

**OLD METAIRIE COMMISSION (OMC) MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING
January 7, 2021 9:00 a.m.**

In Attendance

Old Metairie Commission Members

	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Clifford Brown, Chair	√	
David Webber, Vice-Chair	√	
Dr. Monica Monica	√	
Thomas McAlister	√	
Cynthia J. Steward	√	

Planning Department

Brooke P. Tolbert, Assistant Director
Jay Hébert, Senior Planner
Nedra McKinney, Typist Clerk III
Alena Gesser, Planner II

Others

Bess Renfrow, Parish Attorney
Tom Scott, Inspection and Code Enforcement

Mr. Brown, Chairman, introduced himself, other members of the Commission, and the Parish staff. In light of the spread of COVID-19 and the on-going State of Emergency in Louisiana, the Jefferson Parish Planning Department held the Old Metairie Commission Public Hearing via teleconference on Thursday, January 7th, 2021 at 9:02 A.M. in compliance with La. R.S. 42:17.1.

OM-23-20, 311 Iona St.,

Deferred from last month's hearing to allow the applicant to meet with the property owners to discuss the two trees.

Mr. Hebert reported the findings of the case and stated that we have received two letters; One from the applicant with regards to the adjacent property at 307 Iona St. in which the property owner is agreeing and consenting with the applicant or the arborist to remove the trees at no cost to them. We received a 2nd letter from the property owner at 315 Iona St. stating that they agree and consent to the applicant removing the trees also at no cost to them.

There were no callers who presented themselves for public comment.

Mr. Brown acknowledged that he was not present at the last meeting and asked Mr. Hebert what was the reason for the tree removal request. Mr. Hebert indicated that the request was a demolition and new construction, and although the trees were not in the buildable area they were in poor condition and that the applicant was going to replace the trees with new trees. The

Commission members and others present had further discussion on the trees being in poor condition and that since the adjacent property owners has written consent, they had no objection to the trees being removed.

Mr. McAlister made a motion to recommend approval to remove the two trees. Seconded by Mr. Webber.

Ms. McKinney called the roll on the motion:

	Aye	Nay
Mr. Brown	<u> √ </u>	_____
Dr. Monica	<u> √ </u>	_____
Mr. Webber	<u> √ </u>	_____
Mr. McAlister	<u> √ </u>	_____
Ms. Steward	<u> √ </u>	_____

The ayes have it by a vote of 5 to 0. Motion approved.

OM-22-20, 197 Iona St.

A request to demolish an existing dwelling on Lot E, Square 5, Metairie Suburb Subdivision, Jefferson Parish, LA, bounded by Avenue A, Hector Ave., and Avenue B, zoned R-1A Single-Family Residential/OMNCD Old Metairie Neighborhood Conservation District. (Council District 5)

Mr. Hebert reported the findings of the case.

Planning Department: Approval for the following reasons:

- The proposal to demolish the existing residence is consistent with the OMNCD intent to "...maintain neighborhood character and integrity by focusing special attention on the maintenance of the physical environment... and the accommodation of desirable change".
- The Planning Department defers to the Parish Arborist on the removal and protection of the trees.

Mr. Brown opened the floor for the applicant/owner to speak.

Mr. John Logan, the executor of the estate of Alma Atkinson, the owner, says the house is really in bad shape and the owner was too ill to do any reconstruction on the house. Mr. Logan states that they are not going to remove any trees and they have spoken with the contractor regarding the demolition and was told that this can be done without harming or getting anywhere near the trees. They'll come in through the driveway and take the house down that way. Mr. Logan feels that this will add to the neighbor since the house is in such bad shape and ripe for development of a much nicer residence than Ms. Atkinson had at the time. Mr. Logan stated that in her will, she wanted Mr. Logan to arrange to have the house demolished.

Mr. Brown opened the floor for any proponents to speak. There were none.

Mr. Brown opened the floor for any opponents to speak. There were none.

