

Board aims to preserve harmony

► Its job is to ensure that any construction or remodeling in historic districts fits in with other structures.

By KEVIN CANFIELD
World Staff Writer

Amanda DeCort knows that not everyone will spend May celebrating National Preservation Month.

Ask her to name the primary misconception about the Tulsa Preservation Commission, which she administers, and she smiles and replies, "Which one?"

Then she reels off a short list that includes this observation: "That we're ogres and difficult to work with."

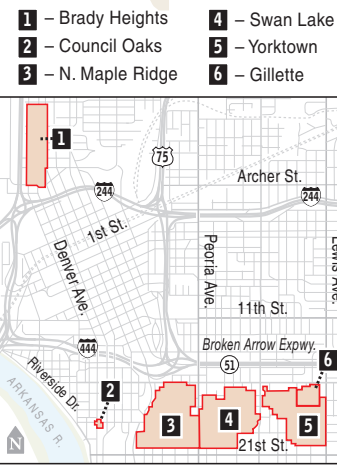
Not so, DeCort insists.

But there is no question that the 15-member body assigned to operate the city's historic preservation program stirs passions now and again. It comes with the territory.

The group does more than nominate local historic sites for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

It also helps residents write — and then must enforce — construction and remodeling guidelines for the city's six historic preservation zoning districts.

Historic preservation districts



districts.

Historic preservation zoning is "overlay zoning," which means it supplements, not supersedes, zoning codes. This limits what the commission can control.

For example, a builder recently asked the commission for a certificate of appropriateness before the builder began construction.

Preservation celebration

May is National Preservation Month. As part of the celebration, the Tulsa Preservation Commission is sponsoring the first Citywide Preservation Celebration.

When: noon to 2 p.m. May 19

Where: Centennial Park Central Center, at Sixth Street and Peoria Avenue.

For more information: 596-2600 or www.tulsapreservationcommission.org or www.nationaltrust.org/preservationmonth

tion of a duplex in the Swan Lake district. The certificates are required before remodeling or construction can start in a historic preservation zoning district. Opponents of the project cried foul.

Eventually, the certificate — with conditions — was granted.

"It's not our job to decide if they get to build a duplex there," DeCort said. "It's our job to make sure that the duplex — if they are legally permitted to build it — fits in with the neighborhood context as best as possible."

In short, the commission is limited to reviewing any exterior changes that would be visible from the street.

What the commission is not, DeCort said, is an advocacy group.

"We're relaying information," she said.

It doesn't necessarily do that as well as its members would like, however.

DeCort said the commission hasn't always done a good job of making the design guidelines for building within a historic preservation zone accessible and easy to understand.

"I would really like to have some more examples and to use them more and (provide) more specific guidance," she said.

Then there are those people who don't know that the guidelines even exist.

"One of the biggest things that I hear is that people buy houses in these zoning districts and don't know they're in these zoning districts," DeCort said.

That brings up that misconception that the commission is hard to get along with. DeCort's numbers indicate otherwise.

Since 1993, the group has approved more than 91 percent of the roughly 750 applications for certificates of appropriateness, she said. Last year, it gave complete or partial approval to 51 applications, rejecting three.

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Judge closes teens' cases in fatal crash

► Two Jenks football players have completed their probations tied to a paintball-related crash.

By BILL BRAUN
World Staff Writer

A Tulsa County judge on Monday closed the juvenile court cases of two Jenks High School students who successfully completed their probations on charges filed after a crash that claimed a classmate's life.

Special Judge Edward Hicks determined that Mitchell Hill and Brad Regal have no more obligations in his court.

Garrett Bennett, 17, died July

12 when the sport utility vehicle in which he was a passenger swerved out of the eastbound lanes of the Creek Turnpike just west of U.S. 75 and crashed.

Oklahoma Highway Patrol troopers reported that the Jenks football players had just left a team paintball outing in Sapulpa.

Troopers said two SUVs were swerving in and out of traffic and that a paintball fired from one SUV hit the windshield of the one that crashed.

