

HPC

Monroe County Historic Preservation Commission

MINUTES

Monday July 7, 2025

2:00 PM Regular Meeting:



Call to Order.

Roll Call.

Present and answering the roll call were Chair Commissioner Brian Shea, Commissioner Barbara Bauman, Brad Bertelli and Commissioner Kate Deloach.

Commissioner Erica Poole was absent.

Staff present: Peter Morris, Assistant County Attorney
Stephanie Reed, Planner
Diane Silvia, Preservationist

Adoption of the Minutes from the meeting on April 15, 2025.

Brad Bertelli motioned to approve the minutes of the meeting on April 15, 2025. Brian Shea seconded the motion. As there were no objections, the motion carried unanimously.

Changes to the Agenda.

There were no changes to the agenda.

Application for Special Certificate of Appropriateness

1. **JILL AND JAMEY LIDDELL** (File #2025-086) ARE SEEKING APPROVAL TO DEMOLISH EXISTING STRUCTURES LOCATED AT 204 OCEAN BOULEVARD, WITHIN THE TAVERNIER HISTORIC DISTRICT, HAVING PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS 00477260-000000, 00477270-000000, 00477280-000000, AND 00477290-000000 AND DESCRIBED AS PARCELS OF LAND IN SECTION 34, TOWNSHIP 62 SOUTH, RANGE 38 EAST, MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA.

Staff presentation and recommendation

Diane Silvia read the staff report noting the applicable standards and guidelines.

Applicant presentation

The applicant was not present.

Public testimony

There was no public input.

Staff response

Stephanie Reed said they have not applied for a demolition permit. If this is approved, she suggests it includes all improvements on the site such as accessory structures, fences, pavers, concrete pads, etc...

Board discussion

Brian Shea said the staff report cites Section 135-7(b), but I believe that was changed to Section 122-1(b)

Stephanie Reed said she believes it was changed in the floodplain section but not updated in the historic preservation section.

Kate Deloach said this is the second demolition by neglect property we have had in a short period of time. I would like to get some clarity on what role we have in terms of keeping an eye out for these things. Do we need to be more active about it? These two properties in particular were deteriorating for some time, and it is a shame. Is there a process for catching these things before we get into this situation? That may be a code compliance question. No one has lived there for a long time. Is this one of those that just becomes too expensive? Alice's house is a good example. Someone was living there but the costs were too expensive.

Cindy Martin said she was a member of the public and lives in the neighborhood. I think the lady near the head of the table lives in my neighborhood. I have not been to a meeting in a long time and want to become more active. I live on Tarpon Street. Did they just buy the property in 2021 and no one has really lived in it?

Peter Morris pointed out, the conversation should be limited to this application. When a building is allowed to dilapidate to an unsafe condition, demolition may be the only way to remediate it. Neglect can be very subtle. Code compliance is the only tool. If you see something, say something. The public can certainly call.

Cindy Martin said she understands.

Kate Deloach said that answers my questions. We have seen cases where neglect is deliberate and others where folks might need help.

Barbara Bausman asked if the 50% FEMA code applies to this.

Diane Silvia explained the FEMA rule does apply to this because while the building is contributing it is not designated. Designated structures are those individually designated by the BOCC. Most of our contributing structures have not been individually designated, although the survey listing them was adopted. In other jurisdictions they usually consider recorded historic structures as exempt from the 50% rule. I thought all contributing structures were considered historic. Devin Tolpin had to explain this to me.

Brian Shea said we should look into this, and which buildings are individually listed.

Barbara Bauman said the \$350,000 cost of repairs is certainly over that.

Kate Deloach said that it is not hard with these little houses.

Brian Shea said the property appraisal value is \$144,000.

Kate Deloach said she will keep a closer eye out in the neighborhood.

Motion

Kate Deloach made a motion to approve the demolition along with any accessory structures on the property, and with the appropriate flood section. Brad Bertelli seconded the motion. As there were no objections, the motion carried unanimously.

