
Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

January 9, 2025

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

Members absent: Lance Ledet

Also Present: Monique Reulet, Public Works Executive Secretary; Sonya Cabrera, Public Works Secretary; Josh Bourgeois, Public Works Director

Blanchard called the meeting to order.

Erwin moved to accept the minutes presented for the December 16, 2024 meeting. The motion was seconded by T. Ledet, all commission members were in favor, motion carried 4 to 0, with 1 absent and 0 abstaining.

Blanchard stepped down from the meeting, as the first applicant is one of his clients. HE turned the meeting over to Dempster.

Dempster introduced the first item on the agenda – to review proposal by Katie Vidrine/GFP architecture on behalf of Lafourche Parish Government for exterior repairs and improvements to the Lafourche Parish Courthouse Annex at 303 W 3rd Street.

Katie Vidrine, 104 Rue Angelique, was present to represent her request. She stated that the old jail project would consist of plaster repair and painting. Erwin asked about the color for the courthouse annex. Vidrine shows the commission members a few renderings and 2 color samples - gray & green. The current color is white. Erwin asked if these color options are historic, and Vidrine said yes, they are part of the Sherwin Williams Historic pallet. Erwin asked if Vidrine had a preference, and she said no, they are still needing to get input for the building owner. Ledet asked if they would be getting rid of the window units, and Vidrine said yes.

Ledet asked about the plans for tile work. Vidrine stated that the exterior pavers will be changed to a grayish color for 8x8 tiles, and the wall tiles will remain. Vidrine noted that they are working with a Historic Consultant for this project. Ledet asked about who the original designer was for this project, but Vidrine did not know. Vidrine explained that part of the project will include a ramp installation, which will have steel rails painted black. Erwin noted that she does like the gray color option presented and Vidrine agreed. Ledet asked if the old jail had always been white, but Vidrine was unsure. He then asked what was driving the decision to change the color and Vidrine said they feel it would be easier to maintain. Dempster asked if the old jail would change colors, and Vidrine said no, it would stay a shade of white. Erwin stated that although she likes the gray option, she thinks it would be better to stay white. Ledet asked about the color choice for the canopy, and Vidrine said it would probably be a charcoal.

Amy Flores was also present to represent this request. She stated that she does not see an issue with keeping the same white color for both the courthouse annex and the old jail. She noted that the old courthouse is a Beaux-art style, and the old jail is more art deco. Flores said that they found a historic white for the old courthouse and they can also use that on the old jail. Vidrine added that the window color for the old jail will match the current color, which is a historic gray. Ledet asked if the doors would be painted. Vidrine stated that the doors will be replaced with wood doors to match existing, and they will also be painted to match the current color.

Ledet made a motion to approve the proposal by Katie Vidrine/GFP architecture on behalf of Lafourche Parish Government for exterior repairs and improvements to the Lafourche Parish Courthouse Annex at 303 W 3rd Street, with the recommendation that they paint both buildings white.

The motion was seconded by Erwin all commission members were in favor, motion carries 3 to 0, with 1 absent and 1 abstaining.

Blanchard returned to the meeting.

Blanchard introduce the second item on the agenda - to review and discuss Historic District Guidelines.

Dempster asked for any comments on the guidelines that were provided to all commission members at a previous meeting. Ledet noted that his concern is the lack of authority to enforce these guidelines. Dempster said that, when the Commission was first created, the City Council only approved it as an advisory board. The commission members discussed the challenges of be advisory-only, and Dempster said that if people come before the commission, they can at least explain why they should do things a certain way. Erwin agreed, saying that they are being reasonable with their recommendations. Blanchard noted that the commission is meeting more often than they used to. Erwin added that she thinks they should focus on exterior work only.

Ledet said that he thinks they should clarify the ordinance on what they have the authority to do, and what type of work they want to review. Blanchard agreed, adding that they should clarify their procedure on vacant buildings in the Historic District, but also clarify their definition of 'vacant'. Dempster and Public Works Secretary Monique Reulet discussed the City's procedure on vacant buildings, and noted that the Historic Districts procedure may be different. Blanchard commented that they need to act sooner rather than later due to the increase in development within the Historic District, and that there may be other ordinances that they can reference.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:44p.m.