

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ST. CHARLES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 2011  
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

**Present:** Chairman Smunt, Bobowiec, Norris, Prestidge, Pretz, Weals, Withey

**Also Present:** Russell Colby, Planner  
Michelle Taubensee, Recording Secretary

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**1. Call to order.**

Chairman Smunt called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and requested that all cell phones be either turned off or switched to silent mode.

**2. Approval of agenda.**

Chairman Smunt added the following to the agenda under Additional Business:

11a) Discuss Tradesman Criteria and Follow-up on Paint Color Books

**3. Presentation of minutes of the April 20, 2011 meeting.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Bobowiec and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes as presented.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Prestidge and seconded by Mr. Withey with a unanimous voice vote to amend the previous motion to include a correction to the minutes that Mr. Prestidge was not present at the April 20, 2011 meeting.**

**4. COA: 410 Illinois Street (fence).**

Mr. Colby briefly reviewed that the proposal is for an aluminum fence and referenced a picture of the design. Also included is a plat of survey which indicates that the fence will be located in the rear yard along the east property line.

Tony Gange, property owner, was present for the meeting. Mr. Gange clarified that the fence will be black aluminum and 36-inches in height. The posts will be 1-inch by 1-inch.

Chairman Smunt commented that the proposal matches the design of the building and is contemporary.

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

**5. COA: 108 S 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue (front porch).**

Mr. Colby advised that this item should be tabled because it is an Administrative review and does not require action from the Commission. Once the item is tabled, it will not be put back on the agenda.

**A motion was made by Mr. Bobowiec and seconded by Mr. Norris with a unanimous voice vote to table approval of a COA.**

**6. COA: 211 N Riverside Avenue, Police Station (awnings).**

Mr. Colby briefly advised that there are (4) awnings and referenced a diagram indicating the proposed awnings at the east and west entrances. Deputy Chief Dave Kintz, of the St. Charles Police Department, was present for the meeting and added that the west entrances currently do not have an awning. The color of the proposed awnings will be marine blue.

Chairman Smunt commented that the style is traditional for a building of that era. Mr. Norris commented that the awning labeled “C” may cause an issue with a truck parking in that area. Deputy Chief Kintz responded that there are parking bollards that are not shown in the picture that protect the door opening.

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

**7. COA: 117-123 S 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Howard House (demolition of detached garage).**

No discussion on this item. Chairman Smunt commented that approval had been granted to previous owners a few years ago.

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

Jim Dukovich, property owner, was present for the meeting and presented a preliminary drawing to rebuild a rear deck. The new deck would stretch across the entire rear side of the north portion of the building. Chairman Smunt advised that the Commission would require that the balusters and handrail system match the existing on the front of the building. Mr. Colby added that what was approved for rear deck on the southern portion of the building was similar to the balusters and handrail used on the front, but it was not an exact match. Mr. Norris discussed code requirements and suggested reviewing the preliminary drawing with the Building Department. There was brief discussion regarding the deck repairs made by the previous owner, which were later entirely removed because they did not meet code requirements.

Mr. Dukovich explained that there are no plans at this time to rebuild on the property where the detached garage will be demolished. The area will be landscaped for the time being. Mr. Norris commented that there may be an issue in regard to the property becoming impervious when left vacant. Mr. Colby advised that the city has adopted the Kane Country Stormwater regulations and stated that he would look into the possible impact for future development.

It was advised that once drawings for the proposed deck are submitted for permit to the Building Department, the Commission will officially review for COA approval. Chairman Smunt requested a separate drawing showing the railing detail.

**8. Election of Officers.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Norris and seconded by Ms. Weals with a unanimous voice vote to nominate Dr. Steven Smunt as Chairman.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Bobowiec and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a unanimous voice vote to nominate Harold Withey as Vice Chairman.**

Mr. Colby briefly commented that both Craig Bobowiec and Tom Pretz were recently reappointed for another 3-year term.

## **9. Façade Improvement Program discussion.**

Mr. Colby updated the Commission on the program. The city has started the new fiscal year and the program is funded at \$40,000. Mr. Colby commented that there has been no interest so far, however, that may partially be because the city was not sure if the program would be funded for fiscal year 2011-2012 and there have not been many projects involving significant building improvements.

Chairman Smunt commented that the Downtown Partnership also offers a reimbursement program for a sign or awning up to \$2,500. Chairman Smunt stated that the Downtown Partnership has been considering including color choices as part of their criteria for approval. Color restrictions should not affect a business logo, but could be part of the sign background to better compliment the building.

Mr. Pretz questioned if the Downtown Partnership was separate from the city Façade Improvement Program. Chairman Smunt responded that they are separate. The Downtown Partnership is funded by the Special Service Area district. Properties that are within the SSA district applying for a Façade Improvement grant would be considered by the Commission for approval even if the property is not within the Historic District. Chairman Smunt stated that the Façade Improvement Grants should not be duplicating the reimbursement given by the Downtown Partnership for projects such as signs and awnings.

