

HISTORIC FAIRHOPE PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Minutes from the meeting of **March 6, 2014:**

Attendees:

Joe Birindelli	Sissy Birindelli	Harriet Gutknecht
Kay Marroitt	Ross Hobbs	Rich Mueller
Nancy Milford	Linda Jones	Ralph Thayer
Gary Gover	Donnie Barrett	

HFPC Resolution:

The Committee members continued their discussions about the Alabama Community of Excellence (ACE), Ralph's Oct. 8, 2013 letter to Mr. Brandon Bias, and the City Strategic Plan, all of which play an important role in the implementation of the HFPC Strategic Plan. The members also reviewed the multi-page document recently received from the ACE team, specifically, it's list of recommendations (document page attached):

o The members approved an updated survey which must be performed by an experienced, professional surveyor. In 1988, John Sledge was the first to prepare a document designating historic properties. From 2000-2002, Linda Nelson updated this document but did not finish the survey. The city paid \$5,000 towards the last survey. Mr. David Schneider (Schneider Historic Properties LLC, 411 E 6th St., Anniston AL 36009/256-310-6320) is an architectural historian and surveyor of Magnolia Springs (2009). His estimated cost of updating Linda Nelson's survey, back in August 2009, was \$7,800. It was recommended that the new survey be put on the computer and a 'hard copy' also be provided. Mr. Schneider could again be approached and may also be knowledgeable about a software company that could assist in the development, support, and maintenance of the survey data. Jeff Montgomery, a city employee, is in charge of all IT systems.

o This information is available on the state and national website. This could be 'linked' or 'added' to the city website along with state grant and funding information.

o The members agreed that the Comprehensive Plan needs reviewing. Preservation needs protection and must be clearly expressed to avoid misunderstanding.

o There is no Historic Society in the city of Fairhope. The HFPC would need to file a 501C3 to become independent from the city as an 'Historic Commission'. Rich Mueller will find out about

what needs to be done to become a 'non-profit'. He will inquire as to how the airport received this status.

- o The Downtown Merchants Association could be approached as there is a strong history of support through the Historic Plaque Program. Both the Downtown Merchants Assoc .and the HFPC could invite Mary Helmer to visit.

- o Mary Shell was very much involved with the preservation of the Fairhope Museum. She may be able to recommend a surveyor.

Treasury:

There is currently \$30,065 in the treasury. This amount reflects the checks that were returned to the Homes Tour sponsors.

Next Meeting:

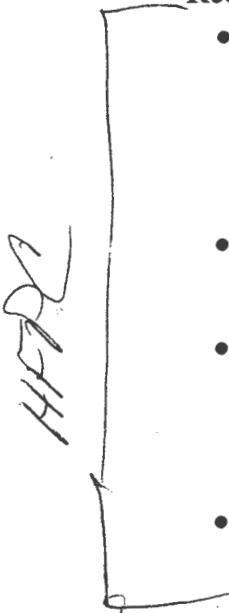
The next meeting will be held on April 3, 2014, @ 9:30 am at the Fairhope Museum.

minutes prepared by Linda Jones, HFPC Secretary

2014.

- The city does not have a local historic preservation or historical society to serve as a non-profit advocate for preservation of its historic resources.
- The commercial area has a Downtown Fairhope Business Association to coordinate activities. They have a well designed website to provide information on special events and collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce.
- Strong community support for public parks exists, and many of them are within or close to the National Register districts.

Recommendations:

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- The National Register districts and individual listings need to be updated to provide a more current evaluation of the listed properties. Due to changes in appearance to some of the properties in the historic districts, some properties may now be eligible while other properties may have lost their integrity and may no longer be eligible. Updating these documents would provide information to the public about buildings eligible for incentives like the state historic tax credit for rehabilitation of commercial and residential properties and other incentive programs.
 - Information on the National Register districts and individually listed properties should be available to the public along with information on state and federal incentives to rehabilitate these properties. Copies should be available at a civic space or the city website.
 - Preservation planning tools and zoning requirements should be evaluated as protection tools for the three existing National Register districts and/or individual landmark buildings. The city leaders need to understand the various layers of protection available for the historic assets from zoning controls to local historic designation and be able to make informed decisions about whether these tools are appropriate to meet the community's development goals.
 - Consider establishing a non-profit group to promote advocacy of historic preservation programs. This group could be a stand alone non-profit group or partner with an existing group with a similar mission. Hosting the annual homes tour and other events could be sponsored through this group.
 - Invite Mary Helmer, Alabama Main Street Director to Fairhope to meet with merchant's group and city leaders to learn about the requirements for a certified Main Street program.
 - Continue to provide resources to Fairhope Museum to support their programming, including cemetery and downtown walking tours, and building maintenance.

Tourism

Observations:

- Fairhope does not have a Tourism Director but is seen as a tourist destination; tourism efforts are coordinated through the City, the merchants association and the Chamber.
- The need for tourism structure was expressed by participants, but it was noted that a Chamber the tourism council meets regularly and that the City and the Fairhope merchants association has representation on that committee.
- Fairhope has a variety of eateries and shopping for tourists, however there is a need for an increase in the number of restaurants that are open seven days a week, as well as a desire for more local shopping opportunities since the two issues are dependent on each other.
- Downtown Fairhope is well maintained and visually appealing to tourists, but a concern for adequate/ visible signage for the Welcome Center and public parking was expressed.
- Fairhope Welcome Center is open every day of the week and is staffed, but visitor information is