MINUTES OF THE CITY OF ORANGE CITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD
REGULAR MEETING, held on Thursday, August 19, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, 201 N.
Holly Avenue, Orange City, Florida.

1. CALL TO ORDER
Vice-Chair Eidel called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Roll call was taken.

2. ROLL CALL
PRESENT: Chair - Donna Cobb (arrived at 5:08pm), Vice Chair - Tom Eidel, Ted Marsolek and Nicki
Burke; City Staff: Becky Mendez (Development Services Director), Carol McFarlane (City Planner);
ABSENT: none

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Dated August 15, 2019
Member Pupello made a motion to approve the minutes dated August 15, 2019,
seconded by Member Burke. The motioned passed by unanimous vote.

4. NEW BUSINESS
A. 257 South Volusia Avenue: Determination of Demolition by Neglect

Ms. McFarlane introduced the agenda item providing a summary of the history for the structure,
known as the Dickinson house, and its significance to Orange City. She detailed staff’s interaction
with the property owner, Artemio Ramirez, after the main structure was damaged by arson fire in
February 2017. During that time, staff worked with the owner to obtain Conditional Use approval
from the Planning Commission to use the cabins at the rear of the property as dwellings and to use
the adjacent property at 239 S. Volusia Avenue as a primary dwelling with a home office. However,
Mr. Ramirez failed to adhere to any of the conditions of approval and the approval expired in May
2018. Staff continued to work with Mr. Ramirez, encouraging maintenance of the fire damaged
structure until proper repairs could be made. After two years of inaction by the owner to make
necessary repairs to the damaged building, staff would like to move forward with a finding of
demolition by neglect and to send the matter to Code Enforcement staff.

Ms. McFarlane reviewed the property maintenance requirements of Chapter 9 of the Orange City
Code of Ordinance. The roof shall be maintained in a safe condition and protect the structure from
weather, broken windows and doors shall be repaired to prevent the elements from entering the
building and to discourage the appearance of blight, and may only be boarded up for a period of 30
days. Staff noted the tarp on the roof openings has not been consistently maintained, allowing rain
and elements to enter the structure. In addition, several windows and some doors have been boarded
up for more than 2 years. On Sept 13, 2019, the City Building Official posted the structure as
uninhabitable and unsafe for people to enter the building.
Ms. McFarlane explained the Board’s role tonight is to communicate with the owner to determine if there is a plan for repair and to institute a time frame to comply. If that timeframe is exceeded, staff can forward the Demolition of Neglect to Code Enforcement. The finding of Demolition of Neglect can be used to convey the historical significance of the site to the Magistrate with the intent to come up with a plan that will benefit the city, make the site safe and remove blight. Staff made a recommendation that the owner:

1. Immediately secure a tarp over the roof.
2. Within 30 days, submit for a residential building permit to repair the windows and roof.
3. Within 90 days, submit a residential building permit to repair any structural damage done to the interior of the building. This would require a statement from a structural engineer as to the damage done to the structure of the building, and propose corrective actions necessary to bring the structure into compliance with the Florida Building Code.

Chair Cobb invited the property owner to share with the Board his plans for the property. Ruben Perez, office manager for Artemio Ramirez’s drywall business, stated he would speak on behalf of the owner, because Mr. Ramirez had to leave for another meeting. Mr. Perez stated that Mr. Ramirez’s understanding of what he could do with the property he purchased in 2015 was “way off”. He began to make repairs to the building at 239 S. Volusia Avenue, currently occupied by the drywall business, and the cabins at the rear of 257 S. Volusia Avenue. Mr. Ramirez was contacted by someone from the City about obtaining building permits for that work. In 2018, Mr. Ramirez contacted a General Contractor with the intent to first permit the work begun at 239 S. Volusia Ave and the cabins, and then the fire damaged structure at 257 S. Volusia Ave. However, financial constraints prevented Mr. Ramirez from moving forward with this plan. Mr. Perez stated Mr. Ramirez wants to make the needed repairs to fire damaged structure, and believes he can submit a plan to repair the structure in 30 days. Mr. Perez was unable to confirm when the finances will be available for Mr. Ramirez to implement the plan. Mrs. Cobb asked what will be done to secure the property while Mr. Ramirez is preparing a plan. Mr. Perez stated they can put up a tarp this week, but felt the damage caused by the fire is of greater concern than the water damage.

