



**CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG  
COMMUNITY PLANNING & PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING**

**Via Zoom**

**JULY 14, 2020  
TUESDAY  
2:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Christopher “Chris” A. Burke, Chair  
Sharon Winters, Vice Chair  
C. Copley Gerdes  
Jeff Rogo  
Lisa Wannemacher, Alternate  
Thomas “Tom” Whiteman  
Keisha A. Bell  
Will Michaels  
Gwendolyn “Gwen” Reese, Alternate

**Commissioners Absent:** Jeffery “Jeff” M. Wolf

**Staff Present:** Derek Kilborn, Manager, Urban Planning & Historic Preservation  
Elizabeth Abernethy, Director, Planning and Development Services  
Laura Duvokot, Historic Preservationist II  
Kelly Perkins, Historic Preservationist II  
Michael Dema, Assistant City Attorney  
Heather Judd, Assistant City Attorney  
Katherine Connell, Administrative Assistant, Planning & Development Services  
Iris Winn, Administrative Assistant, Planning & Development Services

The public hearing was called to order at 2:00 p.m., a quorum was present.

**I. OPENING REMARKS OF CHAIR**

**II. ROLL CALL**

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND SWEARING IN OF WITNESSES**

**IV. MINUTES**

The minutes from the February 11, 2020 meetings were approved unanimously

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT****VI. QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARINGS****A. City File 20-90200007 Contact Person: Laura Duvekot, 892-5451**

**Request:** Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of an Accessory Living Space and front fence on the property of 3225 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. N., a contributing resource to the Kenwood Section – Southeast Kenwood Local Historic District and Approval of a variance to the required rear yard setback from 7-feet to 6-feet and for an Accessory Living Space in an NT zoning district.

**Staff Presentation**

Laura Duvekot gave a PowerPoint presentation based on the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) portion of the Staff Report.

Ann Vickstrom gave a PowerPoint Presentation based on the variance portion of the Staff Report.

**Applicant Presentation**

Austin Grinder spoke on behalf of the project.

**Registered Opponent**

None.

**Public Hearing**

None.

**Cross Examination:**

City Staff:  
Waived.

Applicant:  
Waived.

**Rebuttal/Closing Remarks**

City Staff:  
Waived.

Applicant:  
Waived

**MOTION #1:** *Commissioner Rogo made a motion approving the application for the Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of an accessory living space and the front fence subject to Staff conditions:*

1. Replacement windows will feature contoured, three-dimensional external muntins.



Applicant:  
Waived.

### **Rebuttal/Closing Remarks**

City Staff:  
Waived.

Applicant/Owner:  
Waived.

**MOTION:**                *Commissioner Gerdes made a motion to approve COA (Certificate of Appropriateness) with special conditions:*

1. Windows will be installed to be setback within the wall plane and feature a reveal of at least two inches.
2. All other necessary permits shall be obtained. Any additional work shall be presented to staff for determination of the necessity of additional COA approval.
3. This approval will be valid for 24 months beginning on the date of revocation of the local Emergency Declaration.

*Commissioner Rogo Seconded*

**VOTE:**                *YES – 7 –Bell, Burke, Gerdes, Rogo, Whiteman, Winters, Wannemacher*  
*NO – 0*

*Motion passed unanimously*

## **VII. PUBLIC HEARING**

**A. City File 20-90600002**

**Contact Person: Derek Kilborn, 893-7872**

**Request:** Certify the proposed narrative for a historic marker memorializing the 1914 lynching of John Evans by local residents and the legacy of lynching nationwide, as required by the City's Markers and Monuments Policy.

### **Staff Presentation**

Derek Kilborn gave a PowerPoint presentation based on the Staff Report.

