

LANDMARK COMMISSION
MINUTES

April 26th, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michele Derr	Chairperson
John Dickinson	Member
Christy Graham	Member
Joel Hartmangruber	Member
Andy Lee	Member
Noros Martin	P&Z Liaison
Nadine McKown	Vice-Chairperson
Marcela Medellin	Member
Janel Ponder Smith	Member
Tim Brewer	Council Liaison
Amy Gardner, Legal Liaison	City Staff
Terry Floyd, Development Services Director	City Staff
Karen Gagné, Principal Planner	City Staff
Christal Ashcraft, Development Services Admin. Asst.	City Staff

ABSENT:

GUESTS:

Jana Schmader, Director

DWFD

I. Call to Order, Introductions and Administer Oath of Office

Chairperson Michele Derr called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. Ms. Derr had Commission members, staff and guests, introduce themselves.

II. Review & Approval of Minutes from: March 22nd 2022

Chairperson Derr called for review and approval of the March 22nd 2022 Landmark Commission meeting minutes. Mr. Noros Martin made a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. John Dickinson seconded the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved 9-0.

Regular Agenda Item

III. Action Item: 726 Scott Avenue – American Trust Building/Holiday Inn: Review & Consideration of Support for a Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places

Ms. Gagné stated many of the Commission members would be familiar with this project also known as the "Petroleum Building" was constructed in the years 1966 – 1968. An original drawing done by George A. Thomason dated March 6, 1965 was shown and noted the plans were modified to the current design when the project was assigned to architects Killebrew, Cupit and Associates. Ms. Gagné stated it was mid-century modern design and one of the first buildings in Wichita Falls from the 1960's to be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Ms. Gagné advised the Texas Historic Commission (THC) has scheduled the application to go before the State Board of Review (SBR) on May 21st, 2022. A required endorsement regarding the nomination, by the Landmark Commission and the highest elected official (Mayor) must be submitted prior to May 20th, 2022. Ms. Gagné advised the entire application could be found in the book provided to all Commission members for their review.

Ms. Gagné stated key criteria for the nomination which is based on four elements:

- a) Association with important events contributing significantly to broad pattern of our history; or
- b) Be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- c) Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; represents work of a master or possesses high artistic values or represents a significant & distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction; or
- d) Have yielded, may likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The area of significance for this project is, association with important events contributing significantly to the broad pattern of our history with the period of significance 1966-1972. This structure is an example of post-war commercial building using curtain wall technology. Curtain wall design wraps around each end of the L-shaped tower until reaching red brick masonry stair tower. The American Trust Life Insurance corporate headquarters, located on the 10th floor, started in Wichita Falls in May 1953 and was licensed in 10 states. By 1966 the company had assets worth \$6.3million and became the largest insurance company in west/central Texas. When oil revenues declined in the 1960s, the company was considered a stabilizing force on the economy in North TX. With the exception of some alterations in the 1970s and in 1993, the building generally retains its mid-century modern historic integrity.

Mr. Martin asked what the purpose was of two restrooms, shown in one of the photos. Ms. Gagné stated it was most likely done during one of the early renovations.

Ms. Medellin asked what the four elements of criteria were, with Ms. Gagné repeating. Ms. Ponder-Smith asked Ms. Gagné to explain about the important event(s). Ms. Gagné advised of the unique construction elements associated with the building as well as the important role American Trust & Insurance Company played in the development of Wichita Falls and in Texas. Ms. Ponder asked about the history of previous owners trying to make a business plan work in this location. Mr. Floyd advised the 4B Board has a current commitment of funding for this project.

Ms. Graham made a motion to recommend the Commission's endorsement and approval of the nomination. Ms. Medellin asked how the nomination would work without the original façade and would the owner be able to go back and change it. Ms. Gagné advised it was not a local nomination so no design guideline review and not as many stipulations. Chairwoman Derr asked if changes were made, would they come before the Landmark Commission for approval. Ms. Gagné advised they would not. They would only be for informational purposes. Mr. Hartmangruber seconded the motion, the motion passed 9-0.

IV. Action Item: 900-1008 Indiana Avenue – Indiana Avenue Historic District: Review & Consideration of Support for a Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places

Ms. Gagné stated staff had worked with Post Oak Preservation Solutions, Downtown Wichita Falls Development, Inc. (DWFD) and the City of Wichita Falls TIF #4 Board to cover costs associated with the research and application fees with the consultant for submission of the Indiana Ave. Historic District for a National Register Nomination. The process was slowed during the Covid pandemic and recommendations from Texas Historic Commission (THC) National Register Coordinator as the 900 block of Ohio was originally planned for inclusion. THC indicated they could not support a NRHP application nomination with the Indiana and Ohio blocks combined as they were deemed to have different periods of significance, era of development and overall purpose. Based on the City's involvement with this project, staff recommended supporting the national register nomination for the Indiana district.

