

The regular meeting of the Conway Historic District Commission was held on Monday, December 27, 2021, in person, in the City Council Chambers at City Hall. The following members were present and acting: Steve Hurd, Liz Hamilton, Marie Cason, and Shane Lind. Emily Walter, Shelby Fiegel, and Margaret West were absent.

Chair Steve Hurd served as a voting member the entirety of the meeting. November meeting minutes were approved 4-0 on a motion made by Marie Cason and seconded by Shane Lind, with the Chairman voting.

I. Public Hearing - Robinson Historic District

A. 1832 Robinson Avenue - Signage

The applicant (James Walden) and owner (City Church of Conway) is proposing to develop new signage. The church is a one-story mid-century modern design. The applicant would like to place a large wall sign on the Robinson Ave façade and two small free-standing two pole (monument) style signs along the Mitchell St frontage and near the intersection of Mitchell St and Robinson Ave. These signs would help identify the church and aid with wayfinding to the church parking lot.

A resident (1837 Robinson) asked for clarification about the new signage and spoke in opposition of the size of the letters, size of the symbol, and lighting of the signage (current and future). The resident shared that the lighting of the current signage is disruptive (very bright) and additional lighting will be more disruptive.

Another resident (1822 Robinson) is in opposition of the signage because of the lighting issue as well. The resident shared that the church is not aware of the rules concerning the Historic District (the church should be made aware of the Historic District standards).

A third resident (1814 Robinson) shared appreciation of the positive energy from the church but is concerned that the leadership of the church does not think about the effects of their presence in a neighborhood and that some of the church's decisions affect the quality of life of residents and also affect property values (residents want their property value to grow and not be negatively affected by those around them).

A fourth resident (1837 Robinson) spoke in opposition and shared that the sign ordinance within the Historic District standards should be followed by the church so as to not disrupt the neighborhood. The lighting is an issue and breaks the rules set by the Historic District.

Chair Steven Hurd and Director of Planning James Walden clarified that there is a difference between the City of Conway sign ordinance and signage standards of the Historic District.

Commissioner Liz Hamilton asked when the brick was originally painted, and the applicant shared before they were the occupants; Chair Hurd confirmed. Commissioner Hamilton questioned if the white paint may be an issue with reflection of the light.

Discussion ensued about what is appropriate based on standards of the Historic District Commission. The issues of lighting and sign size were further discussed.

A resident (2 Martin Place) spoke in favor of the new signage.

Recommendations discussed were as follows:

1. The Mitchell St sign shall be removed, and the remaining ground-mounted sign moved out of the right-of-way and clearview zone.
2. No signage may be illuminated after 8 p.m., or in a manner that would result in excessive light trespass onto neighboring properties with no more than 100 lumens per square foot of signage.
3. Landscaping shall be required around the base of the ground-mounted sign.

4. All applicable signs must be permitted to adhere to the Conway Sign Ordinance.

The applicant and Commission discussed the recommendations as written, current signage, and new signage. Based on all discussion, the Commission suggested tabling the discussion so that the applicant can have a meeting with Planning Director James Walden to put a plan together to mitigate concerns (lighting, sign placement, and sign size) and follow Historic District standards.

Commissioner Liz Hamilton motioned to table the discussion and Commissioner Shane Lind seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with the Chairman voting.

II. Public Hearing - Old Conway Overlay District

A. 908 Chestnut Street - Exterior Modification

The applicant (Bunny Adcock) and contractor (Zach Brown) are proposing to open a new storefront facing Chestnut St within an existing block addition to the Massey-Grummer Hardware building. The storefront will honor the design theme of historic storefronts within downtown.

Commissioner Liz Hamilton asked if there were any additional exterior modifications and the applicant shared there would not be.

Recommendations are as follows:

1. Staff recommends the approval of the proposal.

Commissioner Liz Hamilton motioned to approve and Commissioner Shane Lind seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with the Chairman voting.

A motion to adjourn, made by Liz Hamilton and seconded by Shane Lind, was approved unanimously.