



TULSA PRESERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 14, 2023, 11:00 A.M.

City Hall at One Technology Center, 175 East 2nd Street
10th Floor, North Conference Room

A. Opening Matters

1. Call to Order and Verification of Quorum

Commissioner Parker called the regular meeting to order at 11:00 A.M.

Members Present

Katelyn Parker, RA, Chair
Mark D. G. Sanders, Vice-Chair
Royce Ellington, Secretary
Shane Hood
Jackie Price Johannsen
Susan McKee, MFA
Mary Lee Townsend, Ph.D.

Members Absent

Geoffery Evans, PLA, ASLA
Peter Grant, GMR, CAPS
James E. Turner, AIA

Staff Present

Audrey Blank, Caroline Guerra Wolf, Caleb Rocha, Skylar Marlow-Fuson, Rebecca Surber-Cantu, Felicity Good, Anna America, Steven Lassman

Others Present

Chip Atkins, Cody Dinsmore

2. Introduction – Jackie Price Johannsen, Historic Property Owner

Commissioner Parker introduced Jackie Price Johannsen, who had been appointed to the Tulsa Preservation Commission to serve in the role of Historic Property Owner. In response to a question from Commissioner Sanders, Commissioner Johannsen clarified that her company owned several historic commercial properties in downtown Tulsa.

3. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting, July 25, 2023

Commissioner Ellington made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on July 25, 2023. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Townsend and passed with a majority.

Vote: Minutes – Regular Meeting, July 25, 2023

In Favor

1. Parker
2. Sanders
3. Ellington
4. Hood
5. Johannsen
6. Townsend

Opposed

Abstaining

McKee

Not Present

Evans
Grant
Turner

4. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest
None

B. Actionable Items

1. **Proposed amendment to the Unified Design Guidelines for Non-Residential and Mixed-Use Structures to add a new section, “Section H – Guidelines for City of Tulsa Parks.”**

Staff presented background information and described the proposed amendment to the *Unified Design Guidelines for Non-Residential and Mixed-Use Structures*. Commissioner Sanders provided context that, before any amendments were reviewed by the Historic Preservation (HP) Permit Subcommittee, staff spoke with the City of Tulsa Parks, Culture, and Recreation Department (Parks Department) and worked out a lot of issues.

Commissioner Sanders reported that the subcommittee reviewed the proposed guidelines at four (4) meetings and each time came closer to a solution. Despite initially believing the process might be contentious, Commissioner Sanders reported that he developed a great deal of confidence in the Parks Department and found the proposed amendment to be a good solution in concept. Commissioner Sanders stated that the proposed guidelines would ensure that, when a park comes into an HP Overlay district in the future, the preservation commission and Parks Department would at that time collectively identify the historic elements that are important to preserve. Commissioner Sanders stated that this would allow the preservation commission to focus on what matters from a preservation perspective and would allow the Parks Department to keep parks safe, useful and enjoyable for the public. Commissioner Sanders reported that the HP Permit Subcommittee enthusiastically recommended approval of the proposed amendment to the guidelines.

Commissioner Townsend asked about the proposed HP Permit exemption for the removal or replacement of fencing and wondered if there could be a scenario in which an historic or historically appropriate fence were removed. Felicity Good acknowledged that the removal of an historic fence could change the landscape of a park but that she was not aware of any historic fencing in City parks. Anna America, director of the Parks Department, stated that the only instance she could think of would be at Woodward Park, where there was fencing around the arboretum. Director America suggested revising proposed Tulsa Zoning Code amendments to exempt the removal of fencing *unless identified as a historic feature in the guidelines* but clarified that the removal or replacement of fencing was typically more common for sport fields than for fencing such as that at Woodward Park.

Commissioner Parker asked if the preservation commission was acting on proposed amendments to the zoning code, and Ms. Good replied that they were not, although

the proposed guideline amendments would inform the zoning code amendments. Commissioner Hood suggested adding the phrase found in proposed guidelines under H.2, “unless they have been identified as historic features under guideline H.1.1,” to the guideline related to the removal and replacement of fencing. Commissioner Sanders expressed concern that doing so would result in the guidelines differing from the proposed zoning code amendments, but Ms. Good stated that those could be revised as well so that both match. In response to a request for clarification from Commissioner Sanders, Ms. Good clarified that the proposed zoning code amendments would go directly to the Tulsa Metropolitan Area Planning Commission for their recommendation without a recommendation by the preservation commission.