Tulsa County prosecutors charged three Jenks football players in juvenile court.

Hill — now 18, but 17 when the crash happened — was

charged with negligent homicide. He was the driver of the SUV in which Bennett was riding.

Regal, a passenger in the SUV that did not crash, was charged with throwing an object at a moving vehicle. Records state that Regal — now 17, but 16 at the time of the crash — admitted to firing the paintball.

In March, Hicks closed the case and ended the probation of another juvenile, Eric Davis, who was charged with reckless driving. Davis, who turned 18 about two months after the crash, drove the SUV in which Regal was riding, reports show.

Hicks said in March that all three youths had performed

well on probation but that he wanted longer probations for Regal and Hill based on the more serious nature of their charges.

All three teenagers took action in October to resolve their cases without a trial.

Hill and Davis agreed not to contest their charges. Regal "stipulated to the petition" — or essentially admitted the allegation against him.

At a November hearing, Hicks imposed the probation requirements.

The Jenks Trojans won the Class 6A football championship in December.

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SHOOT:

Three area schools are locked down during the standoff.

FROM A-9

After trying for about six hours to make contact with the burglar, police went in the house and found that he apparently had fled before they arrived.

Walton said the homeowner arrived about 10 a.m. and saw that his front door had been forced open. When he found the burglar in his bedroom, "the victim tried to retreat and was shot," Walton said.

Mondragon was hit in the torso, but it wasn't immediately clear how many times he was shot.

During the standoff, police blocked off streets in the area. Three schools — Kerr Elementary School, Newcomer International School and Lewis and Clark Middle School — were locked down, Tulsa Public Schools spokeswoman Tami Marler said.

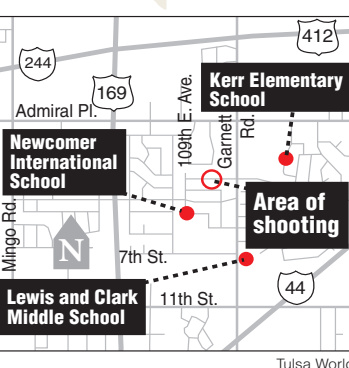
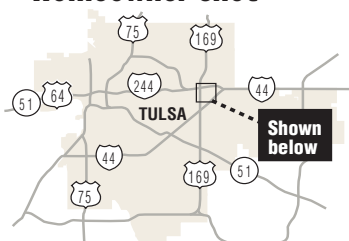
Officers used a loudspeaker to try to talk with the burglar. Once the Special Operations Team arrived, its members continued to try to reach him and used a camera to try to determine whether he was in the house.

SOT officers eventually fired several rounds of tear gas into the home. Officers entered the house about 4:30 p.m., searched it and concluded that the assailant had fled. Only a vague description of the gunman was available Monday.



Police Special Operations Team members use a neighbor's roof to gain perspective on a house where a resident was shot Monday morning.

Homeowner shot



Aurora Ramirez Helton, who also is a member of the Greater

Tulsa Area Hispanic Affairs Commission, said both Mondragon and his wife are very active in community affairs.

"They are a very civic-minded family," she said. "You could not ask for better people."

Helton was shocked to hear about what had happened.

"You hear it happening in your town, and you see it on the news, but you never expect it to be one of your own," she said.

Terry Wiles, who lives in the area and whose son lives next door to Mondragon, described Mondragon as a good man.

"It should not have happened," he said. "You can't predict this. You just can't predict this."

Wiles said his son stayed in contact with Mondragon's family throughout the day.

In addition to worrying about Mondragon's condition, he said,

his son and others were upset that a burglar was prowling about their neighborhood.

"People who do this don't care," Wiles said. "They don't care whose house they get into or whose things they take. That is immaterial to them. They are just looking for things to sell."

Kym Clark, who lives several houses west of Mondragon, watched the ambulance speed away, but her first thought was that someone was ill — not that her neighbor had been shot. Then her mother-in-law called to tell her about the police standoff in her neighborhood.

