

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2017
COMMITTEE ROOM**

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

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Russell Colby, Division Planning 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 seven members present. There was a quorum.

3. Approval of Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

4. Presentation of minutes of the November 15, 2017 meeting

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Gibson with a unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2017 meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

5. Eligibility of Property for Landmark Designation: 411 Prairie St.

Chairman Norris opened the public hearing.

Mr. Colby reviewed the application for landmark designation filed by Susan Olson, the property owner. The Commission reviewed a draft of the nomination form at a previous meeting and recommended some changes to the form and the architectural survey page. Both of these forms have been updated based on those recommendations.

Mr. Gibson asked if the architectural surveys included the date they were originally completed. Mr. Colby said they do not, but this was from 2003. He added a revised date on this one. Dr. Smunt asked for clarification on the property name listed on page 1 of the nomination form. It

was left blank. Ms. Malay noted the resolution lists it as the John Stone house. If a landmark plaque is issued, Dr. Smunt recommended omitting the word house/home from the name to allow for the use of bigger font so it could be read from the street. Mr. Pretz suggested letting the homeowner decide. Ms. Olson asked if people driving by would know what it was if it just said John Stone. Dr. Smunt said it would say landmark designation with the year it was built. He thought people would assume John Stone was the original owner.

Dr. Smunt also asked about the historic/current use of the building. It is listed as a private residence, but he thought part of it was once used as a gasoline station. Ms. Olson said the gas station use was detached and not connected to the house. Dr. Smunt thought the house or property had some historical commercial use affiliated with it when it was on Geneva Road. He said they should get photographic evidence of the gas station affiliated with property. He recommended updating the form under historic/current use to include commercial.

Chairman Norris opened the discussion to the public for comment. There were no comments.

Chairman Norris asked Mr. Colby how they would handle making the changes that Dr. Smunt suggested. Mr. Colby said if the applicant agrees with the revisions, he can modify the original application form. Ms. Olson was fine with the changes and requested a copy of the updated forms.

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Kessler with a unanimous voice vote to close the public hearing.

MEETING

6. Eligibility of Property for Landmark Designation: 411 Prairie St.

The Commission had a draft resolution to review.

A motion was made by Dr. Smunt and seconded by Ms. Malay with a unanimous voice vote to modify the nomination form to include the name John Stone as the historic name associated with the property; and add commercial use as one of the historic uses under the function/use on page two of the nomination form.

Chairman Norris read the draft resolution.

Dr. Smunt suggested an amendment to the descriptive paragraph related to architecture. The dormer on the roof was a non-contributing later addition and not part of the Italianate style. He suggested making a note of this on page 4 of the nomination form, under III e., at the end of the third checked item.

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Gibson with a unanimous voice vote to recommend to City Council approval of the landmark designation of 411 Prairie Street.

7. COA: 225 W. Main St.

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Krahenbuhl with a unanimous voice vote to table the item.

8. COA: 323 Illinois St.

A motion was made by Mr. Krahenbuhl and seconded by Mr. Kessler with a unanimous voice vote to table the item.

9. Preliminary Review: 612 W. Main St.

Amanda, Tamara and Gary O'Connor, the prospective buyers, were present.

Ms. Amanda O'Connor described the modifications they would like to make to the building. They are proposing adding a large porch around the front and side of the building. Since this is an office, they need handicap accessibility, and the wraparound porch will help them achieve that. The porch will have a wood floor and ceiling. The ramp will be located on the west side of the building. They would also like to relocate a side door that is currently positioned within a lower level bay window and match the lower bay window to the upstairs windows when the door is removed.

Ms. Malay asked about the railings and whether or not they could get leniency due to the fact that is an historic building. She said the lower the railings the better. Mr. Colby said they would first need to check to see if railings are required. If they are, they can work with the building department on the height requirement. Mr. Kessler preferred to see rails because it is an original detail. Mr. Krahenbuhl favored not having railings on the porch in an effort to be able to see more of the details of the arched window.

Dr. Smunt said the columns should be turned columns as shown in photos of the original building. He also expressed concern that some of the unique elements of the main elevation will be covered up. Mr. O'Connor said he can alter the ceiling to make it easier to see these elements.

