SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION
CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA
Lower Level – Room 41, City Hall/Court House, 15 West Kellogg Boulevard
June 14th, 2012

Present: Richard Dana, Robert Ferguson, Matt Hill, Michael Justin, Rich Laffin, John Manning, David Riehle, Diane Trout-Oertel, Steve Trimble, David Wagner
Absent: Renee Hutter (unexcused), Matt Mazanec (excused)
Staff Present: Christine Boulware, Amy Spong, Hilary Holmes

BUSINESS MEETING/PUBLIC HEARING

I. **Call to Order:** 5:01 p.m.

II. **Approval of the Agenda -** Commissioner Dana motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Hill seconded the motion. The motion passed 9 - 0.

III. **Conflicts of Interest** – Commissioner Wagner recused himself from Agenda item VIII.A., the Pre-Application hearing for 596 Laurel as his firm was retained for the project. Commissioner Dana recused himself from the follow-up discussion on 555 Grand Hill, as his firm was retained for the project.

IV. **Approval of the meeting minutes**
A. **May 10, 2012** Approved as submitted
B. **May 24, 2012** Approved with corrections: Commissioner Trout-Oertel was in attendance.

V. **Chair's Announcements -** Chair Laffin announced that he is on a Committee to select artwork for the Union Depot and that 260 proposals were received. The HPC will review the proposals to install art on the station.

VI. **Staff Announcements**
A. May Design Review Statistics **(submitted)**
B. June Legislative Hearing Notification **(submitted)**
C. Staff Amy Spong received a $1,300 scholarship to attend the National Alliance for Preservation Conference in Norkfolk, Virginia in July.
D. 555 Grand Hill (Commissioner Dana recused himself from this discussion item). Staff needed HPC clarification regarding the style of garage doors that are to be installed. The HPC agreed that the doors should have rectangular windows.

VII. **Permit Review/Public Hearings**
Staff gave a detailed description of the Vacant Building Category III process and Legislative Hearings and informed the HPC and audience of the role the HPC plays in making a recommendation to the Legislative Hearing Officer.

A. **721 Wilson Avenue, Dayton's Bluff Historic District,** for the demolition of a nuisance property declared by the Department of Safety and Inspections, Division of Code Enforcement. The property is a Vacant Building Category 3 and has been issued an order to abate. **File #12-034** (Boulware, 266-6715)

Staff read the recommendation to approve a pending demolition permit based on the findings presented in the staff report.

Commissioner Laffin inquired whether the brick was painted and if it could be salvaged

or if the balustrade could be salvaged and how that process could be handled. Staff suggested that a reuse or salvage company would have the capacity to salvage such items, though the HPC does not make any recommendations, the Legislative Hearing Officer may be able to provide guidance. Commissioner Riehle asked who the present owner was, since the previous owner was deceased and whether or not the property was probated. Staff stated that the status of transfer of title was unknown at this time. Commissioner Riehle inquired about the status of property taxes on the property. Staff responded that they were not aware if they were current.

Staff added that there was a SHPO letter dated March 12, 2012 stating that a demolition of the property would not have an adverse effect on nearby National Register of Historic Places properties or eligible properties.

Commissioner Trimble stated that he does not agree with the demolition and questioned why a building that was categorized as contributing on page 3 of the staff report then mentions on page 4 that it is no longer representative of its period of construction. Staff replied that the 1989 Inventory Form listed the building as contributing but since that time the building's condition and integrity has diminished.

There was no owner's representative or owner present at the hearing. Staff read the written testimony of Brad Griffith on behalf of the Dayton's Bluff Community Council Vacant Building Committee (DBCC-VBC) asking the HPC to layover a decision on 721 Wilson to the next regularly scheduled HPC Meeting (June 28th) so that DBCC-VBC might have more time to consider the historic and economic potential of the current building. Staff read the written testimony of Thomas Stachowiak of 722 Wilson Avenue in support of demolition of the building. There was no additional public testimony heard and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Manning motioned to adopt the staff recommendation of denial of a pending demolition permit. Commissioner Dana seconded the motion. Commissioner Dana asked about the ownership component of the property and what would happen if someone wanted to rehab the building. Staff replied that a city ordinance, referred to as the *Bostrom Ordinance*, regarding Vacant Category III buildings does not allow for a building to be sold until it is brought up to code. There are some options available such as, donating the property to a non-profit or a government agency, purchasing through a contract for deed or acquiring a property through tax forfeiture. Staff stated that this would be a question that the Legislative Hearing Officer could be of assistance with.