2. **SHARON WARREN** (File #2025-126) IS SEEKING APPROVAL TO CONSTRUCT A THREE-STORY SINGLE FAMILY HOME WITH POOL, PAVER DECK AND DRIVEWAY ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 172 AND 176 SUNRISE DRIVE, WITHIN THE TAVERNIER HISTORIC DISTRICT, HAVING PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS 00506200-000000 AND 00506210-000000 AND DESCRIBED AS PARCELS OF LAND IN SECTION 34, TOWNSHIP 62 SOUTH, RANGE 38 EAST, MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA.

Staff presentation and recommendation

Diane Silvia read the staff report noting the applicable standards and guidelines. She said the proposed structure is thirty-eight feet tall while the height limit in Monroe County is 35 feet. There is an exception allowing them to have the extra 3 feet. Stephanie Reed explained this to me, but I forgot the reasoning.

Stephanie Reed said there is a voluntary elevation available to new builds according to our code. If they exceed the design flood elevation for the bottom of the first livable floor they can raise the height the same amount, up to 38 feet.

Diane Silvia said there is a non-contributing stilt building and a no-contributing two story nearby. The solar array on the low slope roof on the side of the building should not be visible from the street. There is an enclosed elevator on the first floor. In general, it is a very big building for the scale of this neighborhood.

Applicant presentation

Casaundra Wood, agent for the owner, is with CBT Construction and Development. They are doing an aggregation of the two lots. I think it will be beneficial.

Public testimony

Claudia Smith lives next door at 168 Sunrise Drive. She showed pictures of her house and the surrounding area. They are going to take down all of these trees and this is where the animals live. All of these rats and snakes are going to come down to my house. I love my neighborhood and that is why I am here. The owner has a mansion on the corner that goes to the ocean and has been building a pool for two years. All of the neighbors have been suffering the trucks, noise, and everything. Then he purchased the house across the street from me. They have been going inside my property to see the trees and do everything. This will be a humongous house. The space between my house and his is 5 feet. It should be 10 feet and 5 feet on the other side. If he is going to do that, he needs to build a fence and stop going on my property. All the trees are gone because of the massive pool and the trucks speeding on the street.

Brian Shea asked Ms. Smith to send her photos to Diane and Stephanie so we have them for the

record.

Peter Morris said we have extended a bit of indulgence to the individual that just commented, in this forum we should be looking at materially relevant facts in the context of historic preservation. Some of the issues brought up are a private civil matter. These lots appear to be Tier 3 so if I recall correctly, they are subject to a 40% or 3,000 square foot clearing limit. The HPC does not really have a say as to the amount of land clearing. Comment needs to be confined to the only law that is relevant to this panel, which is the Historic Preservation Chapter.

Cindy Martin said she is Claudia's neighbor and understands what she was saying, and she does have a smaller historical home. We struggled for two years with the pool going in and a generator running over a year. One of her biggest concerns is just how big this house is. Why do they need a four-bedroom house with an elevator? The property at the end on the ocean, connected with a three-car garage, a two-story apartment, and another home. The house seems massive. I renovated my home and was not allowed to put on a second story, much less a third story. I am concerned the structure will not fit in with the smaller homes in the neighborhood.

Carol Budisak lives at 252 Tarpon Street. What did the agent mean when she said the land aggregation would be beneficial?

Brian Shea said that it will probably be addressed by staff response regarding ROGO.

Carol Budisak said in terms of zoning this is a residential neighborhood. Given the fact they own multiple properties, and the pool is gigantic, is this going to be some kind of resort, wedding venue, boutique resort? Would this be permitted in this neighborhood.

Brian Shea said we are addressing this as a single-family home as part of the HPC.

Carol Budisak asked who do we go to then. Code Enforcement.

Peter Morris said the development application. It is subject to review by planning, environmental resources, building, and floodplain management. The level of clearing is reviewed to ensure compliance with the land development code. Land clearing and zoning are outside the scope of this panel. As an improved subdivision, I do not believe vacation rentals are allowed.

Lisa Braman, 160 Sunrise Drive, is concerned about the scale of the project. It is just too large and would set a precedence for three-story buildings. Our street is all single-story conch houses. The pictures submitted were misleading and showed non-contributing structures. You mentioned elevation was voluntary, but that is not fitting for a historic neighborhood. Were these lots always Tier 3 or were they recently changed.

Brian Shea asked Ms. Reed if she is aware of any Tier change.

Stephanie Reed said she is not aware of any Tier change but will check on it.