Commissioner Sanders asked if the preservation commission could formally request that staff revise the zoning code amendments to reflect the guidelines. Audrey Blank replied that staff works on the wording of zoning code amendments and presents them to the planning commission, who make a recommendation to the City Council. Ms. Blank stated that planning staff should look at the proposed zoning code language and determine whether it is appropriate to change it. Ms. Good stated that staff would revise the zoning code language to match the proposed guideline amendments that are recommended by the preservation commission.

Citing safety requirements that the Parks Department must meet, Director America pointed to proposed guideline H.3.4 and requested that fencing abutting swimming pools and dog parks also be exempted from the HP Permit requirement, in addition to fencing abutting sport courts and sport fields. Ms. Good provided clarification about the current draft of proposed zoning code amendments. Director America then asked about the process for replacing the fencing at Swan Lake. Ms. Good was unsure whether the HP Permit would be required prior to the bidding process but stated an HP Permit would be required prior to work being initiated. Ms. Good also noted that the City of Tulsa had included the proposal for replacement of the fencing at Swan Lake in a recent HP Permit application.

Director America then mentioned the historic bridge at Owen Park and other historic features at parks such as Mohawk Park. Director America suggested working together in the future to identify historic elements at parks across the city outside of the HP Overlay process. Chip Atkins commented that Central Park in New York City had a similar program related to park monuments. Commissioner Parker stated that additional historic City parks could be added to HP Overlay districts, and Ms. Good stated that National Register of Historic Places listing could be another process. Commissioner Sanders pointed out that listing a park in the National Register on its own would not give the preservation commission any authority over the park, and Ms. Good agreed. Ms. Good also stated that a survey of historic resources in Tulsa parks could be a good option. Director America stated that she wished to highlight the role that parks have as historical pieces of neighborhoods. Ms. Blank suggested adding this as a discussion item on a future preservation commission agenda, as that type of activity is listed in the zoning code as a type of project the preservation commission could pursue. Director America stated that she appreciated the collaborative process, the learning experience, and the efforts everyone had put into the proposed guideline amendment.

Chip Atkins stated that proposed guideline H.3.6 addressing sport courts was vague and wished for requirements about the size and placement of sport courts within parks. Ms. Good recalled that representatives from the Parks Department had

explained the process for making changes to sports courts at an HP Permit Subcommittee meeting. Mr. Atkins expressed concern that sport courts could be expanded to take up an entire park under the currently proposed guidelines. Commissioner Sanders stated that, in his perspective, the HP Permit Subcommittee came to understand that the decision would be made at the discretion of the Parks Department, subject to their own regulations with the Parks Board. Commissioner Sanders stated that there would also likely be some sort of public process before expanding tennis courts at Tracy Park. Commissioner Sanders felt that at some point a hard line should be drawn about where the preservation commission's regulations end. Commissioner Sanders stated that the proposed guidelines would prevent the courts from being expanded to the point where historic elements, such as the retaining walls along 11th Street, were removed. Mr. Atkins stated he was concerned about the area of the courts and not materials. Commissioner Parker stated that the installation of new sport courts would be the primary issue but found it highly unlikely that the tennis courts at Tracy Park would be expanded to that extent.

Director America acknowledged the concerns and added that there were currently too many tennis courts in City parks and the Parks Department did not wish to add more paved surfaces to parks in general. However, Director America stated that, should the Parks Department determine a sport court is needed at a specific park, it should be a parks and recreation decision and not a historic preservation decision. Commissioners Parker and Ellington generally agreed. Commissioner Sanders stated that the proposed amendment would allow the layout of historic features in a park to be identified in the guidelines as historic features and would provide a measure of protection. Commissioner Ellington stated that lifestyles changes could occur and should be planned for.

Mr. Atkins acknowledged the arguments but emphasized a concern about the City running out of land and redeveloping the park. Mr. Atkins expressed distrust in the City and the Parks Department, citing a previous situation at Benedict Park. Mr. Atkins stated that he was glad the guideline amendment was moving forward but wanted to explain the reasons for his concerns. Commissioner Sanders stated that the point was good because in the future, if a park were to be added to an HP Overlay district, the preservation commission should look carefully at the historic features.