### **Public Hearing**

**Jacqueline Williams Hubbard, Esq.,** Co-Chair The Pinellas County Community Remembrance Project Coalition (CRPC): Historically what has happened is that there were at least two groups, perhaps more who were working on a similar path to try and join the rest of the country in memorializing these horrific acts that did occur, in our hometown. We started at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, I am not sure when Gwen's group started but I know that they have been working on it for some time and a number of other citizens in the area. We made an application, those of us who were from the Episcopalians segment to the Equal Justice Initiative because they were starting to fund and partner with community groups. When we contacted the Equal

Justice Initiative, they told us there were about six or seven other groups in the St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, area who were also interested and why didn't we all get together and form the community remembrance project. They sent us all of the names of the people, including Gwen, and we sent out an email suggesting that we all meet and come together as a group and make a united effort for this lynching memorial marker. We formally organized ourselves as a community association in April of 2019, that was our first big meeting. That was the meeting when Gwen was selected as Co-chair, I was selected as Co-chair. We also had a Secretary, who has been excellent, everybody has been excellent. Derek has been great; the City Staff has been wonderful. The Equal Justice Initiative had us formalize an application which was very detailed. At different times several members of the Coalition went to Montgomery, Alabama to visit Bryan Stevenson's Equal Justice Initiative Museum, which is an unbelievable experience that I recommend for everyone. After visiting the museums, there are two, there is one dedicated to lynchings and one dedicated to the civil rights struggle. We came back, formalized our proposal, it was sent to the Equal Justice Initiative, and we were assigned two liaisons. Working with them, the proposal ultimately was submitted and working with the City, we were approved as their partner. Now, that meant a lot of things, but the main thing that it meant was the cost of the memorial marker, which they gave a value of about \$3,000.00, will be born by the Equal Justice Initiative, so no money would have to come from St. Petersburg. The second thing was that the cost of shipping the marker, from Montgomery to St. Petersburg, that cost would also be born by the Equal Justice Initiative. The coalition has raised a great deal of money and we have funds to take care of the cost of installing, maintaining the grounds where the marker is by working with the City. We worked very closely with Dr. Tomlin [Deputy Mayor and City Administrator], she is very aware of what we are doing and working closely with Derek Kilborn and Wayne Atherholt [Cultural Affairs Director]. It really has been a community-wide effort. We have tremendous support throughout the community, and we have people who are part of the coalition who are from north county, not the City of St. Petersburg, but I would say 90% or more people who are part of this community coalition are residents of St. Petersburg. We are looking forward and hoping that you will approve this because it just means so much to our community. It will remind people of some of the struggles that African Americans have gone through and survived, and we now contribute, so positively to our local community. People do need to be reminded that certain things did occur. Some of those things were very unpleasant and we think the wording of the marker does not cast dispersion on anyone in particular. As you know, no one was ever prosecuted for this particular crime. The history of lynching in America, is on the other side of the marker, so it is an educational tool in addition to something we hope would foster racial reconciliation across the City and also conversations. I did attend the installation of the marker in Orlando, and I can tell you that the entire community, not just the City of Orlando but the Orange County politicians, the City politicians, the educators, the ministers, the rabbis, everybody came out. Everyone understood the importance of this particular memorial. We are asking, I am speaking on behalf of the coalition, we are asking you to join your sister cities throughout the country and erect a marker that will foster communication and racial reconciliation, thank you.

Commissioner Burke: Mrs. Hubbard thank you very much and you got in just before the clock was expiring and you got us a lot of information. I really appreciate you expanding on that. I do not see anyone else on the list for public comment, however we would open this up for comment to Ms. Reese if she was interested. I do not see her raising her hand in the meeting, so am I correct that there is no other public comment? Ms. Reese, do you want to comment on this?

