

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2014
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

Members Present: Chairman Smunt, Bobowiec, Gibson, Malay, Norris, Pretz

Members Absent: Withey

Also Present: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager

1. Call to order:

Chairman Smunt called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. Roll call:

Chairman Smunt called roll with six members present. There was a quorum.

3. Approval of the agenda:

Mr. Pretz added two items under additional business- update on the Judd House/Foxwood Square Concept Plan and the Jones Law Office building.

4. Presentation of minutes from December 20, 2013 meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Bobowiec with a unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes as presented.

5. 2014 Work Plan

Chairman Smunt said the Commission was provided with a copy of the 2013 Work Plan to review what was accomplished on projects from the previous year and decide on which projects to further pursue in the next year. The Commission discussed each item on the list:

Mail Order Homes Project: Chairman Smunt noted this project was initiated in the past year and completing the project should be a priority for next year. Mr. Colby stated that Rebecca Hunter completed the initial visual survey in 2013 and the next step will be to continue sending out survey letters to homeowners requesting their assistance in verifying if their house is a mail order home.

Ms. Malay asked about the survey that was completed. Mr. Colby stated that it was a visual/windshield survey, where Ms. Hunter covered all neighborhoods that would fit the time

period for mail order homes and she took pictures of all houses she thought had a chance of being a mail order home model. She prepared a database of approximately 70 homes and listed what documentation she has been able to collect thus far. The next step is to survey the homeowners to get their assistance with documentation. A survey document will then be put together with the photos, a listing of the mail order home model, and the documentation that has been found.

Mr. Colby noted the mailed survey thus far has not received a lot of responses, but that may have been due to the time of year. The Commission discussed options to capture more attention with the mailing, such as a special envelope or postcard. Mr. Colby noted the mailing includes a copy of the mail order home catalogue page.

The Commission discussed a goal of inviting the homeowners to a workshop in the spring and tentatively set a date for late April or early May. Mr. Colby will verify Ms. Hunter's availability and confirm a date.

Public Education/Programs: Chairman Smunt said that use of the City Hall display windows, while a good idea to promote projects, like the Commission did with the Mail Order Homes display, did not belong on the work plan since it is not actually a project the Commission works on. Therefore, it can be removed.

Regarding promoting the Residential Design Guidelines, Mr. Colby stated the guidelines are now posted on the website with PDFs by chapter. The guidelines are also available in print form or on a disc in the Building and Code Enforcement Division office. The Commission discussed ideas to further promote the document, including sending out paper vs. disc copies of the document to contractors. The Commission discussed putting together a list of contractors who frequently do work in the district and sending them a paper copy for reference.

Regarding the landmark sites maps/brochures, Mr. Colby stated that right now, there is a combination map and photo directory of the landmark building sites available at City Hall, but there is no information on the buildings. A more formal brochure or walking tour map could be prepared with assistance from the state through a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant. The Commission discussed plotting out possible walking tours and potential options for dividing the landmarks into shorter tours. The Commission discussed focusing on quadrants. Mr. Colby suggested obtaining copies of similar materials from the Visitor's Bureau and Heritage Center to see how the Commission's map could fit within existing promotional materials. Chairman Smunt passed around copies of older walking tours of St. Charles along with brochures from other locations for the Commission to review. Mr. Bobowiec and Ms. Malay discussed the potential to develop an app to have an interactive audio walking tour and asked whether the City could

produce this or obtain a CLG grant for the project. Mr. Colby said he would need to discuss the concept with the state to see if this met their program requirements. He noted that while the application is simple to assemble, the state only funds projects that meet certain criteria.

Landmarking: Chairman Smunt noted that none of the six properties identified were landmarked last year, but the property owners would support a nomination, they just have not been interested in putting together the documentation. Mr. Colby noted that the application for 512 W. Main St. is complete. The Commission discussed that going to the county as a group to conduct research might be more effective. The Commission divided up the list: Gibson- 502 S. 4th Ave., Malay- 514 Oak St., Smunt and Pretz- 605 W. Main St. and 521 W. Main St., Bobowiec- 123 N. 6th St.

Downtown Design Guidelines: Chairman Smunt said the project was not pursued, as the Downtown Partnership Design Committee was disbanded when the Partnership's functions were restructured. He noted the Historic Commission is now the sole design review authority for the downtown and the Partnership no longer functions as a Main St. organization. He said the existing Downtown Design Guidelines are still usable, and they could be updated at some point, but the project is not a priority. He suggested removing the project from the work plan.

Façade Improvement Program: Mr. Colby said the Commission had discussed an update to the program to either make the applications competitive or to reduce the use of the program for regular maintenance projects. However, Mr. Colby noted over the past couple of years, the program has been fully utilized and has generally been able to fund most projects, therefore staff did not see the need to modify the program at this time. Chairman Smunt said this is more of an administrative change for the staff to handle at some point if appropriate, but it can be removed from the Commission's work plan.

Mr. Colby will update the Work Plan for the Commission to review at a future meeting.

7. Additional Business

Mr. Pretz noted there was a member of the public in attendance and Chairman Smunt asked if he would like to address the Commission. The representative was from Avondale Homes and was attending regarding a sign for 360 S. 1st St. Mr. Colby stated that staff communicated back to the sign company that this address was not in the Historic District, so Commission review was not required. The Commission informally reviewed the drawing and stated it was an appropriate design.

Judd House/Foxwood Square Concept Plan: Mr. Colby stated the Plan Commission and Planning and Development Committee of the City Council appeared to support the Commission's comments regarding the Judd House. He said of the P&D Committee members who spoke, they

were not in favor of the proposal, although the other members did not offer input. He said the developer and the bank who owns the property will need to decide how to proceed, as the developer was under contract to purchase the site and was only interested if the Judd House could be removed. He stated that he communicated to the developer that they can appear again before the Commission at any time, but the expectation is that they will provide the information that was requested. Mr. Pretz noted the developer did not update their plans during the process to respond to the comments from the Commissions. Mr. Colby said that is typical for a concept plan, where the developer doesn't want to consider options until all of the feedback on the initial concept has been received.

Jones Law Office Building: Ms. Malay stated that the Park District Foundation Board is willing to assist with the project by acting as a non-profit to accept donations for the project, but she had heard that someone from the City had communicated to Park District staff that the building was going to be kept by the property owners and therefore was not available. Mr. Colby stated that is not his understanding, and he believes that the property owners are interesting in keeping the building if possible, but the City has until the end of the six month period to relocate the building. He will communicate back with staff to determine the status of the discussions regarding the building. Ms. Malay requested information on the requirement for a footing for the building if relocated, the deadline date for the building to be moved and whether the owner automatically takes ownership if it is not moved, and if the City is willing to fund or assist with the project.

The Commission welcomed Mr. Gibson.

8. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, February 5, 2014 at 7:00pm in the Committee Room.

9. Adjournment:

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.