

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2023 – 7:00 P.M.**

Members Present: Rice, Smunt, Kessler, Pretz, Kramer, Malay

Members Absent: Dickerson

Also Present: Rachel Hitzemann, Planner, Russell Colby, Director of Community Development, Derek Conley, Director of Economic Development, Cindy Kaleta, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Malay called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2. Roll Call

Ms. Hitzemann called roll with six members present. There was a quorum.

3. Approval of Agenda

Chairperson Malay requested moving 5g. 303 N. 3rd Ave. to be discussed prior to the Other Commission business , 9b. Variance Recommendation for 303 N. 3rd Ave.

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

4. Presentation of minutes of the April 5th, 2023 meeting

A motion was made by Dr. Smunt and seconded by Mr. Pretz, with a voice vote to approve the Minutes of April 5, 2023. Mr. Kessler abstained.

5. Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications

a. 219 W Main St.

Mr. Rick Muermann, Bogart's Bar, presented proposal to install a vestibule for the rear door of the building.

Ms. Rice asked for clarification of color of vestibule. Mr. Muermann advised it will be black.

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

b. 311 Park Ave.

Mr. Brendan Allen, Representative of Advanced Windows and Siding, presented proposal to replace one door and two windows at 311 Park Ave.

Dr. Smunt asked if the casing would be the same. Mr. Brendan responded they would not be changing the trim, it will remain the existing trim.

A motion was made by Ms. Rice and seconded by Ms. Kramer with a unanimous voice vote to approve COA as submitted.

c. 307 W Main St.

Ms. Hitzemann presented proposal to install a security shutter over the front door for when store is closed.

Ms. Malay questioned if they had enough information.

Mr. Kessler stated he didn't feel they had enough information. Questioned why they felt the need for this shutter. Requested the Owner submit a picture of what this will look like on the door.

Dr. Smunt suggested an open gate that looks like lattice that still has security. Also questioned why just cover the door and not the windows?

Ms. Malay suggested the COA be tabled until more information can be submitted to the Commission.

A motion was made by Mr. Kessler and seconded by Mr. Pretz to table until applicant can submit information, including drawings showing the new door, with a unanimous voice vote to table.

d. 15 S. 3rd St.

Mr. Steve Figi, representing Lazarus House, presented proposal to replace existing deck and stairs, handrails, and balusters.

A motion was made by Ms. Rice and seconded by Ms. Kramer with a unanimous voice vote to approve COA as submitted.

e. 215 N 3rd Ave.

Ms. Hitzemann presented proposal to replace existing cellar door with a new metal door.

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

f. 403 S 6th St.

Dr. Steven Smunt presented proposal to replace the existing wood lattice fence with a new lattice fence.

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

g. 303 N 3rd Ave.

Mr. Matt Sweeney presented proposal to remove the current detached garage and front addition and construct a new addition and new detached garage.

Dr. Smunt asked about the height change to the garage, it still subservient to the main part of the house, it still looks like a garage or a carriage house. Mr. Sweeney advised it is still lower than the original part of the house. Dr. Smunt said the new design is sensitive to Greek Revival and it has his support.

Ms. Kramer asked if the floor plans are the same. Mr. Sweeney responded the footprint of the garage stays the same but they extended the breezeway out in the back by 3 feet.

Mr. Pretz liked the roofline of the garage in the new plan but concern of the additional 2 ½ feet of height for the residents of 312 N. 2nd. I like the look of breezeway in Option 2.

Ms. Rice agreed she prefers the breezeway of Option 2, feels the open breezeway helps break up the frontage.

Dr. Smunt advised on Cedar & 3rd Avenue they built an enclosed breezeway.

Mr. Sweeney stated the only way not to go for a variance was to have no doors. Option 2 was originally designed to satisfy the needs of the Historic Commission and my family's needs. Option 1 is my preference.

Ms. Malay opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. Paul McMahon, St. Charles resident, expressed concern of the size of the building. Concern of the enclosed breezeway looks massive.

Mr. Charles Izzo, St. Charles resident, expressed concern if the change would be a breezeway or a hallway.

Ms. Hitzemann gave the history of the project from original presentation with the Historic Commission and the consideration of the accordion glass doors. Staff determined the area would be classified as a breezeway with the clear glass doors. After neighbors expressed concern, Staff suggested going for a variance.

Mr. Dean Bemis, St. Charles resident, asked why the garage was not allowed to be attached.

Ms. Malay responded historically, the garage normally isn't attached.

Mr. Al Watts, Preservation Partners of the Fox Valley asked if this Commission is able to make the determination if the open area is a breezeway, or is that the Zoning Commission?

Ms. Hitzemann responded it's a Staff determination.

Mr. Pretz made a motion that Option 1 be denied because of the overall visual appearance and the height adds another 2.5 feet to the building. Seconded by Ms. Rice.

Roll was called:

Ayes: Rice, Pretz, Kramer, Kessler

Absent:

Abstain:

Nays: Smunt

Motion passed: 4-1

6. Grant Applications

7. Landmark Applications

8. Preliminary Reviews- Open forum for questions or presentation of preliminary concepts to the Commission for feedback

9. Other Commission Business

a. First Street PUD Amendment- 300 S 2nd St.

Ms. Hitzemann reiterated this is PUD Amendment request for the size and height of the sign. It will come again for specifics but this is only for the size and height.

Mr. Matt Hendy, Fort Union, LLC, presented proposal information of the sign.

Dr. Smunt pointed out the service station across the street has a sign that is original to the service station and appears to be slightly lower in height. The taller height is a good safety feature, with

just a pole and the higher sign, the parking lot can be clearly seen. With the taller sign there is no obstruction of the development of south First Street.