Peter Morris said he believes the Tier maps were adopted between 2008 and 2012.

Lisa Braman said one of the mandates for historic preservation in the first place is that anything new should not dominate a historic structure and these would adversely impact the historic scale of our neighborhood.

Cheryl Aloia, 162 Sunrise Drive, agreed with Lisa. Historic preservation of our street is paramount. My house is part of the historic registry. I am sure Claudia and Lisa's house are part of the historic registry. Adding an enormous three-story house will change the entire landscape. I do not understand how this would even be considered.

Rebecca Evans, 194 Beach Road, said her house is behind the subject property. She had gone over the historic guidelines and understood they were protected against people coming in with lots of money and tearing down historic properties and building monstrosities. You can drive all over Tavernier and the Keys and see mismatched neighborhoods. I wanted to be protected with my small cottage. Also, the noise and disrespect from these people. It is this committee's job to protect our neighborhood.

Beth Vonnegut, Sunrise Drive, said we were so grateful when the construction finally ended. It created so much dust; they had to replace our mini-split motor. When we found out they were planning to do more, we were taken back. Many of the workers did not speak English and would shoo you off the end of the street. They were not accommodating and disrespectful. My house has a historic designation, and we had an architect come to see if we could enclose the screened porch to add a bedroom. We were told we could not make those kinds of upgrades. How can a three-story mansion fit in our historic neighborhood. We have tolerated the dirt and noise for two years and blocked off ocean access. This will be a lot more traffic, dirt and noise.

Cindy Martin said the disrespect for all of us has been very hard. The applicant does live at the very end of our public access to the ocean and none of us have been able to really go down. Now they are planning to build a four-bedroom home and a pool. There is not anywhere for the construction equipment to park on the street. This structure will tower over the historic homes. The home is too big for this small piece of property. It would be different if it were on the ocean. They have parties and you cannot complain, and we see different people staying there all the time.

Brian Shea said, Stephanie, I am going to give you some bullet points to hit, that may alleviate some public concern. The ones on my list are vegetation, granted conservation easements, and ROGO.

Staff response

Stephanie Reed said a construction permit has been submitted and has been reviewed by all the different departments. The remaining item is the special certificate of appropriateness. It has been reviewed by our biologist, and it is a hammock lot. The permit conditions are 6,000 square feet are required to be in a grant of conservation easement. This means 4,000 square feet could be cleared. These are two contiguous lots. If you aggregate them and retire the density off one, it could potentially be worth ROGO points. That has not been done yet. They will have to go through the ROGO allotment system. The construction plan set must be submitted, reviewed and

approved. The applicant is then contacted and allowed to apply for ROGO and then entered into the pool waiting for their allocation with everyone else. They have not applied for ROGO yet and still have to get their approved construction plan set. No one can provide a particular timeline. ROGO is a competitive system based on the number of points.

Kate Deloach said the summary says the building is 38 feet tall, but looking at the plans it looks like it is 43.5 feet tall.

Stephanie Reed said measurements are taken from the crown of the road. In this case it is 5.58 feet with a vertical elevation of 43.58. You take the height of the building 43.58 and minus the elevation of the crown of the road 5.58 and that is how you get to 38 feet.

Kate Deloach said the guidelines talk a lot about scale and minimum flood levels if you are close to a smaller property. Is there some reason why a photo of the house next door was not included? That might be a Cassandra question.

Peter Morris added vacation rental is prohibited in improved subdivisions, except for in gated communities or homeowner's associations that regulate or manage vacation rentals. They can do rentals for more than 30 days.

Applicant response

Casaundra Wood said they have gone through all the land development process and everything is approved except for the historic certificate we are here today to obtain. Some of these people might be happy knowing some portion of this land will not be developed. They are not trying to put a damper on the community, simply trying to improve things for the homeowner. They have these lots and want to build on them and it is well within their rights to do so.

Board discussion

Kate Deloach asked why isn't a photo of the house next door included in the application.

Casaundra Wood said when she went through the application, and it asked to take photos of the lots not neighboring photos. She did not know that was needed.

Kate Deloach said there are photos of other neighboring houses but not the one-story next door.

