

The Washington City Council met in a continued session with the Historic Preservation Commission on Tuesday, November 7, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Municipal Building.

Members from the Washington City Council present were: Judy Jennette, Mayor; Ed Gibson, Councilman; Richard Brooks, Councilman; Archie Jennings, Councilman; Mickey Gahagan, Councilman; Darwin Woolard, Mayor Pro tem; James Smith, City Manager; Franz Holscher, City Attorney; and Rita A. Thompson, City Clerk.

Members from the Historic Preservation Commission present were: Michael Overton, Chris Collier, Katherine Tate, Katerie Leach and Kathy Simpson.

Also Present were: John Rodman, Planner; Bobby Roberson, Planning Director; Cynthia Bennett, Administrative Support; and Leanne Smith, of the Beaufort Observer.

Mayor Jennette called the Washington City Council Meeting to order and Councilman Gibson delivered the invocation.

On motion of Chris Collier, seconded by Katherine Tate, the Historic Preservation Commission appointed Michael Overton as Chairman to run their meeting in the absence of their Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

DISCUSSION – DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT ORDINANCE

Mayor Jennette thanked the Historic Preservation Commission for meeting with the Council to discuss the proposed Demolition by Neglect Ordinance.

John Rodman, Planner, passed out the latest proposed draft of the ordinance. Franz Holscher, City Attorney, commented that the concerns expressed at the Council meeting to be discussed were:

- (1) Possibility of extending application of the ordinance beyond the present historic district (not enabling legislation at this time to do this)
- (2) Flexibility giving the Historic Preservation Commission discretion on a case by case basis if a person has a claim for undue hardship

Council discussed the Historic District Commissions being clear and comfortable with the proposed ordinance and how it changes the role of the HPC.

It was pointed out that the City operates under the Minimum Housing Code to enforce other areas in town. Also, people who have problems maintaining their structures can obtain assistance from (1) Housing Financing Agency (2) CDBG, and (3) Rural Center.

Mr. Rodman presented a Flow Chart how the Demolition by Neglect process would work:

- Planning Director receives information
- Planning Director conducts investigation (no basis on complaint or,
- Owner receives complaint (within 7 days)
- Hearing with HOPC on complaint (Not less than 30 days)
- Finding of cause
- Order to repair
- BOA Appeal (10 days)
- Penalties for failure to repair, or
- Claim of undue economic hardship (or no finding of economic hardship)
- Plan of action for hardship

Acting Chairman Michael Overton explained that the HPC and the City Council needs consensus on what their expectations are of the HPC and the future look of the

historic district Mayor Jennette asked the HPC to get a list of items they would like clarity on and conduct a workshop.

Mr. Smith handed out some historic guidelines from Winston Salem. Councilman Jennings pointed out he was on the HPC when the last guidelines were reviewed and the Commission worked very hard in creating a knowledgeable document. The Historic District brochure needs to be updated.

On motion of Mayor Pro tem Woolard, seconded by Councilman Gibson, Council unanimously adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Rita A. Thompson, CMC
City Clerk