

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ST. CHARLES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2018  
COMMITTEE ROOM**

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

**Members Absent:** None

**Also Present:** Russell Colby, Community Development Division Manager

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**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**

The following items were added to the agenda.

9b. Catalog Homes

9c. 515 Walnut Street – Landmark

9d. Lincoln School

**4. Presentation of minutes of the January 17, 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 January 17, 2018 meeting.**

**5. COA: 1 S. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. (sign)**

A representative for the St. Charles Public Library was present.

The proposal is for the relocation of a sign for the library from the southeast wall of the building to the front of the canopy. The current signage is being blocked by overgrown bushes and trees.

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

**6. COA: 112 N. Riverside Ave. (canopy)**

A.J. Reineking, Public Works Manager for the City of St. Charles, was present.

The proposal is for the replacement of an awning for the public entrance door on the north side of the Century Station building. The intent is to redefine the main entrance to the building and provide additional coverage from the elements for those waiting to get into the building. The awning will be made out of green Sunbrella canvas with lettering that says “City of St. Charles” on the front and “112 North Riverside” on the sides.

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

**7. COA: 322 W. Main St. (sign)**

Dana McLeod and Jill, owners of Clean as a Whisker, were present.

The proposal is for a three sheet aluminum sign for Clean as a Whisker Pet Grooming to be placed on an existing panel on the west side of the building. Ms. McLeod presented two design options for consideration. Mr. Pretz and Dr. Smunt preferred the first option.

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

The following items were reviewed out of order to accommodate the arrival of representatives.

**9. Additional Business and Observations from Commissioners or Staff**

**b. Catalog Homes**

Mr. Pretz researched the four catalog homes that were previously designated as significant and only found documentation for the home at 716 Mosedale. There was no supporting documentation in the county records for the other three homes located at 306 S. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, 513 Illinois Street, and 504 Jackson Avenue to substantiate that they are catalog or kit homes. With only one home found, Mr. Pretz suggested considering another category of home for recognition. He felt there was no further action needed on the catalog homes.

**c. 515 Walnut – Landmark**

Mr. Pretz will be meeting with the owner, Brian Graff, to begin the landmarking application process.

**a. 217 Cedar Ave. update**

Peter Vargulich, representative from the Baker Memorial United Methodist Church, was present.

Mr. Colby advised that the house mover looked at the building and provided a rough estimate of \$100,000 to pick up the house and move it. Without knowing the new location, the estimate does not include any costs associated with moving things out of the way such as utility wires, or a new foundation, utility services or building systems that need to be replaced when the building is placed in the new location.

The church previously asked if Dan Otto would be able to provide an opinion about the renovation costs. Mr. Pretz said Mr. Otto is interested in doing this, but he asked for a refined scope of work in order to determine exactly what the church would like to have done. Mr. Pretz also asked for clarification as to Mr. Vargulich's role in the church. Mr. Vargulich sits on the Board of Trustees and is the lead trustee for the church on this project. Mr. Pretz asked if the church has received any inquiries about the property. Mr. Peter confirmed there has been some interest.

Mr. Colby advised they anticipate placing this discussion before the Planning & Development Committee at their next meeting on February 12th. This would be close to the 90 day timeline the Committee requested to postpone consideration of the COA. Mr. Colby stated it would also be an appropriate time to ask the Committee about next steps. He said the Church may choose to ask the Committee to make a decision on COA now, or wait to see what the Committee members suggest as the next steps before deciding what to do. Mr. Vargulich was fine with this plan.

Dr. Smunt asked if this provides Mr. Otto a reasonable timeframe to complete his work. Mr. Pretz felt he would need more time. Mr. Colby said they can advise the Committee they can generate the information from Mr. Otto if they feel that would of some use to them.

#### **8. Preliminary Review: 21 S. 4<sup>th</sup> St.**

Zach Derrico, the developer, was present.