Ms. Gwendolyn Reese: First I would like to thank Derek for the excellent presentation and to thank my Co-chair Jacquie for doing a wonderful job. We know that this is very important, and we are hoping that all of my fellow commissioners will deem it as important too. This is not just about a memorial, the Equal Justice Initiative requires us to educate the community. We have been doing this for over a year, whether it was at the Great American Teach-In at various high schools throughout the county. We have spoken to various civic and service organizations and there is also an essay attached to this for high school students and the Equal Justice

Initiative has provided \$5,000.00 for that essay. Through another major donation we are extending it to be an arts contest as well. What we are hoping to do, as Jacquie said, is initiate conversation and spearhead racial reconciliation, around this project which includes the memorial, the essay and the arts content. I would like to say that John Evans was only one of three documented lynchings in our area, however, he was one at that location, so we are focusing on him on this particular memorial, but we did have two other documented lynchings, and we are still documenting others. This is just one of over four hundred thousand (400,000) lynchings that took place throughout this country. We are looking forward to your questions, and we are hoping that you approve this so that we can move on and in our community recognizing not just one part of our history but all of our history. Thank you Chair for the opportunity to address this.

Commissioner Burke: Thank you and thank you for your passion we appreciate it. That will conclude the public hearing and we can move into Executive Session.

### **Executive Session:**

Commissioner Burke: Commissioners this will allow you to ask any questions or make comments and we did have a pretty complete presentation and I would like to kick off the Executive Session by recognizing Commissioner Wannemacher.

Commissioner Wannemacher: Thank you very much, that was a very good presentation, thank you very much and Ms. Hubbard and Commissioner Reese thank you very much for your comments as well. My comment is, really, just a graphic comment. In Attachment A, the first side of the memorial plaque is shown as being, the text is forced justified, in the second paragraph it shows it being left justified. I just want to make sure, when the text is given to the manufacturer, they know to force justify both sides, that is all.

Derek Kilborn: Thank you for your comment I am aware of that. When I moved the text over into the body of the report, I was very careful not to re-type the language because I did not want to type something wrong. The way it was originally set up, your right, one was left justified, the other was not. It will definitely be taken care of as production of the sign, yes. Thank you, I thought I was going to get that through, but you caught me.

Commissioner Burke: Thank you for bringing that up, it is the details that matter, I appreciate you acknowledging that. Commissioner Bell, you had a comment?

Commissioner Bell: Yes, I am humbly honored, if that is a phrase, humbly honored to have the unique experience to vote in favor of this installment. Particularly because I am the great-granddaughter of a man who was killed by the KKK. This makes this vote for me, especially because it is close to home. I am happy the City initiated this installment of the memorial and I would like to emphasize that we as a community as a city, really as a nation, we do not forget. Thank you.

Commissioner Burke: Thank you Commissioner Bell for your comments. Any other Commissioners that would like to comment? Yes, Commissioner Winters.

Commissioner Winters: Yes, I think this is a really important action to take. I really appreciate the community's effort to pull this together. I think it is really about continuing conversation, educating those of us who don't know these stories, who may be new to the community or who have been around for a while and never learned them. I applaud your efforts with the schools. I also think this is a wonderful opportunity for reconciliation, and I hope that we all get an invitation to the dedication ceremony, when that occurs. I do want to say, as a member of the League of Women Voters, I went on a civil rights study tour into Alabama a few

years ago. Soon after the museum was opened and the memorial was dedicated by the Equal Justice Initiative, and do, it is worth going out of your way to see it, it is a really powerful site installation, essentially it has, it is kind of a coffin representing every single county in the country where there was a lynching and the names of the known people who were lynched, are etched onto those coffin like structures. It is really amazing, it is very powerful, and it is a moment of deep concern and education for many of us. Thanks, thanks for the effort.

Commissioner Burke: Thank you very much Commissioner Winters, is there anyone else who would like to speak?

Commissioner Rogo: Thank you Mr. Chairman, one way that we can acknowledge the public input is each of use commissioners received roughly two dozen emails in support of the creation of this marker monument. We received in our Staff Report a comment from a member of the Community Remembrance Committee in Chattanooga, TN.

There can be no reconciliation or healing without remembering the past.

It is interesting that this commission has dealt with the past and markers now two consecutive meetings, the timing is most appropriate. I find myself most convinced by a comment made by Dr. Julie Buckner-Armstrong of the University of South Florida, she said:

We need to reckon with the darkest parts of our past, and this is a vital first step towards taking accountability.

