

Fairhope Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 12, 2025
Fairhope Museum of History
24 N Section Street, Fairhope Alabama 36532

Members in Attendance: Mara Kozelsky-Hunter. Chair, Amy Molyneux, Vice Chair, Gary Gover, Dannie Mixon, Susan Stein, Harvey Jones, and Ginger Golson. Erik Cortinas and Jay Robinson were absent. Cynthia A Boothe took the minutes.

Call to Order: Mara Kozelsky-Hunter called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.

Mara asked for a motion to amend the agenda to start the meeting with a Chair Report. A motion was made by Amy Molyneux to amend the agenda to start the meeting with a Chair Report, second by Gary Gover and unanimously passed.

Approve the Minutes: Mara stated that the first sentence under the “Other” section should be changed to state that there was a discussion about a plaque not that there should be a plaque. A motion was made by Amy Molyneux to approve the minutes as amended, second by Skip Jones and unanimously passed.

Chair Report: Mara started the Chair report by having all the Commission Members introduce themselves to everyone in attendance and say a little about their background.

Mara stated that she wanted to remind everyone present that the Commission was formed with the ability to encourage education, preservation, and voluntary preservation. The vote that passed the City Council supports voluntary efforts but not districts at this time. We shall educate and encourage the community to consider districts moving forward, but until the time a neighborhood decides to adopt a district, our Commission is focused on the following things.

Securing CLG status

Helping to identify grants for the City and the residents of Fairhope.
Advocating and supporting preservation through thoughtful measures such as Demolition Review and education.

Mara stated that last month Gary suggested a deconstruction approach rather than a demolition approach. A demolition assessment was also discussed.

Mara said that she has talked to Lisa Hanks, City Clerk, who advises that the Commission should adopt a more formal approach to the meetings as there will eventually be more interaction with the public during the meetings and a more formal approach would be helpful to conducting meetings.

Mara stated that she had attended the Alabama Historical Commission meeting today as a board member, and that Fairhope was mentioned twice during the meeting. The first time was for the CLG application filed by the commission where she was told that it has been approved by the State and will now move on to the Federal level for approval. The second time was for the American Legion which is now listed as a place in peril which will allow for more opportunities to receive grants for the restoration.

Mara stated that another topic covered at the Alabama Historical Commission meeting was the Education Trust Fund Grants. They are available for building projects with a cap of \$75,000.00. There are preferences and limitations to eligibility, but Mara says there are several buildings in Fairhope that may be eligible for the grants.

Mara has been in touch with Eric Cortinas, Building Official, and he told her that the librarians will teach the commission members for the Microsoft Teams program.

Mara said that Lisa Hanks, City Clerk, is helping the commission get a formal email address with the City.

Presentation by Shelley Springer: Shelley Springer stated that she bought the old Fairhope Hotel at 131 Fairhope Avenue in 2021 and is wanting to preserve and renovate the property back into a hotel. She went over the process she has gone through to apply for tax credits with the State and

Federal Historic Preservation programs. She has also worked with the City Planning and Zoning Department to get a MOP approval for the project and stated that all the fees they have had to pay involved with the Building Department are excessive and she feels the City should be working with people wanting to do preservation projects with concessions that would give them an incentive to preserve instead of tearing down historic buildings and building back new.

Mara stated that the next thing on the agenda is the Demolition Review, but she has to leave at 4:30pm so was wondering if anyone from the audience would like to make comments now that would normally go under the "OTHER" section of the meeting before they discuss the Demolition Review.

One gentleman from the audience stated that the commission might consider specific incentives through the City for historic preservation projects such as cost and building standards. Mara also suggested having expedited reviews for the building permits. She also invited anyone else who had suggestions for incentives to email her or anyone else on the commission.

Demolition Review: Mara stated that the commission is trying to prioritize the demolition review to have it ready to present to Erik Cortinas, Building Official, before he completes the review of the building codes this summer. That is why the commission wants to look at demolitions before they are torn down so that they can pause the demolition to educate the owner and offer incentives for preservation.

Mara asked the commission members to state what items they would like included in the demolition review. This was followed by a group discussion about the different items to be included. Mara had to leave the meeting at 4:30PM but discussion continued with the remaining commission members.

A motion was made by Skip Jones to adjourn the meeting, second by Ginger Golson and unanimously passed. The meeting was adjourned at 4:42PM.

Respectfully by
Cynthia A Boothe
Building Department, City of Fairhope