The Commissioners suggested using *The Field Guide of American Houses* as a reference to assist them in using design elements that match the historical architecture of the building. Ms. Tamara O'Connor expressed concern over maintaining the changes that are being suggested. Mr. Gibson said there are numerous options for the Queen Anne style home. Dr. Smunt noted they can use modern materials that look like the original, but are very durable.

Mr. Pretz was not opposed to the modifications. However, he suggested they make sure the modifications are designed to be architecturally correct and proportioned appropriately with the house. Dr. Smunt said to go with what they know existed versus adding an interpretive element that did not exist.

Chairman Norris noted the arched window is one of the strongest elements on that portion of the building and the wraparound porch will drastically put this in the shadows. Mr. O'Connor said it will still be visible from the street.

The Commissioners were generally supportive of the concept, but suggested the O'Connors provide visual materials incorporating the modifications discussed.

10. Additional Business and Observations from Commissioners or Staff

a. 217 Cedar Ave.

Mr. Colby noted the tour of the house is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. on Saturday and will be noticed as a meeting. A suggestion was made to include the aldermen. Mr. Colby advised some aldermen have already been through the house. He said they have to be careful to avoid having a majority of a quorum of aldermen. Dr. Smunt suggested inviting the 4th ward aldermen if they haven't already been through it. Mr. Gibson suggested Art Lemke and Dan Stellato.

Since this is a public meeting, Mr. Pretz asked about inviting Dan Otto. Mr. Otto has a background in structure and moving buildings. Mr. Pretz felt Mr. Otto would be able to provide some valuable feedback that could be beneficial to the Commission in preparing a response back to the Council. Mr. Colby said it would be acceptable to invite him as it is a public meeting.

Mr. Kessler asked for clarification as to the purpose of the meeting/tour. Was it to show the Council some options? He restated his original position noting he felt their duty was to read the ordinance and see if this meets it. He felt they had already done that. He asked what they believe the outcome of their tour will be. Chairman Norris suggested evaluating a plan after the meeting/tour. Dr. Smunt said if they find the building has a reasonable chance at being part of a redevelopment plan if the property is sold, the Commission needs to say so.

Mr. Gibson said the City Council is asking the Commission to give an opinion and provide guidance in making their decision. He said the Commission could say they have taken their action, made a recommendation, and given a resolution, but this could be an opportunity to further assist the Council and advise them of everything the Commission did on this. Mr. Pretz stated a developer was reaching out to the church to talk about the availability of the property.

Mr. Colby said this discussion will likely return to the P&D meeting in March. Mr. Gibson said he felt the 90 day extension was for the Commission to have time to review a plan. However, he said if they are ready to give their feedback before then, they could move forward in doing so. Ms. Malay said it also gives the Council more time to do what they need to do.

Mr. Colby asked if the Commission wanted to set up a sub-committee or group to meet with interested aldermen and the church. From a scheduling standpoint, he noted only two Commissioners would be able to attend. Mr. Pretz felt it was a good idea if it helps the Council get a better understanding on the matter. Dr. Smunt said it all depends on the outcome of the tour. The Commission decided to conduct the tour before making any further plans.

b. Residential Façade Improvement Grant

Mr. Colby asked if anyone had any comments on the summary he shared with them. The Commissioners did not have any additional feedback.

c. West Dundee/Elgin

Mr. Pretz said he received information from the Dundee Township Historic Society on their plaquing process and qualifications. Their nominations were expanded to include homes 100 years and older. He asked if this item could be put on the next agenda for additional discussion.

Mr. Pretz also mentioned the City of Elgin has a celebration twice a year recognizing their nominated homes. This is done by their heritage commission, in conjunction with their history museum and downtown partners. He recommended doing something similar to recognize the homes that have been nominated in a given year. Dr. Smunt said this may be an ideal way to do something for the catalog homes. After categorizing them, they haven't done much else with the information. He said they could feature the ones that have recognizable original architecture. He felt it could be a seed to stimulate pride in their neighborhood.

Mr. Pretz thought it was a way to continue reinforcing homeowners who received landmark designation years ago that they have a significant home.

11. Meeting Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, December 21, 2017 at 7:00 P.M. in the Committee Room.

12. Public Comment

13. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.