There was brief discussion regarding color choice. Chairman Smunt stated that it should not be the focus of their review; however, they could sway color choice in approval of a Façade Improvement Grant. Chairman Smunt stated that the Commission should have good manuals and an objective when dealing with color choice and should also reference historically correct colors.

Mr. Colby commented that the Façade Improvement Program has also been used for maintenance work such as painting or roofing. Chairman Smunt stated that the program should be used for work above and beyond normal maintenance, such as repair of a parapet wall. Mr. Pretz agreed. Commissioners agreed that painting and roofing projects should only be approved when in conjunction with a major rehab project. Mr. Colby added that currently an applicant can qualify for the program after a certain threshold regardless of the type of project.

Mr. Colby explained that based on this discussion, they can amend the program description that is currently approved by City Council. Chairman Smunt also suggested amending the grant limit to be determined by the Commission based upon the scope of the project. Mr. Pretz noted that with no limit the total fund for the Façade Improvement program could be used with only (1) project, rather than distributing to multiple projects. Mr. Colby suggested establishing criteria that would be ranked so that it is not entirely arbitrary. Mr. Bobowiec noted that some businesses have used the program multiple times and Mr. Colby responded that there are limitations. Properties can use the program only once every (5) years. Chairman Smunt commented that the program increases the property value and enhances the downtown. Mr. Bobowiec stated that there should be a stipulation that a property cannot be sold until

after a certain time frame. This would ensure that property owners do not use the program to enhance the property value and then profit from the sale of the property. Chairman Smunt disagreed stating that the enhancement would still be a visual impact for the downtown area. Chairman Smunt suggested distributing unused funds to eligible applicants at the end of the fiscal year up to a matching 50/50 grant. Mr. Bobowiec suggested opening the program to non-commercial properties. Chairman Smunt stated that the program is not open to properties outside the SSA district; however, Mr. Colby added that the program does allow for multi-family properties (2 or more dwelling units) to be eligible. Mr. Bobowiec added that properties that are non-commercial, but still in the SSA district should be eligible for the program. Mr. Colby also added that an amendment was approved which extends grant money to the entire Central Historic District after all applicants in the SSA district had received money. Mr. Pretz stated that the grant money should only be granted to properties within the tax footprint. Mr. Colby briefly reviewed the current process for accepting applications for the program and how applications are prioritized. Chairman Smunt commented that the criteria was good and should not be changed. In a 5-year period, the grant is limited to \$20,000 total, however, the program stipulates \$10,000 per 30-foot of façade.

Mr. Colby reviewed that the previous budget for the program was \$10,000, which was money left over from the previous budget. Money that would have been budgeted for the Façade Program was allocated by City Council for the Arcada Theatre marquee sign as a separate item.

There was brief discussion regarding Mr. Bobowiec's property and eligibility for the Façade Program. Mr. Colby will review the possibility and contact Mr. Bobowiec.

The Commission agreed that the Façade Improvement Program should only be utilized for larger projects; roofing and general maintenance projects should be approved only if they are part of a larger project. Mr. Bobowiec again stressed that no profit should be made on the sale of a property within a certain time frame from when the grant was given. Commissioners agreed it is something to review, however, stated that the enhancement still remains after the sale of the property. Mr. Colby added that the program requires the property to be maintained exactly how it was approved for a period of 5-years after the project is completed. Mr. Colby mentioned the Howard House project and stated that the previous owner received a Façade Grant in 2006, so the 5-year period has passed. Ms. Weals questioned if the current owner can apply for a Façade Grant to rework the rear deck, but Mr. Colby responded that there are limitations on money that can be spent on the rear of the building; the rear must have a public entrance.

Mr. Colby explained that if there is a concern for deterioration of a specific building, similar to the Arcada Theatre marquee sign, these projects could be considered on a case-by-case basis by City Council. These items would be budgeted separately and would not be part of the Façade Improvement Program.

The Commission briefly reviewed pictures of the top (10) buildings most in need of Façade Improvement. Mr. Colby commented that the photos are a few years old. Ms. Weals voiced concern for lack of knowledge on buildings that have metal material on the façade. Chairman Smunt stated that the owner of the Brew Shop building would likely be the most interested in the Façade Improvement Program.

**a) Tradesmen Criteria**

Chairman Smunt suggested the Commission have a criteria checklist available for owners to reference when hiring a contractor; the checklist should include items that an owner should insist be part of the contract. The information should be very generic and cover the basics of hiring a contractor. Mr. Pretz suggested utilizing already existing information and Chairman Smunt agreed. The National Trust has a publication that could be used. Chairman Smunt suggested including the criteria checklist with the

Design Guidelines. Mr. Pretz and Chairman Smunt volunteered to research this subject. The checklist would be used for multiple types of construction including surface treatments, siding, masonry/stucco and exterior carpentry including windows and doors.

**12. Adjournment.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Withey and seconded by Mr. Bobowiec with a unanimous voice vote to adjourn the meeting.**

With no further discussion, the meeting ended at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dr. Smunt, Chairman  
Historic Preservation Commission

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