

MINUTES

Pine Bluff Historic District Commission Meeting
August 19, 2011 – 3:00 P.M.

The Pine Bluff Historic District Commission met on Friday, August 19, 2011 at 3:00 p.m. with a Public Hearing on a proposed locally designated historic district for downtown Pine Bluff.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Commissioner Dee Herring.

Roll Call: Commissioners present: Darnell Hawkins, Vivian Flowers, Jack Stradley, Marlene Davis-Lily, Dave Sadler and Dee Herring.

The meeting was turned over to Robert Tucker, staff advisor for the Commission, for a presentation on the locally designated historic district for downtown Pine Bluff encouraging investment and development. The Commission now has 60 days to obtain final approval for the proposal from the Pine Bluff City Council. If the proposal is approved by the City Council, the commission's next step will be to draft the design guidelines. Mr. Tucker stated that any new building or significant change to the outward appearance to an existing building in the district will come before the commission for pre-approval. Buildings that are being proposed for demolition will also come before the commission before a final decision is made.

The proposed locally designated historic district would include: a rough rectangle from Martha Mitchell Expressway in the north to 10th Avenue in the south. Sections extend as far west to Walnut Street and east to Alabama Street. The proposal has already been recommended for approval by the Historic District Commission, the Arkansas Historic preservation Program and the Pine Bluff Planning Commission.

Mr. Tucker listed several benefits to locally designated historic districts, citing a 2004 state government commissioned study:

- Arkansas's heritage attracts tourists
- Preserving historic properties creates jobs
- State grant programs for preservation are a good public investment
- Incentives for historic preservation attract investment
- State historic rehabilitation tax credits will create more jobs and income
- Locally designated historic districts enhance property values
- Revitalization of Arkansas' Main Street Communities is good business
- Historic preservation is a good investment compared to other economic activities

Mr. Tucker cited downtown planning experts who report that surveys have shown that historic character is the No. 1 attribute identified for downtown by the general public, that developers understand the power of historic buildings to provide

unique spaces for dining and entertainment venues and that every downtown plan should capitalize of the area's history and character. Mr. Tucker stated how a downtown looks says a great deal about a community.

No further comments, the meeting adjourned.