Mr. Pretz asked if this was a corporate mandate to make the sign this tall. It is typical of any tenant to have free standing presence.

Ms. Malay asked how much bigger this sign is than the one at the service station across the street.

Mr. Pretz asked what would be allowed without amending PUD. Mr. Hendy answered normal sign height is 10 feet and normal square footage would be 15 square feet.

Dr. Smunt made recommendation to the Plan Commission to approve the request based on the taller sign on a single pole creates an open view of parking lot which will act as a safety feature by reducing potential sight line accidents, the adjacent service station sign to the west of the subject property is similar in size and height, and because the sign creates an unobstructed view to the southern parts of the First Street Redevelopment project. Seconded by Ms. Kramer with a unanimous voice vote to approve. Mr. Kessler abstained.

b. Variance Recommendation- 303 N 3rd Ave.

Ms. Hitzemann presented the Variation Application requesting to reduce the rear yard setback and increase the building coverage to construct an addition comprised of an enclosed breezeway and garage. The applicant, Matthew Sweeney, was present.

Ms. Rice questioned if the Commission could approve the doors to enclose the breezeway but not the extra height on the garage.

Ms. Hitzemann advised the garage is within the height requirements and does not need a variance on height.

Mr. Pretz reviewed 7 homes within 250 feet of 303 N. 3rd Avenue. Two of the homes are National Historic Register homes dating 1853 to 1855. Three homes are City of St. Charles landmarks circa 1852, 1892, and 1898. Two additional properties are dated circa 1859 and second between 1850 and 1880. All are within the original town of St. Charles. Mr. Pretz gave a description of each of the 7 homes.

Ms. Kramer stated she supports the variance.

Mr. Kessler stated recently in his neighborhood he voted against a variance that he believes had a similar variance request.

Ms. Kramer asked if the breezeway is now enclosed could the applicant reduce the width of the breezeway?

Ms. Hitzemann responded that yes, because it is an attached structure it could be reduced [10 ft. separation distance from the house to a detached garage would not apply to an attached garage].

Dr. Smunt stated he is in favor of granting the variance. He stated the planned house with the breezeway connection to a detached carriage house is historically and architecturally accurate for Greek Revival because it has the feel of a detached carriage house. Comparing this house on the corner, we looked at square footage of houses as well as lots, and all the houses on this square block are small. Going across the street we have double lot houses, the house across the street is about 2400 sq. ft. and the house immediately across the street to the east is another approximately 2400 sq. ft. house. This house is approximately 2200 sq. ft. Larger homes are on the block across the street but still the same neighborhood. The Historic District does not distinguish by square block.

Mr. Pretz added the square footage of living space above the garage does not count. Ms. Hitzemann advised the area above the garage is included in the 2200 sq. ft. size of the home. Mr. Pretz added the houses across the street are on larger lots.

Ms. Malay opened the floor to public comment.

Ms. Pat Pretz, 214 Chestnut Ave., read a letter from Mike Dixon, architect, who worked on the Historic District survey in 1990, stating the breezeway does not meet the definition in the code as it is not open sided, has a ceiling and continuous exterior wall of windows and screens.

Mr. Dean Bemis, 304 N. 2nd Ave., stated his issue is if the Historic Commission makes recommendation to approve this it sets a precedent. Every single lot can become an exception. My hope is the Historic Commission does not make a recommendation and lets the Zoning Board do its work.

Mr. Paul McMahon, 304 Chestnut Ave., asked if the square footage includes the above the garage square footage. Ms. Hitzemann responded for the variance the Zoning Board will only be looking at the building coverage of the house on the lot; building coverage does not include the second floor or above the garage. Mr. Sweeney, applicant, noted the house would be approximately 2200 square feet including the breezeway and the space above the garage.

Mr. Sweeney, applicant, stated he believes there is a misconception on the size and style of the house. The left wing is being built on top of the original foundation. The new garage is being placed just 5 feet beyond where the existing garage is currently situated. Within the zoning there is a bonus given for building coverage if you do a detached garage because it is a preferential design feature. The breezeway is just a connection between the house and the garage. If we didn't have the doors to enclose the breezeway it wouldn't be a discussion because the design would then meet the Zoning Code.

Mr. McMahon stated the garage is 5 feet farther north and it is a larger garage.

Mr. Chuck Izzo, 312 N 2nd Ave., stated he thought about purchasing this home to restore, not enlarge the home.

Ms. Malay added that this commission has worked very hard on preventing teardowns. The way we have had to do this was to work with people to preserve the existing home and make it useful at the same time. We realize we can't preserve everything in its original form and fashion, we had to allow for things to change to preserve most of the home and property.

Mr. Pretz asked Staff if we decide not to recommend to the Zoning Board, this is still going to the Zoning Board? Ms. Hitzemann responded yes, the Zoning Board of Appeals will review the Variation application regardless of the Historic Commission action. She noted that Zoning Board will review the entire Variation application which has a broader scope than what Historic Commission reviews.

Dr. Smunt made a motion to recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals approval of the Variation Application for 303 N. 3rd Ave., because the planned house with an enclosed breezeway connection to a detached carriage house is historically and architecturally accurate for Greek Revival, and to accomplish this architecture the lot coverage and setback will have to be changed to permit the construction of the carriage house as designed. Seconded by Ms. Kramer.

Roll was called:

Ayes: Rice, Smunt, Kramer, Kessler, Malay

Absent:

Abstain: Pretz
Nays:
Motion passed: 5-0

10. Public Comment

None.

11. Additional Business and Observations from Commissioners or Staff

Al Watts, Preservation Partners, shared information about the Blacksmith Shop in Geneva which has been applied for demolition.

12. Meeting Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, May 3rd, 2023 at 7:00 P.M.

13. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 P.M.