

Morningside Southside Historic District Meeting
October 4, 2019

Intro by Amie Edmiston
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Process for Historic Designation: Explanation by Warren

Preliminary evaluation report is prepared by the City to demonstrate historic value under the direction of the board. Can take several months to research and prepare. Then presented to HEPB. Board then would decide what to do: (1) nothing, (2) additional research, (3) designation. The HEPB votes on designation. They make their own determination.

What is the timeframe for historic designation?

--Contributing buildings give the neighborhood its historic character.

Non-contributing buildings have been altered and no longer have historic value.

--There is no minimum percentage of contributing structures needed in the City of Miami to designate.

Who would do the designation report if not Paul George?

--Paul George is not an architectural historian. The City staff prepares the designation report.

Why is the designation being considered?

--A report was presented to HEPB by Paul George in June. Because not all residents were aware and expressed concern, the item was deferred for six months.

--If district is designated it can be appealed to the City Commission. An appeal can also be made if the designation is denied. It can go as far as the court system. Committee would like to do a walk through with City to understand which structures are contributing.

Who requested the report and paid for it?

--It's not relevant because once the item was brought to HEPB, it needs to be considered.

Process continued: Explanation by Warren

Any alterations to the façade must be approved by HEPB. Staff can approve improvements which do not change the appearance or original configuration.

Contributing structures cannot be demolished unless they can qualify for demolition by neglect.

Non contributing structures can be demolished.

New construction can occur on vacant lots but must be consistent with the character of the district.

Does the City have photos and records of all homes to know what original facades looked like?

--Yes.

Explain the 50% rule when improvements exceed 50% of home value?

Proposed alterations are submitted to HEPB and then a report is submitted once the alterations have been made for tax benefit. Anyone can prepare the report.

Benefits:

- Maintain the historic character of the neighborhood
- Ad Valorem tax benefit. For 10-years you do not pay the increase in the home's value as an incentive.
- Reduced setbacks for second story and additions.

Anything can do about homes that are abandoned under construction with flooding issues? Would they be eligible for designation?

--No

What kinds of restrictions on driveways?

--Staff reviews driveways, fences and hedges.

Do not review interior changes or changes to the rear of the property.

How is the approval process different for historic districts?

--HEPB must review the project if there are alterations. Otherwise it is approved by staff.

Question about circular driveways. Are they permitted?

--City can create specific guidelines for the district if they are seemed appropriate.

If you want to increase or modify street lights is that controlled by HEPB? Add sidewalks?

--There is no historical control over medians. If lights are added to homes would be reviewed.

Can we review the report which shows the contributing structures?

--Yes, but this was created by Paul George, not the City. We can find out if a list exists.

When will the designation occur if I want to demo my house?

--If the design permits are already in process, the designation doesn't apply to your home.

If the demo permit is in and the building is not, your house would have to meet new criteria and would be affected by the moratorium.

When will there be a building moratorium?

--Once the preliminary report is submitted, there would be a moratorium on buildings (Jan/Feb)

Process Neighborhood Conservation District:

This is initiated by the neighborhood and allows you to develop guidelines specific to a neighborhood. There is no oversight board and the process for approval is easier than if a historic district.

Comment: If concern is large boxes for homes, then we should do a conservation district.

Who provides the oversight for NCD if there is no board?

--Urban Design Review Board (UDRB) reviews and makes recommendations only, unlike the HEPB makes decisions.

If Southside residents want to create the conservation district, would the City pay for the design guidelines? Who determines if there is a board to review applicants?

--The City would develop the guidelines. It's a process that could take up to two years. The City Commission does have the power to create the board and they would have to staff it.

Who makes the final approval on developments?

--City staff.

Have the existing NCDs been effective?

--Yes. Very few complaints.

How often are special research requests accommodated for approvals?

--The exceptions are the projects that go to the HEPB. It can take months to review.

When are historic guidelines triggered?

--When you apply for an alteration to your home.

What was the experience and expense of going before HEPB?

--Yes. She had to hire a landscaper and renderer and additional expense to update drawings. Added about 2 years to the process.

Aime: Would like to generate a survey at the end of this meeting to understand what we want to do as a neighborhood. The November 14th meeting will be publicly noticed. But nothing will happen until December.

David Holtzman: Everyone in this room has a voice and can share at the December HEPB meeting. There is definitely dissention and the HEPB needs to consider this in their final decision. The survey would be done through the MCA.

Concern that will affect ability to sell home for the value of the lot. Think should set up tight rules rather than historic district. This should be considered.

--Historic districts increase values of homes.

Can individual homes be designated instead of creating a historic district?

--There's nothing stopping an individual homeowner from designating their home exclusive of this process.

--A lot of historic districts seem to do well in terms of property value.

Paul George: Prepared the historic designation report. Would love to see the neighborhood designated, but he's not from the neighborhood. Wants to do the right thing. Illuminating to listen to all the comments. City Commission is not always supportive of historic preservation.

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