"We know all of our neighbors and try to take our own precautions the best we can," Clark said. "What's scary is that it happened during the day, and I am a stay-at-home mom."

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TAX:

The bill would eliminate city, county and state sales taxes for the specific weekend.

FROM A-9

both have similar events, which draw many Oklahoma shoppers out of state.

The bill would eliminate city, county and state sales taxes for

the given weekend. Sen. Jay Paul Gumm, D-Durant, said the state would reimburse cities and counties for their lost revenue.

"The fact is, in both Texas and Missouri, local revenues held steady or increased because of greater retail activity during the sales-tax holidays," Gumm said, adding that the measure is aimed at middle-class families and small-business owners.

Projections indicate that the entire tax-cut package would reduce state revenue by \$15.3 million in the fiscal year that begins July 1 and \$74.3 million

the next year.

The bill was criticized on the Senate floor by lawmakers who say that by providing more tax cuts, the state is setting itself up for an economic bust similar to what occurred in the early 1980s when energy prices plummeted.

The bill also would accelerate last year's income tax-cut plan by one year.

However, Sen. Kenneth Corn, D-Poteau, said the average Oklahoman would benefit less than \$7 from that measure.

Meanwhile, he said, Oklahomans are spending "\$700 fixing

their vehicles because the roads and bridges tear their vehicles up."

Corn also discussed the provision for a stay-at-home parent tax provision, saying that for most families in his district, both parents work.

Corn said the provision is really a tax credit for home-schoolers, who haven't been allowed vouchers.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

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FOOD:

Ricardo has liked everything he has eaten so far, except for eggs.

FROM A-9

and arranged for him to get the surgery and medical care in Tulsa at no charge to his family.

Since tasting the apple juice April 30, Ricardo has eaten applesauce and graduated to baby food and other soft foods.

"Everything that he eats, he likes," Jimenez Martinez said. "The only thing he doesn't like is eggs."

Ranne said Ricardo could be discharged from St. John Medical Center as soon as the middle of this week.

"He's doing great," he said.

Pagel has arranged for Ricardo and his mother to move in with a local Spanish-speaking woman so doctors can continue to monitor the boy's progress over the next four to six weeks.

Ricardo and his mother will be treated to various activities during their stay here.

The Tulsa Drillers will host

Food fund set up

St. John Medical Center and the Helping Hands Foundation have set up a "food fund" so that Ricardo will have access to a nutritious diet after he returns to Managua, Nicaragua.

Through a fund overseen by the foundation in Nicaragua, Ricardo's mother would receive a monthly stipend to buy food for her son.

Ricardo's family of six lives on \$175 per month, so the fund would allow him to have meat and other nutritious foods his family otherwise could not afford.

Donations can be sent to: the Helping Hands Foundation, 2950 S. Rockford Road, Tulsa, OK 74114.

"Ricardo Day" on June 3, when the boy will throw out the first pitch at the team's 2:05 p.m. game against the Frisco Rough-Riders. Ricardo also will get to meet the players.

"I am very grateful to each one of the persons who made this possible," Jimenez Martinez said.

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JAMES GIBBARD / Tulsa World

The Oklahoma Heritage Center in Oklahoma City uses the latest technology to feature famous Oklahomans and their roles in history.

HISTORY:

"All of this stuff is pretty cool," 9-year-old Deon Edwards says.

FROM A-9

Arianna Fears, 10, concurred. "You get to learn more about our history and Oklahoma," she said. The museum is "very beautiful and pretty."

"All of this stuff is pretty cool," said Deon Edwards, 9.

Tom McDaniel, chairman-elect of the Oklahoma Heritage Association, and president of Oklaho-

ma City University, said the children's enthusiasm is exactly what everyone at the museum had hoped to see.

"We're all really inspired to have the first group of children here," he said. "They're so excited."

The Oklahoma Heritage Center, at 1400 Classen Drive, is in the renovated Mid-Continent Life Insurance Building, which was bought by the Oklahoma Heritage Association in 2005.

The Oklahoma Heritage Association is a nonprofit organization funded by private donations and memberships.

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