

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION
CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA
Lower Level – Room 41, City Hall/Court House, 15 West Kellogg Boulevard
March 28, 2013

Present: David Wagner, Renee Hutter-Barnes, Robert Ferguson, Michael Justin, Matt Hill, Richard Laffin. Steve Trimble

Absent: Richard Dana (excused), Diane Trout-Oertel (excused), Matt Mazanec (excused), David Riehle (unexcused)

Staff Present: Christine Boulware, Bill Dermody, Amy Spong

PUBLIC HEARING

I. Call to Order: 5:06 p.m.

II. Conflicts of Interest: Chair Laffin stated he is a tenant of 275 Fourth Street East and encouraged the architect of 480 Grand Hill to work with staff.

Chair Laffin stated a conflict of interest with the Union Depot project and announced that Commissioner Hutter-Barnes will take the place of the Chair for that agenda item.

III. Chair's Announcements: Chair Laffin congratulated Commissioner Wagner for receiving three "Home of the Month" recognitions in the *Star Tribune*.

IV. Staff Announcements: Ms. Spong announced that the Commission packets will now be available online.

V. Public Hearings/Permit Review

A. 51 West Seventh Street - Church of the Assumption, by Melissa Ekman, Miller Dunwiddie, for permits to demolish the octagonal chimney at the north elevation of the church. **File #13-015** (Boulware 266-6715)

Staff read aloud the report recommending conditional approval of the application to remove the chimney and repair the area where it was connected to the church.

Chair Laffin noted that previous demolition approvals have required significant documentation, and the documentation of the chimney completed by staff appears sufficient. Chair Laffin noted the chimney is the only element on site with Chaska brick.

Chuck Liddy was present to represent Miller Dunwiddie and spoke on behalf of demolition of the chimney. Mr. Liddy summarized the issues associated with the chimney.

Chair Laffin acknowledged the thorough report submitted by the applicant.

Chair Laffin requested that Julie Malecha come forward and speak to a possible sentimental connection to the chimney; Ms. Malecha stated that there is not one.

Chair Laffin noted that the chimney is in poor shape. Mr. Liddy stated that the engineering company determined that it lacked integrity and the rehabilitation would be extensive.

Chair Laffin requested that Mr. Liddy share his opinion of the structural integrity of the church. Mr. Liddy summarized previous work completed to repair the church.

Ms. Boulware noted the salt on the reconstructed stairway and suggested a plan for maintenance. Mr. Liddy stated that they educate their clients.

Ms. Spong noted re-pointing completed fourteen years prior, and inquired as to if the chimney had been repointed at this time. Mr. Liddy responded that it had not and discussed the focus of the re-pointing project.

No written testimony was received and Chair Laffin closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Ferguson moved to adopt the findings and approve the application with the condition made by staff. Commissioner Wagner seconded the motion. The motion was passed 7-0.

B. 275 Fourth Street East, Lowertown Historic District, by Scott Wende, Lunning Wende Associates, for permits to alter openings on the north elevation at ground level and rehabilitate the alley space for patio dining. **File #13-016** (Spong, 266-6714)

Staff read aloud the report recommending conditional approval of the application to alter openings and construct an outdoor patio.

Ms. Spong noted the changes will allow for the dumpsters to be moved inside.

Commissioner Trimble requested confirmation on whether the new door will be replacing the existing door; Ms. Spong replied that both doors will remain.

Scott Wende was present to represent Lunning Wende Associates, and introduced Jim Golden, the owner of Golden's Deli.

Chair Laffin inquired as to the preservation of the sash in the over-head door. Mr. Wende noted the height of the opening and stated they will only be adding a lintel.

Chair Laffin inquired as to the procedure for removing trash from the building; Mr. Wende noted the trash is currently taken through the alley, and the new plan will allow for it to go through the over-head door.

Chair Laffin inquired as to how the proposed plants will grow on the north side of the building; Mr. Wende stated that they have received an easement for the rear side of the alley where there is currently soil and the plants will be there.

Chair Laffin inquired as to the intention of asphalt as the paving method and inquired as to the possibility of a permeable material; Mr. Wende noted the use of the asphalt is due to the location of the alley above the basement of the building, and noted a permeable surface was cost prohibitive.

