

MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2017
COMMITTEE ROOM

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

Members Absent: Malay, Kessler

Also Present: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager
Ellen Johnson, Planner

1. Call to order

Chairman Norris called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll call

Ms. Johnson called roll with five members present. There was a quorum.

3. Approval of Agenda

Chairman Norris added two items.

- 4a. Preservation Partners Announcement
- 7d. Nantucket Event Announcement

4. Presentation of minutes of the December 21, 2016 meeting

A motion was made by Dr. Smunt and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes as presented.

a. Preservation Partners Announcement

Liz Safanda, Executive Director of Preservation Partners, was present.

Ms. Safanda informed the Commission about a presentation being sponsored by Preservation Partners in February that includes a discussion about partnerships between development and preservation. A lecture will be given by Massachusetts architect Ben Willis followed by a panel discussion. A participant from each of the tri-cities will be on the panel. Preservation Partners will give Mr. Willis a tour of the tri-cities the day before the presentation to show him some of the good projects that have been done in the area, along with some projects causing concern.

Ms. Safanda said she had a previous discussion with Mr. Pretz to see if he had any interest in being the representative for St. Charles. She said their goal is to have participants with a range of expertise. They would like to include those who are involved in development or architecture and/or serve on a Plan Commission or Preservation Commission. Mr. Pretz noted Chairman Norris or Vice Chairman Gibson may want to serve as the representative. Chairman Norris asked if anyone was opposed to Mr. Pretz taking the lead as the representative on the panel. There was no opposition.

Ms. Safanda said they expect to charge a fee between \$8.00 and \$10.00 per person. Registration will be required. She will send out further information in late January. Dr. Smunt asked if the City would cover their attendance cost. Mr. Colby noted the City has funds budgeted for seminars and it should cover the Commission.

**5. COA & Commercial Corridor and Downtown Business Economic Incentive Grant:
122 W. Main St. (façade project)**

Randy Jostes, project architect, was present.

Mr. Colby stated the Commission reviewed and approved a COA for this project in November 2016. There is now one slight revision to the design of the pilasters.

Mr. Jostes explained they originally had bead board extending up to a higher point on the vertical columns. The new design extends a consistent horizontal black band along the bottom of the storefronts. The pilasters will now have the same look from top to bottom.

Mr. Colby noted the proposal also includes a grant request. He explained the City has an economic incentive program for new businesses locating within the downtown area. It allows them to qualify for funding to do exterior improvements in situations where the Façade Improvement Grant funds have been exhausted. There are no longer any funds available in the Façade Improvement Grant program for the 2016-17 fiscal year, so this project qualifies for funding from the incentive program.

Mr. Pretz asked for clarification on the eligible costs for the grant program. Mr. Colby said the costs presented in the project packet are all eligible for the grant, but certain line items may not be. He also stated it is uncertain how much funding will be made available for this project.

A motion was made by Dr. Smunt and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a unanimous voice vote to approve the COA as presented.

A motion was made by Dr. Smunt and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a unanimous voice vote to recommend to City Council approval for grant funding for this project up to the maximum allowable.

6. COA: 514 Indiana St. (new house)

Zach Derrico, petitioner, was present.

Mr. Derrico previously presented preliminary drawings for this project and noted the current drawings show more detail. Chairman Norris pointed out some of the features of the front and side elevations.

Chairman Norris asked staff if there were any issues with the perimeter of the square footage or lot coverage. Ms. Johnson advised they have not received that information yet.

Dr. Smunt stated he was in favor of the side elevations. However, he felt the dormers on the front elevation were mismatched making it to appear as if two homes were pushed together. He said the shed dormer looks fine and does justice on the building, but the gabled dormer does not have any craftsman features and should be reconsidered. Dr. Smunt referenced the book *A Field Guide to American Houses* for ideas on matching the dormers.

Dr. Smunt also noted one of the front double doors is partially blocked by the left porch column. He suggested using a 42” wide door or two smaller doors to avoid being blocked. He stated this as an observation and not something that had to be changed.

Mr. Pretz felt the windows needed a little more balance and suggested having more consistency with the scale and proportion. Chairman Norris recommended resizing the trim to help achieve better balance.

