

MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2016
COMMITTEE ROOM

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

Members Absent: Pretz

Also Present: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager

1. Call to order

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

2. Roll call

Mr. Colby called roll with five members present. There was a quorum.

3. Approval of agenda

Mr. Gibson added item 7c. Villa Park Historic Commission.

Ms. Malay added item 7d. Stevens Jones Law Office.

Chairman Norris added item 7e. Downtown Partnership.

4. Presentation of minutes of the September 7, 2016 meeting

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

MEETING

5. COA: 132 s. 1ST St. (sign & awnings)

Mr. Colby presented images of the proposed wall sign & awnings.

Bob Rasmussen, the developer of the building, said he may dictate that all awnings on this building be black to present a uniform look.

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

6. COA: 520 Indiana St. (door and windows)

Zach Derrico, the applicant, was present.

Mr. Colby said the Commission approved a COA for this project, but there have been changes made to the door and windows.

Mr. Derrico said a casement window was proposed on the second floor addition, on the wall facing west (toward 6th St). Chairman Norris asked about the proportion of the window. Mr. Derrico said it would be similar to the other windows. Chairman Norris questioned the use of a casement window. Mr. Derrico said to meet the egress requirement in the master bedroom buildout he cannot match it to the existing double-hung windows. Dr. Smunt questioned the need for an egress on this structure. Mr. Derrico believed it was needed in that bedroom. Chairman Norris stated it depended on the square footage of the room. Dr. Smunt said he would oppose a casement window because it is not appropriate for the architectural style of the building. He asked if it had to be egress, could it be a full panel that looks like a double-hung. Mr. Colby said he checked with the Building Department and they felt the plans as drawn met code requirements. Ms. Malay stated a standard double-hung window is what is needed.

Mr. Derrico stated on the first floor, east elevation, the windows on the left and right of the chimney will be changed to sliding doors (this was not shown on the plans). On the north elevation, one of the rear doors will now consist of sliding doors (as shown on the plans).

Dr. Smunt said on the north elevation, he supports the doors and would support either a slider or a double door.

Mr. Derrico stated he would like to incorporate sliding doors on both sides of the chimney to help get more light into the house. Dr. Smunt expressed concern as to whether or not this would look too crowded. However, he was open to it, but would like to see an elevation first.

Chairman Norris summarized the proposal. The Commissioners discussed tabling the vote on the windows until a revised sketch is presented.

A motion was made by Dr. Smunt and seconded by Ms. Malay with a unanimous voice vote to approve a COA to change one of the single doors on the north elevation to a double/sliding door, per the plans as presented. (The Commission did not approve the change to a casement window on the second floor, or the east elevation sliding doors.)

7. Additional Business from Commissioners or Staff

a. 2016 Projects

i. City Council Tour

Mr. Colby presented a summary of what was previously discussed. He asked how much of an explanation should be included regarding the Commission's interest in doing a survey. Ms. Malay suggested noting it is part of the Commission's mission to continuously look into doing surveys. Mr. Bobowiec suggested mentioning the Pottawatomie area is one of the City's most prestigious neighborhoods and a survey of that area has not been done yet. Dr. Smunt read a portion of the summary and suggested advising the Council the survey "creates awareness and meets the Commission's mission to educate the public". Ms. Malay said the wording should include an explanation to let the Council know there are certain things the Commission should be doing.

Mr. Colby asked if the Commissioners would like to review the tour route and select the locations they would like to highlight. Dr. Smunt said they should include the success stories in the northeast part of the current Central Historic District. The Commissioners discussed some options and suggested mentioning the houses where they were able to partner with homeowners for a successful outcome. They also referenced a new home that has multiple styles as an example where they would have liked to have had a design review with the homeowner or architect beforehand to encourage using a more dominate style better suited to the neighborhood. The Commissioners discussed a tour route starting from City Hall, taking State Ave. east, to 3rd Ave. north, to Park Ave. east, to 4th Ave. north, to Fulton Ave. west, to 3rd Ave. north, to North Ave. west, to 2nd Ave. south, back to City Hall. Mr. Colby will prepare a list of stops with the sites highlighted.

Chairman Norris stated they should start looking into the cost of doing the survey and see if there are any grant options available.

ii. Survey of Pottawatomie Area

Discussion was held within the previous agenda item.

iii. Residential Design Guidelines update – Ch. 2.1

Mr. Gibson recommended/pointed out the following items for consideration:

- St. Charles as a singular possessive noun should be written using an apostrophe "s" (Charles's) versus "s" apostrophe (Charles') if it is possessive.
- Presented some illustrations found on the internet for placement within the guidelines.
- Suggested including a list of common architectural styles if it doesn't already exist.
- The section referencing "Setbacks" ends abruptly after the word "consider". The remaining words are missing.

Mr. Colby mentioned all of the pictures they currently have are of St. Charles. He asked what to do with pictures of negative examples. Dr. Smunt suggested doing these as sketches and leave out identifying details.

The Commissioners reviewed images of homes that showed good and bad examples of various sections in this chapter and discussed the potential of using these in the guidelines. The Commission decided that bad examples from outside of St. Charles would be appropriate to include. Mr. Gibson suggested using a table format that shows one recommended and one non-recommended example of proper size and scale features.

b. Observations

c. Villa Park Historic Commission

Mr. Gibson attended the Chicago Suburban Preservation Alliance meeting held at the Villa Park Historical Museum. He found out the Illinois and federal level tax credits are at risk and will be expiring soon. He advised calling representatives to let them know how important these are.

Mr. Gibson also noted the Villa Park Economic Development Department is using their TIF districts to encourage “preservation sensitive development”. Mr. Gibson explained how Villa Park titles their historic areas in a way that helps their Economic Development (ED) Department. They have an “arts” area and an “industrial” area. When they review the historic use for future businesses, the ED department can use this to steer people to certain areas.

Mr. Gibson said Villa Park does not have a real Historic Preservation Committee. However, they provide grassroots guidance. He noted they created a brochure that discusses historic preservation, its importance, and what the benefits of it are. The brochure is available for realtors to purchase with their logo imprinted on it to hand out when they are selling historic properties. Mr. Gibson did some research on other community brochures and created one for St. Charles.

c. Stevens Jones Law Office

Ms. Malay asked for clarification on what the Commission discussed regarding using a skirt board on the bottom versus siding. She said she was advised the skirt board was the smarter option. Mr. Bobowiec noted that was also the Commission’s recommendation. Dr. Smunt clarified it was a skirt board with a drip cap. The Commissioners discussed that moisture is present along the back of the structure because of the grading and the oversized slab. Dr. Smunt said in order preserve the structure it should not be sitting directly on the concrete slab if possible.

d. Downtown Partnership

Chairman Norris advised there has been a change in the Partnership’s by-laws which now permits any Commissioner to be a voting member of their Board. He was unsure as to the term limit. Ms. Malay said she may be able to serve in this role. She will check her schedule and advise.

8. Meeting Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, October 5, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. in the Committee Room.

9. Public Comment

None

10. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.