Member Marsolek stated what he felt was most important is to cover the roof to prevent more damage to the structure. He noted staff’s recommendation is that a building permit be obtained in 30 days for roof and window repairs. Mr. Perez asked if there is a way to postpone new windows until after the engineer had made an assessment. Member Eidel indicated a plan should be presented to the City showing what repairs the owner can do. Member Eidel asked if anyone was living in the cabins in the back of the property. Mr. Perez said he did not know. Member Burke stated time is running out on having such damage to the home that it can be repaired. She asked if Mr. Ramirez had the finances to move forward quickly to repair the roof and ensure the structure is properly protected. Mr. Perez stated he did not believe Mr. Ramirez would want to repair the roof before determining if the structure is sound. Mr. Perez asked, knowing the structure has historic significance, if the structure could be demolished. Mrs. Mendez stated the Board is being asked to determine if the structure is
already being demolished by neglect. She recommended the Board consider the possibility that the owner will come back in 30 days with a request to demolish the structure, and under what conditions the Board might approve such a request. Mr. Perez stated the owner is open to options on how to proceed. He expressed that because Mr. Ramirez likes the way the house looks, rebuilding something similar is a possibility. He asked what conditions the Board would have for rebuilding. Mrs. McFarlane stated the process for obtaining a building permit to demolish the structure includes another review by the Historic Preservation Board, and will require an assessment from an engineer indicating the structure cannot be saved. At that time, the Board would have the opportunity to provide conditions. Member Pupello stated that he recommends the Board follow staff’s recommendations to avoid repeating what has occurred for the last two years, and asked Mr. Perez if he felt the recommendations were achievable. Mr. Perez stated he thought repairing the roof and windows before obtaining an engineer’s assessment of the structure was not the correct process. Mr. Perez acknowledged that certain elements of the structure may be salvageable, if not the entire structure. He will present the options to Mr. Ramirez and “see what happens”.

Member Pupello made a motion to approve staff’s recommendations to find that the Dickinson House is being demolished by neglect and forward these findings to Orange City Code Enforcement for action, with staff recommendations as written, seconded by Member Eidel. The motioned passed by unanimous vote.

Member Pupello addressed Mr. Perez, stating that Mr. Ramirez has a tremendous responsibility to, not only his personal business and finances, but also to this community. Mr. Ramirez is a steward of these historic structures that are attached to the fabric of this community, and are one of the original threads to this community. This is why this item is being heard by the Historic Preservation Board, not just Code Enforcement. He concluded by saying “we want Mr. Ramirez to be successful”.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Historic Walking Tour - Update

Mrs. Cobb stated she met with Kim Reading prior to the meeting and will be working with her to complete the entries as soon as possible.

6. STAFF/BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. McFarlane addressed the Board’s request last meeting to know the budget for the year. For the year 2019/2020, the Board has $500.00 for promotional materials and refreshments, which can be used to purchase candy for parades, and $2000.00 for additional historic district banners. Chair Cobb asked when the Board needs to submit a budget request. The first draft should be submitted in June, a final draft ready for the Board vote in July, and final Department budgets are entered mid-August. Robert Reid, 527 E. Graves Avenue, shared that he was on the Historic Board in the 1980s when the city first installed historic banners. He asked where the new historic banners will be placed. Ms. McFarlane answered saying the banners will be placed along East Graves Avenue and Holly Avenue following completion of the road improvements. Chair Cobb stated the Board is also considering purchasing additional banners to be placed in other areas of the Orange City Historic District.
Ms. McFarlane shared the proposed Holiday Lighting Contest schedule. The deadline to enter is December 11, and judging will be from December 13 – 22. The Board, as judges, accepted those dates. Member Pupello shared that he is thankful to be part of this Board and grateful to be carrying on a family tradition. His grandmother is Ann Lindsey also served on the Historic Preservation Board in the 1980s alongside Mr. Reid. Chair Cobb welcomed Mr. Pupello to the Board.

7. CITIZEN COMMENTS

8. ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business, Chair Cobb called for a motion to adjourn.

   Member Marsolek made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Member Pupello.

   The motioned passed by unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:                    APPROVED ON

Kimberly Reading
City of Orange City, Planner

[Signature]

[Signature]

October 17, 2019