Commissioner Hood stated that there was precedent for looking at historic open spaces and asked if Swan Lake itself could be identified as a historic feature in Swan Lake Park. Commissioner Parker suggested adding Swan Lake to proposed guideline H.1.1.1. Ms. Good noted that the zoning code currently exempted the planting of organic materials from the HP Permit requirement. Commissioner Hood stated that park design and open space should be looked at as well. Director America stated it would be difficult to define the lake and its boundaries, as they were largely driven by regulations related to environmental factors such as water quality and stormwater, and stated that she was concerned about adding that language. Steven Lassman, Parks Planner, stated that the Parks Department also conducted maintenance such as dredging of the lake.

Commissioner McKee offered a historical perspective, stating that Swan Lake used to be larger, and expressed concern about construction further encroaching on the lake and making it smaller. Commissioner McKee supported language protecting the size of the lake. Director America gave an example of the lake at Centennial Park and stated that trash and debris in the lake was a massive maintenance issue and efforts to resolve it should not be complicated by an additional process. Director America

emphasized that it would be nearly impossible and incredibly difficult to deal with and gave other examples of water quality issues at Owen Park and Braden Park. Director America supported language about valuing and making an effort to protect such historic water features but did not support an HP Permit requirement for all projects related to Swan Lake.

Commissioner Hood felt it was important to recognize Swan Lake as a historic feature while acknowledging that general maintenance does not require HP Permit approval. Mr. Atkins stated that the previous neighborhood-specific design guidelines and the National Register nomination for Swan Lake Historic District identified Swan Lake as a historic resource. Commissioner Parker stated that adding Swan Lake as a historic feature under guideline H.1.1.1 would call for the lake to be retained overall but would not prevent repair and maintenance as needed. Director America stated that, as long as it was clear that the feature overall was retained, then that was fine, but the Parks Department should be able to make adjustments and complete required maintenance and repairs. Commissioner Townsend suggested revised wording of proposed Guideline H.1.1.1. Ms. Good clarified that the zoning code currently exempts general landscape maintenance and the planting of new organic materials from the HP Permit requirement. Commissioners and staff then summarized the revisions that had been discussed.

Commissioner Townsend made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed amendment to the *Unified Design Guidelines for Non-Residential and Mixed-Use Structures* to the Tulsa Metropolitan Area Planning Commission with the following revisions:

- Guideline H.1.1.1 will read, “Swan Lake – The historic park features in Swan Lake Park are Swan Lake and the concrete fountain in its center.”
- Add language in Guideline H.3.4 exempting fencing that abuts a swimming pool or dog park from HP Permit review.
- Add language in Guideline H.3.4 exempting removal or replacement of fencing with the same materials from HP Permit review unless the fencing has been identified as a historic feature in guideline H.1.1.
- Add language in Guideline H.3.6 exempting swimming pools and dog parks from HP Permit review.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hood and passed unanimously.

Vote: Proposed amendment to the Unified Design Guidelines for Non-Residential and Mixed-Use Structures to add a new section, “Section H – Guidelines for City of Tulsa Parks.”

Motion to recommend approval with revisions to the Tulsa Metropolitan Area Planning Commission

<u>In Favor</u>	<u>Opposed</u>	<u>Abstaining</u>	<u>Not Present</u>
1. Parker			Evans
2. Sanders			Grant
3. Ellington			Turner
4. Hood			
5. Johannsen			
6. McKee			
7. Townsend			

- C. Reports
 - 1. Staff Report
 - Staff reported on one staff-approved HP permit:
 - a. **1719 S. St. Louis Ave. (HP-0496-2023)**
 - Repair and replacement in-kind of damaged wood elements, including columns, siding, trim, and brackets
 - Staff announced that Dr. Matthew Pearce, National Register Coordinator for the State Historic Preservation Office, would offer a National Register of Historic Places training following the November 9, 2023, preservation commission meeting.
 - 2. Chair Report
 - None
- D. New Business
 - None
- E. Announcements and Future Agenda Items
 - Commissioner Parker suggested a change in the time of meetings for the 2024 calendar year. Staff stated that meetings could alternate between 11:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. on Thursdays in 2024.
- F. Public Comment
 - None
- G. Adjournment
 - Commissioner Parker adjourned the regular meeting at 12:07 P.M.