

MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Monday, January 12, 2015
City Hall, Room 210
4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Ald. Mark Steuer, Vice Chairperson Jacqueline Frank, Roger Retzlaff, Susan Ley, Dave Boyce, Jeanine Mead

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Frost, Joanne Zlotek (Assistant City Attorney), Jim Mueller (City Attorney), Mary Vanden Boom, Robert Ott and others

The meeting was called to order by Ald. Steuer at 4:00 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND AGENDA

- a. Approve December 8, 2014 and January 5, 2015 Minutes

Motion made by Jacqueline Frank to approve the December 8, 2014 and January 5, 2015 Minutes, seconded by Susan Ley. All in favor. Motion carried.

- b. Modify and adopt agenda

Request made by legal department to move item 5(c), prior to item 2 on the agenda. Motion made by Susan Ley, seconded by Dave Boyce. All in favor. Motion carried.

5. CONTINUING BUSINESS

- c. Discussion on updates from the Law Department on the 30-day raze ordinance and on the resolution directing it to summarize work needed to adapt our historic preservation ordinance to be CLG qualified (City Attorney's Office)

Attorney Mueller introduced the new Assistant City Attorney, Joanne Zlotek.

R. Retzlaff indicated there are two separate issues: the raze ordinance and CLG status.

The Commission would like to have an ordinance which would specify a waiting period before a building can be razed.

Because the current Historic Preservation Ordinance is a voluntary ordinance, the HPC is not able to obtain CLG status from the State of Wisconsin. The Commission would like to obtain CLG status to allow the City to apply for grants with respect to historic preservation.

The ordinance would need to be modified as necessary to allow them to achieve CLG status. CLG status is defined by the Wisconsin State Historical Society.

Ald. Steuer has spoken with the Inspection Department regarding the 30 day waiting period before a building can be demolished. Approximately 46 percent of the City is over 50 years old, but not everyone would be considered historical.

Attorney Mueller indicated the raze order item would need to go before the Planning Commission in order to get it before the City Council. Regarding CLG status, Attorney Mueller stated the law department will draft a proposed resolution to present at the next HPC meeting. It would then need to be referred to the proper committee for approval before going to City Council.

Ald. Steuer indicated the HPC will have the new intern, when hired, help with this project.

The HPC asked that the raze ordinance specify that the original date of construction should be what is listed on the city assessor's records.

Motion made by R. Retzlaff to approve the proposed raze ordinance [marked 15.65 – 30 day waiting period], as amended [base construction date on city assessor records], and refer it to the proper committee, seconded by S. Ley. All in favor. Motion carried.

Attorney Zlotek gave each member a copy of a memo she drafted summarizing the process for obtaining CLG status and future requirements.

Motion made by R. Retzlaff to direct staff to draft a resolution regarding the Commission's support of obtaining CLG status, seconded by S. Ley. All in favor. Motion carried.

2. **DESIGN REVIEWS**

- a. Review and discuss renovations at 405 W. Walnut Street

Robert Ott (Reinhold Signs) and Mary Vanden Boom, property owner (Vertical Butterfly Investments), appeared at the meeting. At one time, this property was the Historic West Theater.

R. Ott stated the project involves rebranding the current marquis, which would include digital messages.

M. Vanden Boom stated that "Funky Monkey" was a fun brand they used on the other side of the state. The reason they purchased this building was because of its history and uniqueness. The long term goal is to bring the Historic West Theater back to life and it will include a dinner theater. The building will be repainted beige, black and copper in the spring time to blend in with the marquis.

S. Ley asked M. Vanden Boom if she met with On Broadway, Inc. regarding the changes she wants done to the marquis. M. Vanden Boom stated Tara Gokey is aware of and has been very supportive of the project. However, she has not met with On Broadway, Inc.

R. Retzlaff stated design committee approval is usually necessary for a sign grant. M. Vanden Boom stated they were told about the grant before they bought the building, but when it came time to apply, they were told the money had been used up.

M. Vanden Boom wanted to be open for the Super Bowl, but R. Ott stated it will be at least another month before it can be fabricated.

R. Retzlaff pointed out that notes on the permit application indicate the message center can only display text and no video display is allowed. R. Ott explained the difference between a video display and text only display. A video display is a full motion video. A text display can include pictures.

R. Retzlaff stated the sign code would regulate brightness, how often a message is permitted to change, etc. R. Ott explained that the sign code specifies that the term "video" means "moving." Pictures are not considered video. This project is similar to the Meyer Theater, but is a much smaller scale.

Per the City's request, M. Vanden Boom stated the marquis will remain within the existing structure. They are allowed one 200 foot sign. The current marquis is 180 square feet. Being "grandfathered" in, they were able to keep the old fashioned liter board underneath. However, if changes are made in the future, this cannot be used.

M. Vanden Boom stated this is a pricey project for them, but feel it's a critical item to bring the theater back to life. R. Ott stated the new message center will be incorporated into the existing marquis and have LED lettering. M. Vanden Boom said a future goal is to eventually upgrade the sockets and replace the row of bulbs above and below the sign.

M. Vanden Boom stated they have installed a beautiful 50 x 60 crystal chandelier in the lobby, along with two additional chandeliers. The lobby has been repainted in dark gray and beige. A copper and black luster, old fashioned looking tile ceiling has been installed in the theater. Everything has been repainted and reupholstered. It has a classy look and has been brought back to its original historical appearance.