Mr. Gibson suggested moving the gable end on the front elevation forward approximately 2 to 3 feet. It would help add footage to the second floor. He felt it looks like the front of an original house. He also suggested moving the stairs on the front porch to the side leaving room to space the pillars equally across the front. Mr. Gibson stated he preferred having two gabled dormers instead of the shed dormer.

Mr. Pretz said he would like to see an additional window added to the right side elevation. Mr. Derrico stated the layout on that side consists of a bedroom, bathroom and a closet, and another window isn't needed. Dr. Smunt indicated the current second floor window appears too low. He felt positioning it up a few feet would help make it appear more centered.

Mr. Gibson said he preferred to see matching door sets on the rear elevation with equivalent window sets above the doors.

The Commission directed Mr. Derrico to return with revisions to the drawings based on feedback from this meeting. Dr. Smunt said he would like to see a Plat of Survey to determine the actual dimensions of the yard.

A motion was made by Dr. Smunt and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a unanimous voice vote to table the COA.

7. Additional Business or Observations from Commissioners or Staff

a. Pottawatomie area tour and survey discussion

There were no updates.

b. Residential Design Guidelines update – Ch. 2.1

There were no updates.

c. Façade Program Amendments / Residential Historic Rehab Grant

Mr. Colby presented a draft outline as to how the Façade Program might be structured next year. He said the intent is to simplify the program by expanding the eligibility criteria to include all commercial properties that might be a landmark site or are in a historic district, or within SSA #1B. Multi-family residential structures within SSA #1B would also be eligible.

The program will be modified to include two tiers of reimbursement levels. The current program allows for a 50% reimbursement for any type of eligible improvement. City Council would like to see routine maintenance funded at a lower level with a greater emphasis placed on projects that include more significant reinvestment in buildings. Mr. Colby's outline includes a category for 25% reimbursement for routine maintenance or replacement of non-historic parts of the building. A 50% reimbursement category would be for historic structures that involve some kind of maintenance activity that follows historic preservation practices. This would include more intensive restoration repair work, replacement of historic features, or painting that involves significant prep work.

Mr. Colby said the outline includes another category called, "Building Improvements", which qualifies for 50% reimbursement. This includes investments where they are enhancing storefronts, doing typical façade renovation projects, or making improvements and enhancements to the character of the building.

Mr. Colby explained the program would most likely not include sign or awning improvements on their own because the Downtown Partnership has a program in place for those items.

Mr. Colby said another element of the program would include other residential buildings not covered under the regular façade program described above. This would include all residential buildings in a historic district or a landmarked site. The intent is to have a second category under one program versus setting up a whole different program for residential properties. The program would serve as an incentive to homeowners to take on projects that had historic preservation benefits. To qualify, the building would need to be rated as "significant" or "contributing", or would be rated as such upon completion of the improvements. The program would include a 50% reimbursement for certain types of improvements to buildings that follow historic preservation practices.

Mr. Pretz asked if there has been a determination made as to what the grant limit will be. Mr. Colby said that has not been decided yet, but it will depend on how much gets budgeted for the program.

Mr. Bobowiec asked if this will cause any issues with the Building Department when it comes to deciding if the house qualifies for the enhanced program. Mr. Colby said the program will be publicized and he would expect interested homeowners to approach the Commission for funding before they apply for a permit.

Mr. Colby noted in the past the program was very specific in regards to the type of improvements that could be done and the program description did not include an explanation of what the intent was in terms of what qualified for funding and why. He believes the new program allows for more negotiating when it comes to placing emphasis on certain elements of the improvement project.

Mr. Pretz said the description of the program needs to state the funds are designed to enhance the property and bring it to significant or contributing status. He said the requestor needs to understand that their role is to apply the proper architectural standards.

Mr. Bobowiec asked how the applications are going to be prioritized. Mr. Gibson suggested they initially state the property has to be contributing. Dr. Smunt noted all significant structures are contributing by definition. Chairman Norris said they could keep it broad now and tighten it up later.

d. Nantucket Event Announcement

Mr. Pretz shared information regarding a Preservation Symposium being held on Nantucket Island from June 6-8 that he will be attending. He stated it includes all aspects of preservation and will include tours of properties that would not normally be open to the public.

8. Meeting Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, January 18, 2017 at 7:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers.

9. Public Comment

10. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.