July 15, 2021

Privately Initiated Text Amendment

AMENDING SECTION 27-272

Applicant: Brian Seel, 313 W Park Avenue, on behalf of the Tampa Heights Civic Association

**Executive Summary**

This proposed Code Amendment is intended to help protect the integrity of the Tampa Heights National and Local Historic District by implementing basic site and design standards for the rest of the Tampa Heights neighborhood surrounding the Historic Districts. The Tampa Heights Historic District protects less than one half of the neighborhood’s urban and architectural integrity. There are currently no special overlays or design standards for the remainder of the neighborhood; basic City Code applies. The Tampa Heights area outside the Historic District contains a significant number of historic homes dating between 1890 and 1930. The borders of the Historic District contain the highest concentration of historic structures, but the urban fabric and development pattern outside those boundaries is seamless.

The Tampa Heights Civic Association (THCA) repeatedly requested additional protections since the foundation of the local Historic District in 2000. In 2014, THCA was promised by the City that a form-based code overlay process would commence in 2015, similar to what had been enacted for Seminole Heights. The overlay process never started. THCA petitioned every year thereafter and was told lack of a resources caused continual delay. In 2019, THCA’s Land Use Committee met with the City and Planning Commission staff. We were told that if we did not want to keep waiting until the public resources were allocated, THCA must write our own code without City assistance and submit via Privately Initiated Code Amendment. After several years of effort, this code amendment has been written and submitted.

Tampa Heights Civic Association has explored other avenues for protecting our neighborhood’s urban fabric. Board members and other Tampa Heights residents have had numerous discussions with City staff including Carole Post, Abbye Feeley, Dennis Fernandez, Eric Cotton, LaChone Dock, Randy Goers, and Stephen Benson. We also conferred with Councilman Gudes about this effort. Some staff advised THCA to explore expanding the Local Historic District Boundaries and associated design standards. Dennis Fernandez and Historic Preservation Commission Chair Vivian Salaga advised that this process would involve significant cost to THCA since the City does not have the time, funds, or staffing to conduct the associated architectural inventory and analysis. Even after that analysis, the subject area may not contain the threshold concentration of contributing historic structures that would qualify an expansion of the District.

This Code Amendment is in conformance of the Tampa Comprehensive Plan adopted January 7, 2016. The Comp Plan, in speaking to Historic Development Patterns Pre-World War II Pattern (page 30), states: “This period represents a time when many people walked, bicycled, or took the streetcar to work and other destinations. It features an interconnected, grid-style street network designed to maximize the efficiency of these transportation modes. Land uses were mixed, minimizing travel time between home, work and shopping. Homes and other buildings were oriented near the sidewalks, with parking relegated to the back of the property. This pattern can be seen in historic neighborhoods around downtown Tampa: Hyde Park, Beach Park, Ybor City, *Tampa Heights,* Seminole Heights, Palmetto Beach, West Tampa and Virginia Park.” Current Chapter 27 regulations do not effectively regulate outcomes as stated in the Comp Plan. This Code Amendment is necessary to achieve that vision.

Furthermore, the Comp Plan on page 40, section Urban Villages, acknowledges the Tampa Heights Neighborhood plan, which was adopted by City Council in 2003. This plan, which details many goals in the “Urban Design” section starting on page 17, includes provisions such as to “Encourage design and orientation that reflects the historic Tampa Heights.”

Especially since 2015, the rate of uncomplimentary development has exploded when it should have been protected by regulations the City committed to enacting. Such development creates conditions that are dangerous to pedestrians, harms the welfare of surrounding homeowners, and detracts from the traditional urban fabric of the neighborhood. Any other avenue besides this Code Amendment would take numerous years to complete after the City eventually allocates the staff and financial resources. By the time that could happen, most of Tampa Heights would be completely overrun with redevelopment that further detracts from the unique character of the neighborhood.

**Current Code to be Amended**

Sec. 27-272. - Tampa Heights Historic District Design Guidelines.

The 2000 Edition of the Tampa Heights Historic District Design Guidelines is hereby adopted by reference, as it may be amended from time to time, and it, therefore, has the force and effect of law.

(Ord. No. 2000-235, § 4, 8-31-00)

**New Code to be Added**

See attached document

Signed by and sworn to be accurate to the best of my knowledge:

Brian Seel

President – Tampa Heights Civic Association

Personal Residence: 313 W Park Avenue