

Ryan Saunders

Fri, Dec 13, 2024 at 11:47 AM

To: fsharp@dunedin.fl.net

Francis,

PLEASE FORWARD THIS TO THE HPC COMMITTEE MEMBERS...

You mentioned there was another version of the draft provided yesterday. Can you please share that with me?

I want to reinforce key concerns that I addressed yesterday...

The text as it reads today...

111-1.7 Designation of Local Historic Districts

The following procedures shall be followed with respect to the designation of historic districts.

The process may be initiated by a property owner within the proposed district, by the HPC, or by the City Manager. For applications initiated by property owners in a residential historic district, a petition signed by at least 60% of the property owners within the proposed historic district must accompany an application. For applications initiated by property owners in a multi-family or commercial historic district, a petition signed by all the property owners within the proposed historic district must accompany an application.

This currently reads that ONLY applications submitted by property owners will require 60% of property owners to sign. If this is initiated by the HPC or City Manager that is NOT required.

My understanding from the meeting last night is that **this is a mistake** and it is the intention of the HPC to resolve this in the submission that will be submitted to the City Council, to ensure the 60% property owner approval applies as well to HPC or City Manager initiated applications as well.

Also in the meeting it was stated **that any home inside of a history district would not have to follow the rules, unless they applied** for their individual house to be included, however the language today does not reflect that it states...

*Any ordinance designating a historic district shall set forth the historic district design regulations that apply to the historic district. These regulations would then become the Historic District Design Regulations for that historic district. **Modifications to any structure within the designated historic district shall follow the COA procedures in Sec. 111.1.8 below.***

My understanding from the meeting yesterday is that this is a mistake and it is NOT the intention of the HPC to apply restrictions to every home, **only those that apply**. Is the HPC planning to update this language as well before submitting to the City Council?

Attached are the questions that I posed yesterday. Can you please provide a list of all those that were in attendance yesterday.

Thank you,

Ryan Saunders

<Preceding Pages were shared with the HPC Committee at the meeting on December 12>

December 12, 2024

Historic Preservation Committee
Dunedin, FL

Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Historic Preservation Code Changes

Dear HPC officers and members,

As a homeowner invested in Dunedin's character, culture, and future resilience, I am writing to share my concerns. I appreciate the thoughtful work you have done to preserve the city's unique history through proposed changes to Chapter 111 of the Land Development Code. However, after reviewing the language of these changes, I have serious concerns about their unintended negative impacts on homeowners, especially given the increasing challenges posed in the light of the impact seen by Milton and Helene. Some of my top concerns and questions have been outlined below.

1. Historic District Designation Without Owner Consent Section 111-1.7 grants the Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) and the City Manager the authority to initiate historic district applications independently, potentially reducing property owners' autonomy by allowing decisions to be made without their direct consent. This means the HPC can prepare the required documentation, hold public hearings, and present the application to the City Commission for approval—all without direct homeowner involvement, beyond the public hearings.

If a homeowner is away for the summer or on vacation during the notification period, they could return to find their property has been designated within a historic district, subjecting them to new regulations and associated costs.

How does the HPC plan to ensure that residents are adequately notified and involved before such a significant designation process moves forward?

Do you foresee scenarios where homeowners may be surprised that their property was deemed part of the historic district without their input?

2. Increased Complexity and Cost of Rebuilding Given recent challenges shared by residents during rebuilding efforts after storms like Milton and Helen, I worry about adding more bureaucratic layers, such as lengthy permit approvals, additional public hearings, and increased design review requirements. Under the proposed changes, homeowners in historic districts would face an added Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) process, involving public hearings, design reviews, and fees.

How will the HPC ensure this process remains transparent, efficient, and financially manageable for residents in historic districts, especially after a major storm?

3. Preservation Mandates After Flood Damage Section C.2 of the proposed code mandates that “property in a local historic district shall be preserved and protected in accordance with this section.” In practice, this could mean that after a flood, a homeowner may be required to restore historic architectural features rather than rebuild using modern, storm-resilient materials. Or their windows may need to be replaced with historically accurate windows which would come at a premium to the homeowners.

Would the HPC consider adding language that allows for reasonable flexibility in using modern materials that maintain aesthetic integrity while ensuring storm resilience?

4. Restrictions on Demolition and Rebuilding Section 111-1.6 H severely restricts the demolition of homes within historic districts, even when rebuilding would offer safer, more storm-resistant structures. This could conflict with climate resilience practices by limiting the ability of homeowners to elevate or redesign homes to better withstand future storms. In a state prone to hurricanes and rising sea levels, limiting residents’ ability to rebuild safer homes seems counterproductive.

Why was this restrictive demolition language added, and how does the HPC propose balancing historic preservation with climate-adaptive building practices, especially for those residents that have their homes zoned as part of a historic district?

5. Civil Penalties for Homeowners While civil penalties remain unchanged, I am concerned that residents unaware of their new historic district designation could face steep fines.

Can the HPC clarify whether there will be provisions to notify and educate homeowners about these penalties before they take effect?

6. Proposed Historic Districts This code change gives the HPC the authority to create historic districts. This is a very seriously increased level of power given to the HPC, that is not currently afforded to the HPC.

Does the HPC have any areas they plan to zone historic district, or research that has been done on what zones they would like to zone a historic district?

If this code is approved by the City of Dunedin, does the HPC have a timeline as to when or what area they will request be named a historic district?

From the outset, I want to acknowledge the HPC's dedication to preserving Dunedin's heritage and express my shared passion for the city's unique character. However, giving the HPC the authority to create historic district now - in the aftermath of two devastating storms requires a careful balance between preservation and resilience. I urge the HPC to take a way the authority to create historic districts or at the very least reconsider these provisions or clarify how residents' concerns will be addressed under the proposed changes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ryan Saunders