Casaundra Wood said she sent her property manager to take the photos from across the street and standing in the lot looking both ways. I was not the one who took the photos, so I don't know how he stood.

Kate Deloach said I am trying to figure out visually where the house would go. I know someone made a comment about setbacks. The lot with the palm trees has a structure behind the trees. There is an apartment and garage. Why isn't there a photo of the property itself?

Brian Shea noted a conservation easement is shown on the plans as the dashed area so there will be a lot of trees. It is 15 feet on the east side and 25 feet on the west side.

Barbara Bauman said, I don't know if the ribbons on the trees mean they are saving or not saving them. The biologists would have to clarify that.

Kate Deloach said on a positive note they are including a cistern. She is very concerned about the scale of this project. This would be a very large building.

Brad Bertelli said this would be a very large non-oceanfront property. He fears the historic nature of this community is disappearing. This would be one more contributing factor, more of a blemish than an improvement. Sunrise Drive in particular is very historic.

Kate Deloach said it starts with six tiny houses at the front end.

Brad Bertelli said as a historian this is frightful, and we are here to make sure that's not happening. I know it's hard when we are trying the property we elevate homes and mitigate things like that. The guidelines point out building base height when adjacent to a contributing structure should be constructed at the minimum flood height. They are using the crown of the road because it is higher. This brings me back to the property we had several months ago next to the old Post Office. That is obviously a wedding destination. That is not a single-family home.

Kate Deloach said it makes sense for the voluntary elevation but to me pushing right up against the absolute maximum height in a historic neighborhood surrounded by smaller properties is not okay.

Brian Shea said under the guidelines for new building type, mass and scale are within our purview. He is willing to make a recommendation to table this item so we can get additional information to include additional images of the site and adjacent properties. The trees might go towards mass and scale.

Barbara Bauman asked Stephanie if they received a conservation easement yet.

Stephanie Reed said no, a conservation easement will not be executed until afterwards.

Peter Morris said the idea of tabling or continuing this item is appropriate as there has been an omission of at least one adjacent building. There is a deficiency in situational awareness to make a fully informed decision. Massing and scale are within the purview of this panel.

Barbara Bauman said they should look at downsizing.

Kate Deloach said they should look at the comments and consider reducing the size.

Brian Shea suggested they look at downscaling the structure and obtain more photos of adjacent properties and the lot itself. The next meeting is August 4th.

Casaundra Wood said she sent a photo of that lot.

Stephanie Reed said there is an existing conditions report she can send along.

Casaundra Wood said she is concerned about not making the ROGO deadline as she cannot make it without this approval.

Stephanie Reed said it is July 12th.

Casaundra Wood asked if she could get the photos by the end of the day.

Peter Morris said we should continue this so they can avoid the cost of paying for additional noticing.

Peter Morris said he himself is English as a second language. Construction crews might not be approaching in a hostile manner they might be trying to make sure you are not injured on the construction site. If an issue arises, call the owner of the construction company. I recommend tabling this based on additional information of bullet points 3 and 4 of the application being sent and added to the next agenda.

Brian Shea said he recommends continuing this to the next HPC meeting so bullet points 3 and 4 can be addressed.

Diane Silvia said we should make it clear they may want to reduce the scale because it may be continued again.

Brian Shea said with recognition of the public input and trying to resolve that as well.

Casaundra Wood asked if they had four photos.

Brian Shea said we have three photos.

Kate Deloach said we have one with palm trees and a hedge, and two newer concrete buildings. It does show on the property record card.

Diane Silvia said it would be good to label the photos along the streetscape several properties on either side of this property and then across the street on either side.

Stephanie Reed said there is a good view on google earth.

Motion

Brian Shea made a motion to continue this item to the August 4th meeting so that additional photographs of the project setting and surrounding area can be reviewed. Barbara Bauman seconded the motion. As there were no objections, the motion carried unanimously.

Other Business:

Diane Silvia said as Barbara Bauman's term is expiring this month, she wanted to thank her for her years of service on the HPC. We will miss her.

Peter Morris said I want to echo that sentiment, I was proud to represent you. I want to thank you for serving on the HPC and for your service as professional staff.

Barbara Bauman thanked everyone and said she will miss everyone too.

Adjournment.

As there was no other business, the meeting was adjourned.