Mr. Brown had no concern with the demolition per se. His only concern was with the developer; when it's torn down the developer may try to squeeze in a mansion on a 47 ft. wide lot. Dr. Monica shared the same concern with this small lot and that someone understands the trees need to stay; someone can't come in and squeeze something on this tiny lot. Ms. Steward mentioned that if that were the case, they would have to come in for a waiver. Mr. Logan added that the trees will be preserved, and that Mr. Brown was correct, they plan to sell the lot. The lot is worth more by itself than it is with the house on it, because the house is in such bad shape. And certainly, they will make that clear that if they sell the lot, it will have those restrictions, and they will have to come back to the Commission to build anything.

Dr. Monica made a motion to recommend approval. Seconded by Mr. Webber.

Ms. McKinney called the roll on the motion:

	Aye	Nay
Mr. Brown	<u>√</u>	___
Dr. Monica	<u>√</u>	___
Mr. Webber	<u>√</u>	___
Mr. McAlister	<u>√</u>	___
Ms. Steward	<u>√</u>	___

The ayes have it by a vote of 5 to 0. Motion approved.

Dr. Monica made a motion to recommend approval of the minutes from December 3, 2020. Seconded by Ms. Steward.

Dr. Monica made a motion to recommend that Mr. Clifford Brown remain Chairman of the Old Metairie Commission for the 2021 calendar year.

Ms. Tolbert discussed the amendment to the rules of procedure and pointed out some modifications:

- Regular meetings will no longer be in suite 604; it will be on the 2nd floor Council Chambers
- Instead of a roll call vote; a voice vote to approve the new calendar

Dr. Monica made a motion to recommend approval of the amended rules of procedure. Seconded by Mr. Webber.

Ms. McKinney called the roll on the motion:

	Aye	Nay
Mr. Brown	<u>√</u>	___
Dr. Monica	<u>√</u>	___
Mr. Webber	<u>√</u>	___
Mr. McAlister	<u>√</u>	___

Ms. Steward

√ _____

The ayes have it by a vote of 5 to 0. Motion approved

Administrative Approvals & Follow-up of previous cases.

There were two cases that were approved administratively.

- OM-24-20, 509 Betz Place, installation of a new generator in the side yard, zoned R-1C, side yard setback requirement is 10 feet, the generator was setback 12 feet and the Planning Department approved it on December 7, 2020.
- OM-27-20, 309 Cuddihy Dr, installation of a new generator in the side yard, zoned R-1B, generator was setback 5 feet and was approved on December 3, 2020.

Ms. Gesser presented an overview of the OMNCD Demolition Review which included potential approaches to handling development approval, review criteria, and submittal requirements related to demolition.

The overview included:

- Approach 1 – Transfer of demolition review from the OMC to the Code Enforcement Director. Approach 1 was discussed at the last OMC meeting.
- Approach 2 -Transfer demolition review from OMC to Planning Director, with potential for OMC review. Would still require site plan and LURTC review, and ministerial approval
- Approach 3 - Maintain OMC review of demolition, but subject to review criteria
- There was still some debate over approach 2 or 3 amongst Commission members and Parish Staff.
- Planning staff looked at other examples of demolition criteria. They looked at various historic districts including Miami, FL, Savannah, GA, and New Orleans, LA, and how they handle demolition review. Staff also reviewed the National Register of Historic Places criteria for being eligible to be placed on the list.
- Potential criteria and requirements for the OMC and/or Planning Dept. when evaluating demolition proposals:
 - The current condition of the structure
 - The reason for the demolition request
 - The architectural or historical significance of the structure for structures 50 years or older
 - The neighborhood context of the structure and the overall effect demolition will have on the block face and surrounding area
 - The proposed length of time the site is anticipated to remain undeveloped if demolition is granted
- Planning presented the following approach which includes requiring a written statement as part of the OMNCD application regarding future development plans, which specifically includes the following:
 - Year built
 - Proposed plan for maintaining the lot between demolition and redevelopment, including lot/weed maintenance and trash debris removal
 - Reason for removal
 - If fencing is proposed, type of fencing

- Timing expectations for planned development
 - If no redevelopment is planned, the length of time the lot is expected to remain vacant
 - State that applicable property maintenance provisions provided in Chapter 8 and 19 apply in the OMNCD
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- Ms. Steward gave an update on grants for historic designation research and provided an email to Planning that LA Division of Historic Preservation thinks funding is available for neighborhood historic structure research/ survey and can be matched by volunteer hrs.

Dr. Monica made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. McAlister. Meeting adjourned at 10:16.