Commissioner Wagner noted that there is not an elevation drawing of the building in the packet. Ms. Spong confirmed that there is not an elevation drawing in the packet for the Commission, however one was submitted to staff. Ms. Spong presented the elevation drawing to the Commission.

Commissioner Wagner noted the vagueness of the visual information provided. Commissioner Wagner requested more information from the applicant; Mr. Wende confirmed that additional information can be provided.

Commissioner Wagner suggested the decision be laid-over until more information is provided.

Chair Laffin inquired as to the intended timeline of the project; Mr. Wende stated the intention to begin in April.

Commissioner Wagner expressed that there is not currently enough information to make a decision; Chair Laffin inquired to the Commission if they agree.

Commissioner Hutter-Barnes replied that she does not agree and believes the information is adequate.

No written testimony was received and Chair Laffin closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Hill motioned to adopt staff recommendation to approve the application. Commissioner Hutter-Barnes seconded.

Commissioner Wagner noted the importance of sufficient information for a building of this significance. Commissioner Wagner encouraged the Commission to adopt a level of standards for submitted materials.

Commissioner Trimble requested the additional information be sent to the Commission after the decision is made.

The motion passed 6-0 with one abstention (Wagner).

C. 480 Grand Hill, Hill Historic District, by Dave and Gretchen Fellon, owners, for a building permit to alter the rear two-story porch, rehabilitate the kitchen porch, replace skylights and replace exterior windows and doors. **File #13-017** (Boulware, 266-6715)

Staff read aloud the report recommending partial conditional approval of the application to rehabilitate the porches, repair the metal framed windows and replace non-original doors and windows with historically appropriate models.

Staff presented historic and current photos of the building and the condition.

Chair Laffin requested clarification of the proposal to move the stone balustrades from the east side; Ms. Boulware replied that other options would result in imbalance of the rear of the building.

Chair Laffin requested clarification on the guideline to repair windows as opposed to replacement. Ms. Boulware stated that windows are a character defining feature and new window models do not sufficiently match the historic profiles. Ms. Boulware also noted the importance of retaining historic fabric.

Chair Laffin inquired as to if Ms. Boulware had discussed window repair with the designer; Ms. Boulware confirmed that she had. Ms. Boulware discussed the process the applicant followed that lead to the proposal of replacement. Ms. Boulware stated that she does not believe replacement is warranted with this property.

Chair Laffin requested that Commissioner Wagner share his history with the residence; Commissioner Wagner stated his mother-in-law previously owned the residence.

Dave Fellon, the current owner, was present and spoke on behalf of the application. Mr. Fellon noted his commitment to the history of the residence. Mr. Fellon spoke to the challenges involved in the repair of the windows and the potential environmental impacts. Mr. Fellon noted the attention to historic detail in the proposed plans and discussed security concerns of this property in regards to the windows. He requested support from the Commission to approve replacement.

Chair Laffin noted the heating bill included in the materials submitted.

Commissioner Ferguson requested the applicant speak to the revision of the balustrade proposal; Charlie Simmons, designer, was present and stated disagreement with staff revision.

Chair Laffin requested clarification on the proposal to remove the balustrade. Mr. Simmons replied that the proposal is to remove the all balusters on the rear porch and convert to a three-season porch incorporating several design changes. Mr. Simmons noted several areas of damage.

Commissioner Hutter-Barnes commended Mr. Fellon's passion for the residence, and clarified the Commission's intentions to retain the character-defining features of the residence. Commissioner Hutter-Barnes noted the balustrade and the windows as character-defining features and the intentions to retain historic fabric.

Mr. Fellon expressed changes that have occurred in society and encouraged the historic fabric to be considered differently. Commissioner Hutter-Barnes noted Mr. Fellon on safety concerns.

Commissioner Hutter-Barnes explained the environmental impacts of the disposal of the windows and suggested the window company consider safety concerns. Mr. Simmons stated that the historic window company cannot, and Marvin will consider safety concerns. Commissioner Hutter-Barnes noted that this is not addressed in the report.

