

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2013
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

Members Present: Chairman Smunt, Bobowiec, Malay, Norris, Pretz, Withey

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager

1. Call to order:

Chairman Smunt called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. Roll call:

Chairman Smunt called roll with six members present. There was a quorum.

3. Approval of the agenda:

No changes or additions.

4. Presentation of minutes from October 16, 2013 meeting.

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

5. COA: 117 N. 4th Ave. (rear staircase)

Mr. Colby stated that the rear staircase behind the building was recently repaired and the City is requiring it to be brought up to code.

Thomas West, property owner, was present. Mr. West stated there was a miscommunication with the City regarding how the staircase would be repaired, but he has discussed with Tom Medernach that the staircase can be modified to meet code requirements for the rise/run of the stairs and the guardrail. He indicated that he was open to painting the staircase. The fence enclosure for the refuse container would be reinstalled.

Mr. Bobowiec stated the Commission does not regulate whether the staircase is painted, stained or left unfinished. Chairman Smunt noted that an opaque stain would adhere best.

Chairman Smunt asked about the handrail/guardrail design. Mr. Norris noted the guardrail is required to be at 42 inches. Mr. West said the existing railing would remain, but a circular handrail would be added on top to increase the height of the guardrail to meet code.

Chairman Smunt asked about the balusters, which appear to be turned-style based on the drawing, and he noted a square design would be more in keeping with the craftsman architecture of the house. Mr. West agreed square balusters could be used.

Mr. West described the history of the house, noting that it was in his family since it was constructed and his relative built the same house a block over.

Mr. West asked about his plan to caulk the front entry stairs where the stairs meet the brick. The Commission said this was a good solution, and discussed other alternatives to seal the joint to ensure that water would drain away from the joint.

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

6. Discussion regarding 304 Cedar Ave.

Mr. Colby stated that as he previously informed the Commission that the Dunham Hunt House is now under contract to be sold by the City. The new owners intend to use the house as a residence, with future plans to turn the property into a bed and breakfast. As a part of the sales contract, the City has a 6 month period to decide what to do with the law office and bell tower structures currently on the property. He said the new owners may be open to retaining the structures, but the law office would likely not be accessible, at least initially. The law office might be more accessible if the property is converted to a bed and breakfast, but this may not happen in the near future. He noted the Commission has previously stated an interest in making the building accessible to the public.

Ms. Malay asked if the Park District had been contacted. Mr. Colby stated no, no formal conversations have occurred yet. Ms. Malay said she is on the Park Foundation Board and they assist with funding projects. She suggested relocating the law office to Baker Park, which would be closest to its original location and would be publicly accessible. The Commission discussed that vandalism of the building in Baker Park may be an issue.

Chairman Smunt suggested the Park District may want to relocate the law office building to Primrose Farm Park, which although outside of the City, is within the township. He said this location might be a better fit from a maintenance/programming perspective. Ms. Malay noted the

Park Foundation also supports the living history museum at Primrose Farm, so this could be another option. Chairman Smunt said of the two locations, this one may be a better fit.

Chairman Smunt also noted the City owns some property adjacent to the Heritage Center, which could be another alternative location for the law office. He is not sure if the Heritage Center would want to utilize the structure.

The Commission agreed that wherever it ends up being located, they would like the building location to at least be accessible, staged in a location, with a plaque explaining its history. Mr. Colby will send Ms. Malay information on the history of the building to share with the Park Foundation Board.

Mr. Bobowiec said the bell tower should be located with its bell, which is currently along the riverwalk outside of City Hall. The Commission agreed it would be preferred that these two items be located together.

7. Update on Mail Order Home Survey

Mr. Colby stated that Rebecca Hunter completed the visual survey in the spring and compiled a list of possible mail order homes. The next step is to send out a survey seeking information on evidence/documentation to confirm this. The survey mailing would include the catalogue page of the model Ms. Hunter thought the house could be, along with a request to fill out a questionnaire online, via email, or by phone. He said the Commission previously discussed asking the property owners if they would be interested in attending a seminar with Ms. Hunter, and seeing if there was enough interest, or if the seminar could just occur at a Commission meeting.

Mr. Pretz said Ms. Hunter's demonstration is most helpful when she is showing how to find the documentation by using an example she already confirmed, and this would be preferred for the seminar. Mr. Colby said he needs to check with Ms. Hunter regarding whether she did mortgage searches for all of the houses on the list, because some indicate a Sears mortgage, but she may have had this information previously. The seminar would be early next year.

8. Additional Business

Chairman Smunt welcomed Ms. Malay back to the Commission. She was recently appointed by Mayor Rogina based on input from himself and the Commission members, including Mr. Bobowiec. Ms. Malay said she recently met with the Mayor again to discuss her appointment and felt the meeting went well.

Chairman Smunt said the Mayor intends to nominate Stephen Gibson for the other vacancy once Mr. Gibson is back in the area.

Ms. Malay asked if the Design Guidelines are available in the Building and Code Enforcement office. Mr. Colby said discs and hard copies are not set up for distribution but are available on request, although he said most people either access it online or only ask for a copy of a section. The Commission discussed that it would be nice to have them available just in case someone would like to take a copy.

9. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, November 20, 2013 at 7:00pm in the Committee Room.

10. Adjournment:

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Steven Smunt, Chairman

St. Charles Historic Preservation Commission