



Randall L. Woodfin
Mayor

Edwin Revell
Director

Darren L. Whitt
Deputy Director

BIRMINGHAM HISTORICAL COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

**Thursday, September 12, 2019
3:00 p.m.**

**Held at
Spain & Gillon, L.L.C.
505 North 20th Street, Suite 1200
Birmingham, AL 35203**

Members Present:

Sam Frazier, Chairperson
Linda Nelson, Vice-Chairperson
Nolanda Hatcher, Secretary
Cathy Adams
David Fleming

Members Absent:

Catherine Browne – called in proxy
Steven Hoyt
John Morgan
Cherri Pitts

Staff Present:

Karla Calvert
Pamela Perry

Chairperson Sam Frazier called the meeting to order at 3:09 p.m. The minutes of the April 9, 2019 meeting were not ready, and therefore, a vote on the minutes would be deferred.

I. Topics for Review and/or Discussion:

A. BHC vote on whether the following proposed National Register nominations meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

1. The South Central Bell Building, Birmingham, Jefferson County, Alabama

David Fleming stated that Atlanta-based developers want to convert the South Central Bell building to mixed-use and apartments, and tax credits are being sought. Linda Nelson and Cathy Adams expressed concerns about calling the South Central Bell significant within the last fifty years.

The following corrections were pointed out as being needed:

- Page 8, last paragraph, reference to the first president
- Protective Life is on 21st and not 22nd Street.
- 1971 and 1972 dates – should be all 1971

Nolanda Hatcher commented on the building's major presence. Sam Frazier noted that the building has historic significance, and pointed out the lack of buildings after the Civil Rights movement.

David Fleming made a motion to approve the nomination with the items for correction. Linda Nelson said that she would help with noting those items. Cathy Adams seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. The Birmingham Food Terminal Historic District, Birmingham, Jefferson County, Alabama

A conference call was placed to the consultant, David Schneider, who prepared the National Register nomination for the Birmingham Food Terminal Historic District. The Commission asked why the Roundhouse was not in the nomination even though it is eligible. Mr. Schneider stated that the Alabama Historical Commission did not want the Roundhouse to be in the nomination because of fear of lawsuit from the railroad. There's an approved Part II on the entire complex. A typo was noted on page 3, which references the roundhouse, but the roundhouse shouldn't be included. The food terminal property is owned by one entity.

Cathy Adams made a motion to reject the nomination. The motion failed for lack of a second. Nolanda Hatcher stated the nomination meets the National Register criteria, and there are efforts to rehab the buildings. Sam Frazier stated that he regards historic preservation as the most effective revitalization tool for the preservation of neighborhoods.

David Fleming made a motion to approve the nomination, with a note that the Finley Roundhouse be included. Linda Nelson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Sam Frazier observed that the need to include the Roundhouse is similar to what happened with the Woodward House, which politicians recommended by cut out of the Redmont nomination, but ultimately it was included.

3. The Five Points South Historic District (3rd Expansion), Birmingham, Jefferson County, Alabama

Next, the Commission discussed the nomination for a third expansion to the Five Points South Historic District. Nolanda Hatcher stated that she would like to hear from David Schneider as to what the goals are. The historic designation could help determine the future of properties. Another conference call was made to David Schneider, who prepared the nomination.

Sam Frazier mentioned that it seems that the Southern Life Building wouldn't be contributing. David Schneider mentioned an alternative to the exceptional

significance test. Frazier asked about the rule concerning the number of non-contributing structures that it takes to disqualify a district. Schneider stated that it's not a hard and fast rule. He noted that the Building Trades Tower was the push for the expansion. David Fleming observed that since the buildings seem to be of a different era from those in the original district, it seems that a separate district could have been proposed. Schneider stated that he applies the Park Service rules [when assessing the district boundaries].

Linda Nelson made a motion to deny the nomination [as meeting the National Register criteria]. Nolanda Hatcher seconded the motion. David Fleming voted against the denial, and the motion passed with the majority of members present voting in favor of the motion to deny the nomination.

Next, there was miscellaneous discussion regarding tax credits.

B. Update on the Local Historic District Designation for the South East Lake Area

Calvert stated that work was continuing on the South East Lake local historic district designation, and the draft Historic Preservation Plan, which includes design guidelines, would have to be presented to the neighborhood for comments. After presenting the Plan to the neighborhood, a Historical Commission meeting would have to be held to review the Plan and design guidelines.

II. Adjournment

With there being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:15 p.m.