



CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 9/29/2015

ALL

Item Creation Date: 9/24/2015

2015 Amendments to the Historic Preservation Ordinance

Agenda Item#: 22.

Summary:

ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTERS 10, 33, AND 44 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES relating to Historic Preservation; making findings and containing other provisions relating to the foregoing subject; containing a savings clause; providing for severability

Background:

In October of 2010, the City amended its Historic Preservation Ordinance (HPO). The update significantly changed the way Houston's historic districts were created and protected. By 2014, through feedback from the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC), applicants and planning staff, the Planning & Development Department (P&D) had identified a number of improvements that would make the HPO operate more smoothly for city staff and customers.

In the fall of 2014, Mayor Parker appointed a HPO Review Committee, comprised of three members of the HAHC and the two members of the Planning Commission, to review the ordinance and recommend improvements. The Mayor asked that the committee correct and clarify the HPO and "provide applicants with additional options for a streamlined approval, provide the Commission with improved guidance on which to base their decisions and create a more efficient/user-friendly process."

P&D, working closely with the Committee, administered a transparent, inclusive process for improving the HPO. The HPO Review Committee met 13 times from September 2014 through April 2015. Each meeting was held in the evening so that more members of the public could attend. Meetings were held at the City Hall annex and broadcast live via internet streaming. P&D posted links to every broadcast and placed all notes and distribution materials on P&D's website. Each Committee meeting reserved time for interested members of the public to address the Committee. P&D allowed the public to sign up for related emails, and the email distribution list grew to approximately 100 people. CitizensNet emails and other tools were also used spread information to an additional 7,000 people.

The Committee issued their final recommendations report in April 2015, and P&D began working with stakeholders to develop proposed ordinance language. P&D published draft "redline" language on June 26, 2015, and allowed public comment until July 27, 2015. HAHC held a public hearing on the changes on July 22, 2015. P&D presented recommendations on over 80 public comments to the HAHC on August 5, 2015, and received HAHC input on these recommendations. P&D then presented a revised draft of the HPO to the HAHC on August 27, 2015. On August 27, the HAHC requested time for further study.

P&D presented a summary of the proposed changes to the City Council Quality of Life Committee on September 2, 2015. A copy of that presentation is also attached.

On September 24, 2015, the HAHC voted to unanimously recommend City Council adopt amendments to the HPO. These amendments presented for Council consideration include the recommendations put forth by the HAHC with one modification. This modification is regarding the appeals process.


Patrick Walsh, P.E.

Director

Planning and Development Department

Prior Council Action:

Ord. 2010-0814, 10-13-10

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ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Quality of Life Committee Presentation

Type

Backup Material