Some of the other words that were used in those email messages were: healing, mourning, remembrance, honesty, reconciliation. I am very much in support of the motion, well I will even make that motion.

***MOTION: Commissioner Rogo made a motion that he Commission certify the proposed narrative for a historic marker memorializing the 1914 lynching of John Evans, the Commission approve the contents of the marker, with the three conditions, proving the event occurred, the subject of the marker made a significant contribution to the history of St. Petersburg, and that the proposed text is historically accurate.***

1. The CPPC is certifying the proposed marker's historic accuracy and overall importance to St. Petersburg's local history and heritage;
2. Installation shall be coordinated through the City Development Administration, City Architect, and Real Estate and Property Management, Building Maintenance; and
3. Relocation or removal, if required, shall be conducted in accordance with the City's Markers and Monuments Policy.

***Commissioner Bell seconded the motion.***

Commissioner Burke: We do have a motion on the floor, and I want to compliment you Commissioner Rogo on getting that very, very complete and accurate, so thank you very much. We can I think, we would be remiss if we didn't allow a member of the public to speak on this important issue. If you could please bring that person in, then we will continue the Executive Session.

Oscar Banks, member Promise Foundation: I am the new pastor over at the Palm Lakes Church here in Sunny St. Petersburg, Florida. This is my first time attending any of the City meetings. I am excited about this initiative especially in this time and in this day. I know some of the people say we just need to get over the past and move on, but you can never know where you are going until you know where you have been. You can never bring healing and hope and reconciliation until we right the wrong of the past. I am excited to be part of a City sees God's healing in this way, so I am just excited to be a part of it.

Commissioner Burke: Thank you for your comments we do appreciate that. Any other members of the Commission that wish to speak? I do not see any hands up.

Attorney Judd: I think Commissioner Michaels is waiving...

Commissioner Burke: His analog hand. Commissioner Michaels, go ahead.

Commissioner Michaels: Thank you, I too want to thank the Community Remembrance Project Coalition for bringing this extremely important marker before the Commission and before our City. Going back into Jon Wilson's account and Raymond "Ray" Arsenault account of the John Evan's lynching, his account is basically the same as Jon Wilson's and he concludes with a statement that this was the most gruesome and shamefully episode in St. Petersburg's history. You can't make a heavier statement than that. These markers are extremely important because they help to tell a story, to make people aware and I think most people in our city are really not aware of the John Evans lynching and all that is associated with it. I think it is an important step in educating the community, making people aware and as many people have already said, this is a very important step towards racial reconciliation. (audio lost for .05 seconds), thank you.

Commissioner Burke: Thank you Dr. Michaels. Are there any other commissioners that would like to speak? We do have a motion on the floor and a second that we can get to. I don't see any, I mentioned last month how fortunate we are to have people with expertise in architecture and historic construction, Sharon Winters, Lisa Wannemacher and Jeff Wolf, all have a real deep background in that. As a commission we also have to acknowledge how lucky we are to have Will Michaels and Gwen Reese who know so much about the history of this City that we can always call upon them when we need to get a deep dive into those things. This, obviously is an emotional issue in the city right now and has been for years. I want to thank Ms. Hubbard and Ms. Reese for taking the time to acknowledge the work of Derek Kilborn and the City and the work that they have put in. They do a lot of things for us that sometimes do not go recognized, so thank you for doing that. I do not see any other discussion, we do have a motion on the floor, I would like to go ahead and call the vote.

**VOTE:**                    **YES – 7 – Bell, Burke, Gerdes, Rogo, Whiteman, Winters, Wannemacher**  
                                  **NO – 0**

***Motion passed unanimously***

## **XI. ADJOURN**

Commissioner Whiteman made a motion to adjourn.  
Commissioner Rogo seconded.

With no further items to come before the Commission, the public hearing was adjourned at 3:30 P.M.