Commissioner Riehle moved to table the decision to the next meeting given the DBCC-VBC's testimony and request.
Staff stated that the next HPC meeting will be the public hearing on June 28th, that there would be no recommendation to the Legislative Hearing Officer and that it is likely the Officer would not lay over a decision as it has already been laid-over. It was suggested that the DBCC-VBC could attend the Legislative Hearing on June 19th. The minutes from this meeting and the written testimony will be forwarded to the Legislative Hearing Officer. **The motion passed 5 – 4 (Manning, Hill, Wagner, Justin).**

B. 451 Selby Avenue, Hill Historic District, for the demolition of a nuisance property declared by the Department of Safety and Inspections, Division of Code Enforcement. The property is a Vacant Building Category 3 and has been issued an order to abate. **File #12-035** (Boulware, 266-6715)

Staff read the recommendation to deny a pending demolition permit based on the findings presented in the staff report. Staff noted that the owner did not appear at the Legislative Hearing on June 12th, 2012 and that a code-compliance report has not been ordered to date.

Commissioner Laffin asked who the current owner is. Staff responded that there has been a new owner within the last couple of years and that it had been condemned previously. Commissioner Riehle inquired about the current owner, listed as Mi2 LLC. Staff replied that the LLC is owned by Matt and Kristin Miller. Commissioner Dana wanted to know if staff has worked with the owners, to which staff replied they have. Commissioner Dana also wanted to know if staff had been inside the building, staff replied that they had not. Commissioner Trout-Oertel commented that the roof appears to be in bad condition. Staff responded that there are photos of the interior from a few years ago, taken by a code enforcement officer.

There was no owner's representative or owner present at the hearing. Public testimony was heard from Mike Faricy of 453 Selby Avenue, a resident of Ramsey Hill since 1975. Mr. Faricy testified in support of the maintenance and restoration of the building, citing the importance of the building to the neighborhood. Mr. Faricy also submitted written testimony in support of obtaining the property for restoration as the property is one of just five remaining frame homes from the Cathedral of Saint Paul to Mackubin and the loss of the building would have a detrimental effect on the remaining homes. Anderson Cialto of Summit-University District Council testified in support of preservation of the building. Sally Rubinstein of 442 Dayton, testified in support of rehabilitation of the building. Greg Hotzler of 193 MacKubin also testified in support of preserving the building.

Staff read the written testimony of Bethany Gladhill, resident of Summit-University, in support of the restoration and rehabilitation and stating the need for the Old Towne Restoration to come back. Demolition of the property would be a loss. Kit Richardson, resident of the Hill Historic District at 117 Farrington since 1974, is concerned about vacant buildings and is against demolition. Mr. Richardson is a contractor who has worked with historic tax credits and spoke with the owner of 451 Selby and if the owner cannot renovate, others in the neighborhood would be willing to step forward and do the work. Staff noted that they received multiple phone calls and there was a lot of interest in the future of the property.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Dana moved to adopt the staff recommendation of denial of a pending demolition permit. Commissioner Trout-Oertel seconded the motion. The motion passed 9 – 0.
Commissioner Dana noted that the testimony of the city moving homes to vacant lots in this area was significant. The City has investment in this district and this testimony was impressive, stating the house should be restored.

C. 466 Iglehart Avenue, Hill Historic District, for the demolition of a nuisance property declared by the Department of Safety and Inspections, Division of Code Enforcement. The property is a Vacant Building Category 3 and has been issued an order to abate. **File #12-036** (Boulware, 266-6715)

Staff read the recommendation to deny a pending demolition permit based on the findings presented in the staff report. Staff stated that at the Legislative Hearing neighbors testified in support of restoration and that the owner was not present at the Legislative Hearing. An appointment letter was sent for DSI and HPC staff for a site visit to gain access to the interior of the house. Staff have since spoken with the owner and will have a walk-through on June 21st, 2012. The owner is Burton Murdock, who has owned the house since it moved across the street from 655 Iglehart in the late 1970's.

Commissioner Riehle asked if the house value was accurate, to which staff replied that the house values are from Ramsey County and may not be accurate values. Commissioner Riehle then asked if DSI has been inside the house, to which staff replied there is a site visit scheduled for next week. Commissioner Manning asked if there was a reason to hold it over. Staff advice was not to move forward without an HPC recommendation.

The public hearing opened. Greg Hotzler of 193 MacKubin testified that the building is worth saving, that it is in reasonably good condition and that he is opposed to vacant lots in the neighborhood.

Jean Schroepfer of 271 Summit testified that the house is worth preserving and that she has rehabbed three vacant buildings and believes that the building should be rescued.

Staff read the written testimony into the record. Kit Richardson of 117 Farrington is in support of preserving the building. Bethany Gladhill is also in support of preserving the building. The Ramsey Hill Association encourages the preservation of the building. Christina and Peter Heinrichs, seven year residents of 456 Iglehart, are in support of demolition.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel moved to adopt the staff recommendation of denial of a pending demolition permit. Commissioner Wagner seconded the motion.

Commissioner Dana stated that as with 451 Selby, the building contributes to the neighborhood and character and that the building should be preserved and rehabbed.