Ms. Gagné stated for this project the determination for eligibility for National Register of Historic Places would be based on the four elements previously discussed:

- a) Association with important events contributing significantly to broad pattern of our history; or
- b) Be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- c) Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; represents work of a master or possesses high artistic values or represents a significant & distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction; or
- d) Have yielded, may likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Ms. Gagné advised the criteria for qualification of this nomination would be: a) as it reflects commercial growth downtown, encompassing the early 1900s to the oil boom, through post WWII period in which key anchor buildings include: Perkins-Snider-Radio Building (known as the First Texas Building); Wichita Theatre; Perkins-Timberlake Building; and Filgo-Bailey-Moline Building and c) the nomination based on architecture and being an intact collection of early to mid-20th century commercial buildings with a high degree of integrity.

Ms. Gagné stated just as with the previous nomination, the Texas Historic Commission (THC) has scheduled the application to go before the State Board of Review (SBR) on May 21st, 2022. A required endorsement regarding the nomination, by the Landmark Commission and the highest elected official (Mayor) must be submitted prior to May 20th, 2022.

This nomination includes 14 properties, 12 of which are contributing structures with a period of significance from 1908 to 1960. The main era of construction was the 1920's – 1930's, after 1918 when oil was discovered in Burk Burnett, development expanded westward from the railroad/Ohio Avenue area.

The architects/builders associated with this district include Sanguinet, Staats, Hedrick & Pate, Voelcker & Dixon, along with Burke, Kober & Nicholais in the Commercial Classical Revival style. Photos were shown of some of the various buildings in the proposed district;

- 900 Indiana – Perkins-Timberlake, 1960
- 917 Indiana – Noble Hardware, 1980
- 925 Indiana – Wichita Theatre, 1980

- 927 Indiana – Parisian, 1955
- 1000 Indiana – Filgo/Bailey-Moline, 1950's

Ms. Gagné stated the application for this nomination could be found in the meeting book in its entirety for review.

Mr. Lee made a motion to support the recommendation that the Landmark Commission approve and endorse the Indiana Ave. Historic District nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and stated the historic tax credit should be substantial in helping to bring the buildings up to meet current code requirements. Mr. Martin asked what the tax credit would amount to and how others would be taxed due to this. Ms. Graham explained this would have nothing to do with appraisal value, that it was not property tax but rather an IRS credit to an individual/company's taxes based on an authorized THC or federal historic tax credit restoration/rehabilitation project. Ms. Ponder-Smith seconded the motion and it was passed with a vote of 9-0.

V. Other Business:

a) Monthly Reports

Depot Square: Ms. Derr gave the following updates:

- April 26th – MSU Texas Night Downtown @ 5pm
- May 5th – Art Walk
- May 7th – Mother's Day Tea, Kell House
- May 13th – Gallery Night, Wichita Falls Art Association
- May 14th – Opening Reception for the Sculpture Garden, Kemp Center
- May 14th – Cajun Fest, Downtown 11am – 7pm
- Now-May 8th – Frozen, Wichita Theater
- Now-May 21st – Cover of Life, Backdoor Theater

Kell House Restoration/Rehab Project:

Staff provided brief status report

West Floral Heights:

Ms. Ponder-Smith gave the following updates:

- Neighborhood Clean-Up in May

b) Resources & Periodicals:

- National Trust: National Preservation Month (May) – Overview & Project: Staff outlined a proposal to engage other community preservation partners (Wichita Co. Heritage Society, Wichita Co. Historical Commission and Museum of North Texas History) for a multi-year preservation month project of researching, identifying and restoring THC historic markers across the city. In addition, staff challenged the Landmark Commission members to consider creating a volunteer team to refurbish a marker during the month of May. Staff will conduct a basic training 'How To' session using THC's Bob Brinkman video kicking off preservation month on National Historic Marker Day April 29, 2022. Staff will put together a marker supply box with all materials necessary to refurbish a marker.

There will also be a proclamation at the May 3rd City Council meeting proclaiming May as National Historic Preservation Month and encouraged all preservation board members to participate.

- Friends of THC - Webinar: Exploring Untold Stories of Texas (Historic Markers Program) May 12 @ 6pm
- c) **Design Review – Staff Authorized – Minor Alteration/Repairs**
 - 2715 9th St (Morningside National Register District) – residential remodel; *information only*
 - 1608 Tilden (West Floral Heights HD) – plumbing permit/water heater

VI. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:39 p.m.

Next regularly scheduled meeting May 24, 2022 - 12p.m.

Michele Derr
Michele Derr, Chairperson

June 28, 2022
Date