Mr. Derrico presented new exterior elevations consistent with the previous presentation, but with more detail. The Commissioners reviewed the documents. Mr. Colby mentioned at the previous review there was a concern with the north lot line setback. Mr. Derrico said project does meet the setback requirements. Dr. Smunt asked if this structure was taller than the existing one. Mr. Derrico said it will be slightly taller with a similar shape and configuration as the current one. Dr. Smunt gave suggestions for improving the division of the window lites. He recommended four small ones or none at all. He also suggested adding a few square brackets to the porch posts and a frieze board to define the gable better. The Commissioners were fine with rest of the plans.

#### **9. Additional Business and Observations from Commissioners or Staff**

##### **d. Lincoln School**

Ms. Malay said some parents are upset about the possibility of this school closing and have concerns about what will happen to the building if it does close. She said they asked about landmarking. Mr. Colby said the school is not in the historic district. It is adjacent to it.

Ms. Malay mentioned the school district does not have to obtain permits from the City for any work that they do. Mr. Colby said that is correct, but noted based on a recent court case, school districts are required to follow zoning or site development codes, and the City now provides zoning reviews on school district projects. Ms. Malay asked if historic preservation would be included under the zoning review. Mr. Colby was not sure, given that the COA review requirement is tied to a building permit application.

If there is threat of teardown, Ms. Malay asked if the Commission would want to consider the idea of landmarking the school. Mr. Gibson said landmarking does not necessarily guarantee nothing will happen to a building. He felt this building is nondescript enough to be used for purposes other than another school. Dr. Smunt said it does not have to be landmarked, but the Commission should weigh in at any public meetings or hearings. Mr. Colby mentioned there has not been any discussion about disposing of the property. However, due to the type of building it is, and its location, it may have the potential to be sold if the school closed. Ms. Malay said if it does sell, it would then fall under a private owner and there would be no protections in place if that owner decided to tear it down. Mr. Gibson mentioned the code permits the Commission the ability to landmark anything it chooses to based on its historical significance.

Ms. Malay said there is a heated fight going on in the community about all this and asked if they wanted to get involved in it. She is assuming they would be going against the owner's will by pursuing landmark status. Do they want to act now or wait to see what the outcome is? Dr. Smunt said waiting does not change the significance of the structure. Mr. Pretz feels the Commission's responsibility is to proactively preserve things that are historically or architecturally significant. However, he felt strongly about bundling efforts while doing so. Ms. Malay said they could consider including the Howard house in their efforts. Mr. Colby said another alternative approach would be to propose adding this block into the district. Dr. Smunt suggested distributing some findings of fact out to the public to generate support for the annexation into the Central Historic District.

Ms. Malay said if the property is landmarked or in a historic district, a contractor may ask the school district to demolish the building before they make a purchase because the school would be able to do that and the developer would not. Dr. Smunt felt the Commission would have a louder voice if it was part of the district. Mr. Kessler provided examples of recent occurrences in Geneva. In both instances, there was strong opposition, but the buildings were still demolished.

Mr. Gibson said it would not be that difficult to find a way to designate the building as historic. He thought it would be wise for the Commission to have that in place in the event the building does get sold. This would help the Commission have some say into what happens to the structure.

Ms. Malay said her intent was to bring this before the Commission to make it aware of the situation. She feels the building should be protected. Ms. Malay noted the Commission is expected to have a certain amount of support if they bring another area into the district. She asked how this works when they only have one property owner and it's against their will. The Commissioners mentioned other landmarked buildings in that area that they could consider including.

Mr. Gibson asked if this is not within the City's purview, could they draw a line around it in case at some point in the future it becomes under the City's control. It would then fall within this district. The Commissioners agreed having this in the district would give it some protection.

Mr. Colby said he would need to research the legal questions raised regarding the COA process and district designation process and will provide additional information to the Commission at a future meeting.

**10. Meeting Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, February 21, 2018 at 7:00 P.M. in the Committee Room.**

**11. Public Comment**

**12. Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.