

MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2018
COMMITTEE ROOM

Members Present: Pretz, Malay, Krahenbuhl, Kessler, Smunt, Mann

Members Absent: Norris

Also Present: Russell Colby, Community Development Division Manager
Rachel Hitzemann, Planner

1. Call to order

Vice Chairman Smunt called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. Roll call

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

3. Approval of Agenda

The following items were added to the agenda:

8a. Fence at Heritage Green
8b. 218 Indiana St.

9b. Elgin Historic Tour
9c. History Museum Report

4. Presentation of minutes of the September 5, 2018 meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Krahenbuhl and seconded by Ms. Malay with a unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2018 meeting. Mr. Kessler abstained.

5. Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications

a. 12 N. 3rd St. (Patio)

This request was discussed at several previous meetings. The applicant submitted construction plans, but no other substantial changes were made to the proposal since the last review.

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

b. 109 N. 4th Ave. (Windows)

The proposal is for the replacement of three windows at the rear of the house with aluminum clad windows.

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

c. 21 S. 4th St. (New Addition and Garage)

The proposal is for an addition and a new two-car garage. The garage will need to be set back 5 feet from the rest of the building walls with frontage along S. 4th St.

Vice Chairman Smunt expressed concerns over the design of the garage. He felt the gable on the garage did not follow the slope of the gable on the house and suggested raising the pitch of the one on the middle bay to give it more of a carriage house look. He would like to see a revised rendering of the garage before giving final approval. He also recommended maintaining the trim and carrying it through to the addition.

Mr. Pretz questioned the use of vinyl siding. The home currently has vinyl siding and the Commissioners felt it would not be appropriate to ask the homeowner to use different materials at this point.

Mr. Krahenbuhl suggested including some kind of decorative feature on the garage doors to match back to the house. Vice Chairman Smunt recommended making the doors one foot taller for a vertical feel.

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Krahenbuhl with a unanimous voice vote to table the COA until additional/revised information/renderings for the garage are submitted.

6. Landmark Applications

No items were submitted.

7. Grant Applications

No items were submitted.

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

a. Fence at Heritage Green

A proposal was discussed for the installation of PVC fencing at the Heritage Green Townhomes along 5th Avenue. The bushes currently in place will be removed. Mr. Pretz expressed concern over the removal of these bushes. The development across the street removed all their bushes which left the parking areas more visible. He felt it looked unattractive. Vice Chairman Smunt would like to see the fence put east of the bushes. Once they grow, it will create a large green screen and will help soften the look of the fence. If no bushes are going to be used, then he would prefer to see cedar fencing. Ms. Malay said wrought iron fencing would be fine too.

John, president of the homeowners association, said the bushes are dying due to environmental reasons. However, they are not able to determine the exact reason, but it would be too costly to keep putting in new bushes at their current size. This is why they are looking at alternate fencing. The goal is to stay away from wood to avoid the maintenance associated with caring for it. He said composite fencing would cost twice as much as vinyl and about the same as replacing the bushes with new bushes. Vinyl is half that cost and is available in a number of different styles. He would like to use wood grain looking vinyl. Vice Chairman Smunt would like to see a sample of the product under consideration before providing a recommendation.

Mr. Pretz said he prefers to see some type of greenery included with the fencing. Vice Chairman Smunt agreed that any combination of fencing and greenery would be better than just fencing. John asked if the Commission would be more open to considering a less costly fence option if it was combined with plants. The Commissioners said it would help, but they would like to see the materials.

b. 218 Indiana St.

Andrew Driscoll, a real estate developer, was present. He noted the address should be 219 Indiana St. He is considering demolishing the property and constructing something that adds to the current look and feel of the neighborhood. He suggested something that visually ties into the new development along First Street, or perhaps some type of row house. There are two architectural pieces behind the property that he would preserve and highlight in his new plans. He was seeking feedback on the Commission's guidelines/restrictions.

Ms. Malay advised the Commission would like projects to be sympathetic to the neighborhood's architecture and to incorporate some of those features into the projects. She also noted the Commission has begun doing more on-site visits whenever a demolition is being considered. Mr. Pretz said they would like some historical research done to determine if there is any valuable information that needs to be considered before a demolition is approved. He also said they need to know what is going to replace the current structure. Mr. Krahenbuhl suggested Mr. Driscoll check with the history museum to see if they have any information on this house.

Mr. Kessler gave examples of a few homes in the same area that the Commission approved, or that have features he may want to emulate. He said he would rather not see him mirror

development on First Street. Mr. Pretz said the mass of the structure should be sensitive to the surrounding homes. He does not want to see a home so out of place in relation to the others.

Vice Chairman Smunt reviewed structural features of the Queen Anne style of homes. He said Mr. Driscoll plans for a full two-story home would seem to fall within that style.

The Commissioners discussed conducting an on-site visit.

9. Additional Business and Observation from Commissioners or Staff

a. Façade Grant Monitoring

Mr. Pretz expressed concerns over how to monitor the work that was to be done when grants are approved. The following suggestions were made to help ensure the work was done as requested.

- Have all the conditions listed in the scope of work. When the homeowner submits for the payout, they would need to provide itemized receipts matching that scope of work. It was noted this may still not accurately depict if the work was really done.
- Have the contractors attend the meetings so that the Commission can tell them the specific work that needs to be done versus relying on the homeowner to relay the information.
- Assign a commissioner to monitor the scope of work.
- Do all the prep work and then have a commissioner volunteer to take a look at it.
- Provide photo documentation.

Mr. Kessler cautioned against sending a volunteer to monitor the work. Ms. Malay also noted that they shouldn't be having individual discussions with applicants about particular projects. Perhaps a staff member and a commissioner working together would be a better option.

Mr. Colby said the homeowner should know the expectations in advance. They should be informed at the time the grant is being reviewed that the work will be verified at a certain point in the process. The homeowner would have to agree to this as a condition of the grant.

b. Elgin Historic Tour

Mr. Pretz has a book from the tour that he will share with the other members.

c. History Museum Report

The History Museum will be celebrating historic preservation month next May. The director would like to have the different preservation and historic groups in the St. Charles area come together for some type of event, or tour, in an effort to enhance public relations.

10. Meeting Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, October 3, 2018 at 7:00 P.M. in the Committee Room.

Public Comment

Edith Craig, director of the St. Charles library, introduced herself and provided some brief information on the library's plan for renovation of the building. They will be looking to remodel or expand.

Pat Pretz mentioned Questers is working with the library to bring in a speaker to discuss how to get younger people involved in doing historic preservation.

Ms. Malay shared some original catalog books that featured the local catalog homes. She will bring them to the next meeting for further review.

12. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.