

**Tifton City Council
Special Called Meeting
November 12, 2019
5:00 PM
Tifton City Hall**

Attendees

Mayor Julie Smith
Council Member Jack Folk
Council Member Frank Sayles
Council Member Johnny Terrell

Pete Pyrzenski, City Manager
Rob Wilmot, City Attorney
Jessica White, City Clerk

City Council held a Special Called Meeting to provide the public information and update them on the recent decision made by the HPC to approve a demolition permit for the Historic Town Terrance Hotel commonly referred to as the "Pink Motel".

Mayor Julie Smith called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. Mayor Smith mentioned the Council will not be voting at the meeting tonight, but called the meeting to provide residents with information on the Historic Preservation Commission's decision and appeal process.

Discussion of Town Terrace

Mayor Smith read the below statement before opening the meeting up for public comment.

"The City of Tifton has long been recognized across our state and region as a leader in economic development, historic preservation, downtown development and quality community efforts as it relates to arts, education, recreation, and more. And while some may say that these ideals are not related- is historic preservation economic development or does quality of life impact a tax base, we say they are intertwined implicitly. It's how we as a community choose to move forward with our resources that makes the difference between a successful community and one that isn't. To be responsive to the needs and desires of our residents and businesses is paramount to a progressive, active, engaging city that attracts visitors, supports existing business and attracts new residents, business and industry to the fold.

With recent events relating to the Town Terrace Hotel located on 12th Street in the northernmost boundary of Tifton's Historic District, the City Council felt it prudent to gather tonight to provide information to the community on the process of what has transpired over the last several months. We will not be taking any action tonight. This is not a hearing to override or support any decisions. Our purpose tonight is not to decide if we the Council think the property should be saved or demolished – that is not our role tonight. We wanted to provide the public with the specific factual information of what has transpired and to offer options as it relates to the current vote given by the HPC.

As a City of Ethics, it is important to each of us personally and professionally that we be transparent. Our goal tonight is to provide you with facts – not innuendo or rumor, but facts regarding the processes that have taken place. This is not an appeal process tonight. Tonight, we will only disburse information. There has been quite a bit of public discussion relating to this property. The Council felt it necessary to provide you with the facts so that you, the public, know everything that we the Council know as it relates to this application and vote. In closing, I want to reiterate that the Council is not taking a vote tonight. We stand behind our Boards and will be transparent with information. Any of the information that we've been provided is available to you the

public via an Open Records Request. Our commitment is to support this community and our volunteers, and to provide a platform for the best Tifton we can be.”

Public Comments

Hayward Fowler, 1018 Park Avenue

Mr. Fowler mentioned he has spoken with one of the current owners of the property today and he was informed that the property sale was not moving forward. Mr. Fowler talked in reference to the historic importance of the Hotel and mentioned something needs to be done to keep it and turn it into something productive.

Jeff Gibbs, 620 N. College Avenue

Mr. Gibbs stated he lives in the historic district and has been before the HPC several times. He mentioned sometimes they have ruled in his favor and sometimes they didn't. Mr. Gibbs suggested the City provide the public with more information on the HPC guidelines, permitting process, and appeal process so the residents can be properly educated and informed. Mr. Gibbs felt getting this information to the public will help residents be fully aware of decisions, such as the recent decision, and they can properly comment and respond.

Leslie Roach, 1002 N. Ridge Avenue

Ms. Roach questioned why the Hotel was not a historic property and how can historic buildings even be demolished?

Mr. Bruce Green, URA Director, stated any property which is fifty (50) years old and contains its original architectural structure is an historic property based on the Department of Interiors Guidelines. He mentioned that the hotel is a contributing property to the Historic District because of its age and character, even though it is not individually listing on the National Historic Register. Mr. Pete Pyrzenski, City Manager, stated the City has received confirmation from Ms. Sarah Rogers w/ Georgia HPD that Town Terrace is listed on the historic register and has been since 2008.

Mr. Rob Wilmot, City Attorney, spoke in reference to the HPC guidelines. Mr. Wilmot mentioned the HPC guidelines have a process and documentation that must be provided before a property can be demolished. He mentioned anyone submitting a request to demolish a historic building must provide significant evidence that the structure is unstable and not economically feasible to repair before a property can be demolished. Mr. Wilmot mentioned when the HPC has to consider an application for demolishing a building they must go about their decision with caution, due care, and substantial information provided before they can make an informed decision. Mr. Wilmot mentioned for time to time certain properties will meet the established guidelines to necessitate demolition. Mayor Smith mentioned the City's Historic Preservation Guidelines are available on the City's Website.

Sherry Bishop, 308 W. 12th Street (Resident of Town Terrace)

Ms. Bishop mentioned she is a current resident at Town Terrace and enjoys living there. She mentioned if the current property is demolished, many of the current residents will not have a place to live and she wished to continue living at Town Terrace.

Roy Vanzant, 1015 N. College Ave

Mr. Vanzant spoke positively about Tifton's Historic District. He suggested addressing the current issues at the Town Terrace and develop a plan to address those issues. He mentioned the property could really be

saved and turned into a tourist attraction. He expressed that demolishing the building will take away from the history of the property and Tifton's history.

Casey Harrison, 2616 Diana Circle

Ms. Harrison expressed that in this decision the public was not given an opportunity to respond prior to a decision being made and felt the board made a hasty decision. She furthered that the HPC Board should be held to the guidelines when making such a decision.

Sherry Kelvin, 1811 Red Fox Trail

Ms. Kelvin mentioned she moved to Tifton twelve years ago, but has been visiting for many years. She expressed that the Town Terrace has a certain nostalgia and all options for its future should be reviewed before making such a huge decision. She mentioned she is very glad the current issue has passed and she is looking forward to seeing what the future holds for the property.

Mr. Lonnie Lewis, 2618 Diana Circle

Mr. Lewis spoke favorably of the Town Terrace and encouraged the community to step up and preserve the location.

Mr. Bruce Green, URA Director, spoke briefly about the Tax Credits and Incentives available for this property and for many of the properties located in the historic district and enterprise zone. He also briefly informed the public of financing opportunities available for properties such as Town Terrace.

Mr. Wilnot informed those present of the HPC appeal process. He mentioned anyone who feels they were adversely affected by an HPC Decision can file an appeal to City Council within 15 day following the decision. Mr. Wilnot mentioned the appeal should be made in writing and submitted to the City Manager.

Mayor Smith thanked those present, those that spoke out, and also thanked the City's Board Members for their service.

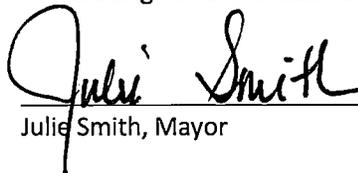
Executive Session

Council Member Johnny Terrell made the first motion to go into executive session to discuss legal matters. Motion second by Folk and unanimously approved. Meeting closed to executive session.

Resolution Providing for Executive Session

Council Member Johnny Terrell made the first motion for approval of the resolution, seconded by Folk, and unanimously approved.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned.



Julie Smith, Mayor



Jessica White, City Clerk