The motion passed 9 – 0.

D. 702 Third Street East, Dayton's Bluff Historic District, for the demolition of a nuisance property declared by the Department of Safety and Inspections, Division of Code Enforcement. The property is a Vacant Building Category 3 and has been issued an order to abate. **File #12-037** (Boulware, 266-6715)
Staff read the recommendation to deny a pending demolition permit based on the findings presented in the staff report.

Staff read the recommendation to deny a pending demolition permit based on the findings presented in the staff report. Staff stated that the owner was present and was also present at the Legislative Hearing.

Commissioner Trimble clarified the reasons for the changes to the block faces on this block of Third Street E. The owner, Charles DeLisi and the owner's sister, Joanne Tyler, were present to discuss the proposal. Mr. DeLisi asked what the HPC requires of styles and materials. He stated his intention to fix the roof and exterior. Staff stated that they would forward Mr. DeLisi the Dayton's Bluff design guideline handbook, that staff will work with the owner and the contractor and that staff does not know how the Legislative Hearing Officer will look at separating to interior and exterior work. Mr. DeLisi stated that he would post a performance bond the following week in order to begin repair work. Commissioner Manning inquired if Mr. DeLisi is in support of the staff recommendation, to which Mr. DeLisi replied that he is and that his mortgage on the house is $50,000 and that he has the intention of seeking the financial advice of legal counsel. Ms. Tyler asked whether vinyl siding could be installed on the building; staff replied that it cannot, that the siding must be repaired or replaced in-kind. Ms. Tyler stated that the siding needs to be repainted often; staff replied that there are resources available such as Historic Saint Paul to direct homeowners to additional resources.

Commissioner Dana stated that the last time the house was occupied was 1992 and asked if it was a single-family home or a duplex; it is a single-family dwelling. Staff informed Mr. DeLisi that if there is an exterior insurance claim, he can work with staff to resolve it.

There was written testimony read into the record from Brad Griffith from the Dayton's Bluff Community Council, Vacant Buildings Committee, in support of preservation of the home. The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Trimble motioned to adopt the staff recommendation. Commissioner Ferguson seconded the motion. **The motion passed 9 - 0.**

Pre-Application Review

E. 596 Laurel Avenue

Staff read the pre-application review and preliminary findings.

David Wagner of Sala Architects and owners Tom and Tiea Crane were present to discuss the proposal.

Mr. Wagner stated that the west elevation is not meant to be a deck and that he does not want to change the porch design but would entertain altering elements or materials. Commissioner Trout-Oertel asked about the entrance detail. Mr. Wagner responded that the front steps are more compressed instead of gradual ascension shall be more like the others. Commissioner Trout-Oertel observed that the house appears to sit lower and inquired about the number of risers on the front steps. Mr. Wagner replied that the intention was not for the house to sit lower and that it can be raised.

Commissioner Dana observed that the north and east elevations look like the siding is coming down to grade. Mr. Wagner noted that the front is meant to feel in place with the neighborhood, the west side is to reduce the transition of the interior to exterior and the east elevation is open for consideration, looking for an interior to exterior expression of the more private side of the house. Siding can be used to accentuate the concept. Commissioner Manning observed that there is not as much space between the houses on that side. It is intended to be a more private elevation.

Commissioner Manning stated that the porch roof is flat compared to the neighbors. Commissioner Manning also noted his concern with a large front window.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel said the placement of the front door is for discussion and that there was concern about the east elevation and the door location, that some panels are wood or some paintable material. Chair Laffin stated that the front door around the corner is not far back enough, that it came out of the plan and to explore ways to better treat that. The wrap around front porch could extend to the south more. Mr. Wagner was agreeable with that alteration.

Commissioner Dana referred to the design as exciting and noted that he does not have an issue with the front door.

Commissioner Manning suggested adding windows on the front solid wall with the same panel detail on the east. Mr. Wagner replied that it is a possibility. Chair Laffin noted that there wouldn't need to be a regular pattern on the east.

Commissioner Trimble noted that the small window on the front looks of place. Mr. Wagner stated that the line of the porch roof will transfer around.

Chair Laffin summarized the Commission's concerns and comments:

- Raising the house another step or two.
- A utilitarian side of the house could be made by wrapping treatment of the front porch around the side as well as addressing the windows.
- There was discussion of the front door.
- The front entrance could have the bench in front of a taller window, and the bench could be broadened.
- More regular treads on the stairs and addressing the siding to grade relationship.
- Addressing the flat porch roof.

VIII. Old Business - There was none.

IX. New Business

A. Education Committee Commissioner Trout-Oertel stated that the committee will meet Monday June 18th at noon.

B. 3M Task Force There was no new information to report.

X. Motion to Adjourn: 7:57 p.m.

Submitted by: H. Holmes