Minutes

Historic Preservation Meeting

January 11th 2016, 7 pm Plaza Arts Center

Attendees: Larry Folk, Susan Hitchcock, Shelagh Fagan ( Lyn Hendren was out of town)

1. Shelagh Fagan opened the meeting at 7 pm. Lyn Hendren ( Romine) had planned to Skype in, but this was not feasible
2. The **minutes** from August 10th and August 31st 2015 were approved. Larry made the motion, Susan seconded; all were in favor.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. **COA 2015-004**. Review and approval of replacement of front steps at Methodist Church (Madison Ave). It was noted that this request was discussed without a formal meeting as work was starting and it was a minor change. This paragraph serves as the minutes of that process. The request was recommended for approval on Oct 15th 2015 and approved by council on Oct 19th 2015.
2. **201 N Madison**. Shelagh recapped that she appeared in court on Dec 17th along with the owner, Mr. Joe Burke. He claimed that he had done the work requested and that he had “taken the house back to its original state”. The judge reduced his fine to $200. Ms. Fagan told him we weren’t sure that all had been done and that the HPC wanted time to consider reinstatement of a porch. He gave her his phone number; his address still remains c/o mother Ennis Burke. He asked her to help him sell the house; she responded that he would need to lower the price. Apparently, wherever he is living it is extremely inconvenient for him to travel to Eatonton. It should be noted that Mr. Burke was very cordial and helpful at court. More on this under new business.
3. Shelagh has talked to Chris Huskins about bringing the Historic Preservation ordinance re-write to City Council. It had been placed on hold due to her vacation and the local elections.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. The situation with **201 N Madison** has new elements
   1. Shelagh detected a huge leak from the roof into the hallway, just after Christmas. The leak has caved in part of the upper story floor and damaged the floor in the hallway. She looked again a week later and it had started to dry up. She called Mr. Burke on Jan 6th 2016. Despite a full phone mailbox Mr. Burke called back promptly and she told him the leak was serious. He said he would have someone look at it as soon as possible.
   2. There was a discussion as to how to proceed. Based on local input, we had been leaning towards asking Mr. Burke to reinstate a porch but for it to be of an early Federal style (simple one story).
      1. Larry & Shelagh measured the front façade of the house on Jan 6th and also looked around generally. They discovered that the columns were being kept safely in a shed and they could be restored.
      2. Shelagh had asked for input from the National Association of Preservation Commissions Google group ( NAPC-L). She had distributed the significant email and verbal responses from NAPC-L. Larry summarized these response as follows:
         1. There was much input & speculation and about the original style of the house, but given that all we have so far is Sanborn maps from 1884 onwards, it is mostly speculation. The only real evidence we have of a porch is the Neoclassical columns ( based on Sanborn, added between 1909 and 1921). There was advice to the effect that we cannot ask owners to recreate an earlier porch without evidence and based on a request to do so.
      3. Shelagh said she thinks we could enforce the maintenance by neglect part of the law and insist he repair and reinstate the columns. But the chance of him doing this correctly or at all is negligible. She feel that all we can do is stabilize the house by writing ( to backup the phone call) and asking him to fix the leak and also to cover open apertures. There are several broken windows and an upstairs porch open to the weather. Larry said it could be closed in with plywood for little expense. Shelagh will write this letter asap.
      4. Susan suggested that instead of relying on remote email input, that we should ask an expert to “read” the house. She suggested Tommy Jones, who is a well-respected expert in Atlanta who would do a great job. He would need access to the interior of the house. All agreed that this was a good thing to pursue but it did not have to be urgent. The resulting report would stand us in good stead with a future owner.
      5. Having someone buy the house would seem to be the best direction (after fixing leaks etc). Shelagh will again contact the Georgia Trust. She thought that if the present owner knew we could insist on reinstatement of the porch, he might be willing to negotiate with the Georgia Trust. Larry suggested we use a “carrot” and offer to have the house documented, at no cost to the owner, and tell him it would help sell it. Shelagh will see if she can add this to the leak letter.
      6. Shelagh was concerned that the tree close to the porch had contributed to the decline of the porch and that limbs were still overhanging the house. Susan said the Tree Board has looked at this some time ago and feel the tree does not pose a problem and that they would not consider cutting it down. Shelagh asked if it could be severely pruned back. Susan gave her the current list of Tree Board members so she could forward this request on.
2. **200 N. Madison Ave**. We had noticed in December that the new owners of 200 N Madison Ave were making major ‘repairs” to their porch. Part of this was wholesale replacement of the decking. Shelagh had taken a welcome packet to one of the new owners which contained the guidelines for COA’s etc. This work began the next day. Larry and Shelagh went to talk to the contractors and determined that the work was all “maintenance”. Shelagh wrote them a thank you letter and included the one page summary of maintenance versus material change. The work is finished and looks very good. The contractor gave us his card. Larry has talked to the owner and was made aware that they want to remove rear porch(s). He made sure they knew this required a COA and said the owner was very pleasant & receptive.
3. It was noted that we placed an **advertisement in the local newspaper** for a 5th HPC member ( weeks of Jan 7th & 14th 2016 – deadline for application Jan 31st).
4. We discussed the **HP training in Athens, March 8th,** 8.30 am – 3.30 pm. Shelagh & Susan said they will go. Larry said probably not. Shelagh will ask Lyn. It was clarified that HPC will reimburse attendees for all expenses, although Susan may stay with a friend.
5. **The Plaza Arts Center** has begun to impose a $25 an hour fee for use of the conference room, plus a possible after hours “attendant fee” of $10 an hour.
   1. Shelagh has asked Gary Sander if we can meet at City Hall. All agreed this would add authenticity to the meetings and would be ideal. Gary has suggested the Hut as an alternative, but we would need to set up and break down chairs and tables each time Use of either will need council approval. Shelagh will lobby several council members for use of City Hall.
6. Shelagh was asked by Walt Rocker III to help with a **tax credit project** for part of the old Enterprise Aluminum Hill. She thinks it is the brick building with some colored glass panes.
   1. It is not in the National Register District so would require proof of eligibility
   2. Susan said that a DOE (Determination of Eligibility) was a long process and was normally done by a consultant that specialized in such. The consultant was typically the one helping do the tax credits. Shelagh did not have any more details but will wait to hear from Walt.

The next meeting is scheduled for Feb 8th 2016, but will not take place unless we have a reason to meet.

Adjourned 8.05 pm.