanchard, Rhonda Dempster, Marguerite Knight Erwin, & Lance Ledet

Members absent: Laura Fanguy

Also Present: Monique Reulet, Public Works Secretary, Josh Bourgeois

Blanchard called the meeting to order.

Erwin moved to accept the minutes presented for the August 11, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Dempster, all commission members were in favor, motion carried 5 to 0.

Erwin motioned to introduce the first item on the agenda – to review proposed mural to be painted on northern wall of building located at 409 W 3rd St.

Juliann Allen, Thibodaux Main Street, was present to represent the proposal. She described the proposed design that is intended to be painted on the northern wall of 409 W 3rd Street, behind a free library. She stated that most of the visitors of the free library are children and she felt this design with bright colors and simple lines would draw them in and enhance their experience downtown. She also noted that the rendering provided to commission members did not show a color accurately, and that it would be a brighter white.

Dempster stated that the guidelines for Louisiana Main Street says that if the building is not painted brick, typically you would not paint the brick. Because it is painted already, it is recommended that people use breathable masonry paint.

Erwin stated that she doesn't think there is anything historic about the proposed mural, which it is extremely contemporary and it doesn't fit at all. She doesn't know what the historic elements are behind this design. Allen stated that they chose the sun because it symbolizes enlightenment which fits with the free library they have. She acknowledged that it isn't necessarily historic. They wanted to make it clean and fun. Erwin stated she thinks it is out of place.

Blanchard agrees with Erwin's statement. He added that he thinks the mural is kind of lost in space. It is only one in between the windows and there are multiple walls there, so the symmetry is off. He agreed that there is nothing historical about the design.

Dempster questioned if the design would just be in between those two windows as depicted. Allen stated yes that is correct. Allen then asked for suggestions to make the design more historic. Dempster asked Erwin if she had a suggestion for what could be there. Erwin stated that the reasoning as far as a specific or strategic plan for how this fits in to the Main Street area. She asks Allen if there is a plan for Main Street. Allen stated that she doesn't believe there is currently a plan. Erwin questions Main Street as to where the future is and how it all fits in. She stated that they want a plan for aesthetics, and added that she thinks this design loses another element to what makes Downtown Thibodaux charming.

Dempster asked if it was a portable free library. Allen stated yes it is. Dempster asked what would happen to the mural if they ever move the library or if they take it down. Allen stated that they don't have any plans to move the library, but if they ever did, Main Street believes the mural would still be a nice element of character for the building.

Erwin stated that she could see approving the design if they were painting the entire bottom portion of the wall, but that it looks out of place the way it is currently designed.

Blanchard stated that he is trying to be a neutral party and will abstain from voting because he is on the Main Street Board in addition to the Historic District Commission. He then asked, to the comment of the mural being somewhat out of place, what were the thoughts if the mural went across the entire bottom floor of the building. Erwin stated that, aesthetically, it would look better, but she still thinks the design is not historic. Blanchard then suggested that they look at more historic colors. Erwin added that she would like to see another rendering. Ledet suggested that, if they wanted to keep with the sun design, they could consider starting it in the corner and have the rays stretch out across the wall. Dempster asked if the owners of the building would agree to that. Allen stated that they would run it by them, but they were excited about this design. Erwin questioned who came up with this design. Allen stated that a Board member designed it. Ledet suggested that, instead of doing white in some areas, to match the current wall color. Dempster agreed about tying into the current color of the wall.

Blanchard stated that Main Street had spoken about taking that building on as a project since it is the building that they occupy. He added that the building needed to be cleaned. Erwin agreed. Dempster also agreed, and suggested that they should ask for a maintenance plan to insure that the mural is kept up. Erwin recommended that Main Street have a total strategic plan about how Main Street will tie in. Blanchard stated that Main Street did have an initiative in 2019 that was started before Covid, but they intend to revisit to see if it is still an option. He added that he thought Erwin's suggestion to bring in more historic colors would be applicable in this situation. He also suggested that Allen meet with Main Street to see if the budget would allow for a more expansive design.

Dempster asked if they would want to table it and let them come back with another idea just take the recommendations. Erwin asked Allen if she would like to take it back to her board and see what their thoughts are before coming back. Allen said yes.

Erwin made a motion to table the proposed mural to be painted on northern wall of building located at 409 W 3rd St. The motion was seconded by Dempster, all commission members in favor with Blanchard abstaining, motion carries 4 to 0.

Erwin questioned Dempster about an event that was scheduled, which she was not able to attend, since it was tax week. Dempster said she would look to see if a replay was available.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.