Ms. Boulware stated that the installation of the clear safety film does not fall under the guidelines for review.

Commissioner Hutter-Barnes inquired as to if the safety film can be installed on any type of glazing; Mr. Simmons responded that it cannot be installed to the windows, but can be installed to the storm windows.

Mr. Fellon reiterated the safety concerns of the property in regards to the windows.

Ms. Spong requested confirmation of the security concerns; Mr. Fellon clarified there is concern with the glass and the frame of the windows.

Ms. Boulware noted the history of the residence with the lumber industry and the integrity of the house materials. Ms. Boulware also noted an observation of more non-original windows being replaced in historic homes. Ms. Boulware addressed the environmental concerns of repairing versus replacing windows.

Chair Laffin expressed the concerns of staff citing the possibility of setting precedent for other cases.

Mr. Simmons addressed the comments made by Ms. Boulware and noted the currently sash weight-pockets in the existing windows. Mr. Simmons noted that an architectural representative from Marvin visited the site and the packet provided by Marvin includes all custom windows.

Ms. Spong requested clarification on whether the repair-bid from Marvin included insulated the weight-pockets and retro-fitting the original sash; Mr. Simmons replied that they had not, and some of the windows will be repaired. Ms. Spong noted other possible options for window repair and suggested exploring other window-repair options.

Ms. Spong noted that the guidelines take a holistic approach in regards to the efficiency of the building envelope and inquired as to if these aspects had been considered; Mr. Simmons responded that it had and will be addressed.

Commissioner Wagner noted that the exterior wall is solid masonry and there is likely not a cavity for additional insulation. A discussion was had regarding insulation methods.

Commissioner Wagner noted that the reduction of air infiltration is the most significant aspect of energy reduction; Mr. Simmons agreed and noted the air infiltration occurring through the windows.

Mr. Simmons spoke to the originality stated in regards to the front door. Commissioner Wagner noted that the existing door may be from another residence.

Chair Laffin requested the recommendation of staff to retain the concrete on the porches as opposed to installing blue stone be addressed. Mr. Simmons stated that the space cannot be viewed from the public street and the retention of concrete would be unfortunate. Commissioner Wagner suggested the use of a similar blue tile that currently exists in the solarium. Mr. Simmons re-iterated the intention of this area to become an interior room.

Chair Laffin noted that if this area is to become interior space, staff would lighten the review. Ms. Spong noted that it is the decision of the Commission to allow a historically exterior space to become an interior space. Commissioner Wagner noted the tile to concrete relationship in the solarium.

Commissioner Trimble requested confirmation that the applicant was aware of the location of the residence within the historic district and the established historic district guidelines. Commissioner Trimble discussed the aforementioned security concerns.

Mr. Fellon expressed the importance of considering the security concerns in regards to the review of the windows.

Commissioner Trimble expressed concern of setting a precedent.

Mr. Simmons inquired as to the issue of replacing a window to match the existing windows.

Ms. Boulware noted Chapter 74 of the Legislative Code.

Commissioner Wagner and Chair Laffin noted the security concerns addressed by Mr. Fellon for the residence.

No written testimony was received.

Ms. Boulware read aloud the recommendation made by staff to partially approve the application with conditions.

Chair Laffin noted specific recommendations as most relevant to the Commissioner decision.

Commissioner Wagner moved to adopt the staff recommendations with the exception of the recommendation regarding the balustrade and the rear elevation of the porch and allow them to be removed, based on the visibility of the elevation and the condition to use historic concrete be removed. Commissioner Trimble seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0, with one abstention from Commissioner Ferguson.

D. 214 Fourth Street East, Union Depot – Lowertown Historic District, by Josh Collins, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, for a building permit to install a 146.5 ft. by 6.65 ft ceramic tile mural in the carriageway. **File #13-018** (Dermody, 266-6617)

Commissioner Hutter-Barnes assumed Chair duties.

Staff read aloud the updated report recommending conditional approval of the permit application to install a ceramic tile mural in the carriageway.

Commissioner Trimble requested clarification on the ability to speak to the art; Mr. Dermody clarified that the HPC cannot provide binding direction on the art, per the City attorney.