D. Boyce asked how often the message center will change. R. Ott stated it will be six times per minute. D. Boyce thinks this could be distracting to traffic. R. Ott stated the City allows this six time rotation.

Motion made by J. Frank to approve the renovations at 405 W. Walnut Street, seconded by Susan Ley.

R. Retzlaff stated he would like the message center to have some type of border around it to give it a higher quality look.

M. Vanden Boom is trying to locate a copy of a November 14, 1941 newspaper article which she would like to display in the lobby. It was shared by Chris Naumann at a previous meeting. R. Retzlaff will follow up and get back to her.

M. Vanden Boom stated that off the lobby to the right and left will be a gift shop and the Funky Monkey.

All in favor. Motion carried.

3. **REPORTS**

- a. Continuing report on the 2014 WHS Conference in Elkhart Lake (R. Retzlaff)

R. Retzlaff gave a report on "Advocacy for HP Commissioners," a topic discussed at the conference. This dealt with promoting the interest of historic preservation.

Commissioners represent historic preservation in the community. Their job is valuable for other beneficial work in the community; it can foster influence with higher powers; and it can make historic preservation less of a mystery. It can also be fun!

Advocacy tips include the following: 1) Play your strengths; 2) Know your limits; 3) Stay educated; 4) Support your team; 5) Be political; 6) Be a leader somewhere else; 7) Reward what you would like to see more of; 8) Be dramatic; 9) Be able to talk about the bottom line; 10) Join the crowd.

Ald. Steuer would like to pursue the HPC applying for membership in other historic preservation organizations.

Motion to receive and place on file made by Ald. Steuer, seconded by S. Ley. All in favor. Motion carried.

- b. Report on a potential meet and greet with citizens interested in historic preservation at the Wycislo Center at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Tittletown Brewing or another location (D. Boyce)

D. Boyce gave each member a handout and asked that they provide feedback. Everyone he spoke with was very positive about the idea and feel there is a definite need. Tittletown is willing to accommodate a meeting on Thursday, February 12.

D. Boyce spoke with Steve Sengstock, Executive Officer of Heritage Hill State Park. He provided Dave with direction on how to proceed. Mr. Sengstock suggested they start out with annual or semi-annual meetings. The immediate issue is getting the word out to the public

D. Boyce suggested inviting local artists to the meeting. They could display artwork that is city related. The meeting could also break into small discussion groups. R. Retzlaff suggested having some key initiators, such as construction professionals.

D. Boyce will organize the meeting and work with the other Commission Members via email to coordinate it.

Motion made by R. Retzlaff to receive and place on file, seconded by Ald. Steuer. All in favor. Motion carried.

4. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

5. **CONTINUING BUSINESS**

a. Reiteration of HPC goals for 2015 (HPC Members)

Primary goals are obtaining CLG status, an ordinance creating a 30 day waiting period for building demolition, filling the vacant position on the Commission and hiring an intern.

b. Discussion of HPC Preservation Awards and a timeline for the May 2015 presentation of these awards (HPC Members)

Jeanine Mead volunteered to coordinate the award ceremony this year. She will have a plan of action for next month's meeting.

d. Discussion on the addition of another HPC Committee Member

Ald. Steuer will contact the persons who expressed an interest. D. Boyce would like to be involved in the selection process.

At this time, Ald. Steuer asked his guests to identify themselves.

Susan Frost owns Frost Marketing Communications which is the oldest agency in Brown County. She also teaches Humanities at the university and is a former member of the Neville Museum Board. Susan coordinated the History Harvest, a collaboration that resulted in the consortium of museums here.

Susan stated she has always been interested in history. Her mother was the first president of the De Pere Historical Society. Susan is the 8th granddaughter of a Chief of the Eagle Clan of the Menominee Indians. Her family came here in the early 1800's and her parents at one time owned the De Pere newspaper. Susan also started "Stories from the Ledge," which is a history project in Ledgeview.

Randy Connour and his wife, Connie, also have a deep interest in history. They are currently serving on the Brown County Historical Preservation Commission. Mark thanked the HPC for what they do. Connie feels if they all work together, it would be very

beneficial. She discussed the half percent sales tax and how that money could be used for grants.

Ald. Steuer left the meeting at this point, turning moderation over to J. Frank.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

J. Frank asked whether the following items should be tabled, since Ald. Steuer was not present to express his views, having placed them on the agenda.

- a. Discussion on a scenario about a typical historic residential/commercial restoration and how that may be incorporated into an HPC article, power point or web item. An attempt will be made to invite citizen(s) to the meeting who has experience with this scenario (Ald. Steuer)
- b. Discussion on a contractor database that has been started by the Brown County Trust for Historic Preservation (BCTHP) and how the HPC may partner on this effort (Ald. Steuer)
- c. Discussion on a historic preservation symposium/meeting for May 2015 with the HPC, BCHS, BCTHP, De Pere Historical Society, Allouez Historical Society and other Brown County area preservation groups (Ald. Steuer)
- d. Review City Raze/Repair Orders and Demolitions

Motion made by R. Retzlaff to table these items until next month's meeting, seconded by Jeanine Mead. All in favor. Motion carried.

- e. Review December building activity report

Motion by Susan Ley to receive and place on file, seconded by Jeanine Mead. All in favor. Motion carried.

7. **OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS**

R. Retzlaff discussed the upcoming Wisconsin History Tour. He will email the members information about specific events.

8. **NEXT MEETING DATE:** February 9, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn made by Susan Ley, seconded by R. Retzlaff. All in favor. Motion carried.