

MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2016
COMMITTEE ROOM

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

Members Absent: Bobowiec

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 six members present. There was a quorum.

3. Approval of Agenda

No changes were made.

4. Presentation of minutes of the November 16, 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. Ms. Malay abstained.

5. COA: 200 N. 2nd St. (windows)

Mary Morgan, the petitioner, was present.

Ms. Morgan said they are proposing replace all of the 578 existing windows on the Carroll Tower building. Chairman Norris asked her to provide some background on the building and the need for new windows. Ms. Morgan noted the building opened as a Section 8 senior living center in 1984. The current windows keep breaking and are not very energy efficient. She noted the electric bills are quite high so the proposal calls for the installation of more energy efficient windows to help lower the electric bills for the residents in the building. The existing windows are aluminum, double-pane and dark brown in color. The new ones are higher quality insulated windows in the same style as the existing windows. However, the new ones will be black or bronze. Ms. Morgan stated they did caulking, tuck-pointing, and cleaning work in 2015 on the building. The improvement project is new windows.

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

6. Additional Business or Observations from Commissioners or Staff

a. Pottawatomie area tour and survey discussion

Ms. Malay said she spoke to two of the aldermen and they were both in favor of the tour.

There were no other updates.

b. Residential Design Guidelines update – Ch. 2.1

Mr. Colby said he is looking for photo contributions to fill the blank space on pages that do not contain a great deal of text. He said they need examples for the “not recommended” section. He suggested bringing a sample of pictures to the next meeting for the Commission to review.

c. Façade Program Amendments / Residential Historic Rehab Grant

Mr. Colby stated there were no new items to discuss.

Ms. Malay asked if staff found any old documents on the residential grant program. Mr. Colby said he has not come across any, but will continue to look into it.

Dr. Smunt noted making grants available for residences will provide a positive perk to being in a historic district. Ms. Malay felt having this program would be a good way to promote preservation.

Mr. Pretz envisioned a rehab grant coming into play when a homeowner does “true” restoration work. Maintenance and updates to non-contributing elements would not qualify. Mr. Colby noted the qualifying items would need to be well defined.

Chairman Norris asked if the Planning & Development Committee had written recommendations since they are requesting an amendment. Mr. Colby said the topic of maintenance was discussed for the existing Façade Program. The Council would like to see some program revisions made that would lower the amount of funding for maintenance versus new improvement projects.

Chairman Norris asked how the Rehab Grant differs from the Façade Improvement Program. Mr. Colby advised the Rehab Grant would be for residential buildings, and would be a new program separate from the Façade Program.

Mr. Colby said he will submit a draft document for review at the next meeting.

d. Discussion regarding potential Millington Historic District

Dr. Smunt said he met with the two 4th Ward aldermen. He said they were both supportive of a new historic district and provided input on the potential boundaries of it. He noted the district would include two blocks north of Route 64 to State Street; two blocks west of the Central Historic District from 5th Street to 7th Street; and two blocks south of Main Street to Illinois Street. Dr. Smunt said there are only two blocks where the majority of structures are not significant or contributing. If they face a great deal of opposition, they can gerrymander the border. Or they can provide two options to the City Council; one that removes the people opposing the district and one that says the boundary stays based upon the listed criteria.

Ms. Malay said she received a phone call from an alderman regarding one of the structures on the corner of 7th and Main Streets. There is a possibility this building will be torn down. Mr. Colby said the contract purchaser contacted staff and staff advised them that they would need to go through a zoning approval process in order to do what they want to with the property. The contract purchaser was also informed about the concern over the structure being demolished and was told that this may prevent them from receiving support for the proposed zoning changes they would be seeking. He said he suggested they file a concept plan application to get feedback on their plan. Staff has not heard back from the contract purchaser.

Ms. Malay said she also spoke to another alderman and they both asked if there were any options available that would save the structure. She told them about the new district concept, but that the landmark process could be quicker. Ms. Malay advised them if they decided to pursue the landmark option, she would be happy to work on getting the nomination done. Dr. Smunt felt there were several at-risk properties in the area and they should be considering the entire area. He said focusing on just one structure would be viewed as “targeting”. He noted the landmark process could take just as long as establishing a new historic district.

Dr. Smunt said they need to move forward with a new historic district based upon the fact that Darwin Millington is an historic figure, his addition is the first addition to the City’s west side, these homes are all part of his addition, and the area includes numerous landmarks.

Mr. Colby stated they need a legal description of the survey area for the historic district nomination. The Commission agreed to include as much of the area as possible with the understanding they could always downsize. Dr. Smunt felt the boundary mentioned earlier was very credible based upon the survey and the amount of significant and contributing structures in the area.

Mr. Pretz asked when the legal description would be needed. Mr. Colby advised they need it when the application is filed.

Mr. Gibson expressed concern over five of the homes on the south side of Illinois Street between 5th and 7th Streets because they are not included in the proposed district boundary. He said three of these homes appear to be contributing. Mr. Pretz noted those homes could be part of the Moody-Millington Historic District; those homeowners could ask to be added to that district.

A motion was made by Dr. Smunt and seconded by Ms. Malay with a unanimous voice vote to direct staff to develop a draft nomination for the Millington Historic District, bounded by Fifth Street, State Street, Seventh Street and Illinois Street, for discussion and consideration at the next meeting.

e. Press Releases for New Landmarks

Ms. Johnson said she put together some information which described how many structures have been landmarked by the City and highlighted the five recent landmarks. She said this could be put out as an article for The Den or as a press release. Mr. Colby said they could space out the publications in The Den and feature one structure at a time.

Mr. Gibson said it would be great to be included in The Den. He also noted local news outlets are eager for information so a press release may be well received and easy to get published.

Ms. Johnson reviewed three informational brochures she prepared on the topics of landmarking, historic properties, and COAs. Dr. Smunt suggested changing how the amount of landmarked structures are identified in the historic properties brochure to keep from constantly having to edit the brochure when new ones are designated. Ms. Malay suggested giving copies of the brochures to the Council members.

7. Meeting Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, December 21, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. in the Committee Room.

8. Public Comment

Mr. Kessler asked if there was any update on the roof in question on the house on Walnut Street. Mr. Colby said the Building Department was going to send out a violation notice. He said it is likely the issue will not be corrected so a lien will be issued against the property when it is sold.

Chairman Norris asked if the same thing could be done to the original St. Patrick's Church where they removed the steeple. Mr. Colby said he believes there was an attempt to serve a notice when the issue first came up, but they were unable to find a way to contact the owner. Since the issue was over 10 years ago, not much can be done at this time.

9. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.