Commissioner Trimble made an informal suggestion to include people in the art.

Commissioner Ferguson expressed an informal opinion that the inclusion of areas outside of Lowertown is appropriate.

Ms. Spong noted that the Commission commented on the murals of the Farmer's Market Lofts due to the ownership of the City.

Commissioner Hutter-Barnes requested confirmation that the mural is sponsored by Ramsey County; Ms. Spong confirmed. Mr. Dermody noted that there has been a verbal confirmation of approval by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Josh Collins was present to represent the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, the owners of Union Depot. Mr. Collins noted that the artists of the mural were present at the meeting.

Mr. Collins expressed appreciation for the staff for support for RFP for the project and the availability of the staff report and noted that Chair Laffin was a part of the panel. He noted the approval of the panel in regards to the regional connections made in the mural. Mr. Collins explained that this mural is one part of a larger project and addressed the comments made by Commissioner Trimble.

Mr. Collins noted the letter of approval received from the State Historic Preservation Office and read aloud a quote from the letter.

Commissioner Wagner commended the artists. Commissioner Ferguson thanked the artists.

Mr. Collins expressed public approval of the mural.

No written testimony was received. Commissioner Hutter-Barnes closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Wagner moved to adopt the updated staff recommendation and conditionally approve the application. Commissioner Ferguson seconded the motion.

Commissioner Hutter-Barnes noted the staff report; Ms. Spong clarified that it was not the updated version.

The motion passed 5-0.

Chair Laffin resumed his role

VI. Old Business: None was stated.

VII. New Business:

A. Review and comment on a *Historic Evaluation Study for the St. Paul Gas Light Company Island Station*, 380 Randolph Avenue (437 Shepard Road), report was prepared by Landscape Research LLC for the Department of Planning and Economic Development and the Department of Parks and Recreation. (Spong, 266-6614)

Ms. Spong requested of the Commission to accept the report and make a decision to concur or not concur with staff recommendations. She also requested a discussion to make a decision to direct staff to conduct a designation study. Ms. Spong noted a decision to conduct a designation study would result in a Public Hearing to accept the study.

Ms. Spong presented a summary of the staff memo regarding the report prepared by Landscape Research LLC for the Department of Planning and Economic Development and the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Ms. Spong noted recent designations recommended by the Commission and noted the local criteria for designation. She also noted various points and levels of significance of the site.

Commissioner Trimble requested clarification on the construction date for the building; Ms. Spong and Commissioner Ferguson stated the construction date as 1924.

Commissioner Trimble noted a past debate regarding the ownership of the building.

Commissioner Ferguson stated that NSP purchased this building in 1929; Ms. Spong confirmed.

Commissioner Wagner inquired as to if the building is privately owned; Ms. Spong confirmed that it is.

A discussion was had on previous uses of the building. Ms. Spong noted previous adapted re-use.

Commissioner Wagner inquired as to the intention of the current owner; Ms. Spong noted this would be related to the Public Hearing.

Ms. Spong summarized the points and levels of significance determined for the building and site and discussed the determined level of integrity. Ms. Spong noted the National Park Service classifiers used by the consultants to describe integrity and significance.

Commissioner Trimble inquired as to the worth of staff completing a survey; Ms. Spong clarified that the report would be translated into a designation study.

Chair Laffin clarified the position of the Commission to make a decision to direct a designation study.

Commissioner Ferguson moved to direct staff to complete a designation study. Commissioner Justin seconded the motion.

Commissioner Hill expressed concern of the merit and time consumption of conducting a designation study.

Commissioner Ferguson stated disagreement with Commissioner Hill and stated reasons for local designation.

Commissioner Wagner expressed support of the designation study.

Commissioner Hutter-Barnes noted the time consumption and expressed support of the designation study.

Commissioner Ferguson noted the context study within the report in regards to the Criterion One. Commissioner Wagner noted Criterion Four.

Ms. Spong explained the differences between local and national designation.

The motion passed 5-1 with opposition from Commissioner Hill.

Commissioner Trimble encouraged the Commission to consider nominations for the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Awards.

VIII. Motion to Adjourn: 7:49 p.m.

Submitted by: R. Cohn