

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 2013
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

Members Present: Chairman Smunt, Bobowiec, Prestidge, Pretz, Norris

Members Absent: Weals, Withey

Also Present: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager

1. Call to order:

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

2. Roll call:

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

3. Approval of the agenda:

There were no changes.

4. Presentation of minutes from May 15, 2013 and June 5, 2013 meetings:

A motion was made by Mr. Bobowiec and seconded by Mr. Prestidge with a unanimous voice vote to approve the May 15, 2013 minutes as presented.

A motion was made by Mr. Norris to approve the June 5, 2013 minutes as presented. There was no second and the motion failed.

5. COA: 119 N. 3rd St. (demolition)

Mr. Colby stated the COA is for demolition of the VFW Hall. The City purchased the property for the purpose of providing a public parking lot. The building is listed as “non-contributing” in the 1994 Architectural Survey and was constructed in 1952.

Chairman Smunt asked about the lighting to be used. Jim Bernahl, Public Works Engineering Manager for the City, said the lighting will be the same as used at the parking lot near the Breadsmith, with overhead poles in the islands. Mr. Pretz asked about landscaping. Mr. Bernahl said the existing parking lot lacks landscaping and it will be upgraded to current standards.

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

6. COA: 1 E. Main St. (accessibility ramp)

Mr. Colby stated the proposal is for an accessibility ramp, to be located in an unused mulched landscape area located on the south side of the building. He showed photos of the location.

Doug Gilbert, architect for the project, clarified on the drawings where the ramp would be located and where it would connect to the existing bank entrance, at the top of the stairs. None of the existing stairs would be removed.

Chairman Smunt noted the railing design shown in the plans did not match the existing railing system on the building and asked if the applicant would consider a more closely matched railing. He said otherwise, the Commission has no issue with what was proposed.

The applicant indicated that they would discuss this with their client and revise the railing detail to be more sympathetic with the design of the existing railing, but that it would still need to meet the code requirements for a handrail. The Commission agreed this was acceptable but they would like to see the design. The applicant agreed to return with a revised design at the July 17 meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Prestidge and seconded by Mr. Norris with a unanimous voice vote to table the COA.

7. COA: 404 N. 5th Ave. (siding and front porch)

John Hunecke, applicant, was present. He stated that he received the setback variance and is proceeding with the project to restore the house and construct the addition. However, since the front door will be the primary entrance during construction, they need to restore the front porch. He said the existing porch is significantly deteriorated and passed around photos showing the deterioration and cracked columns. The plans show the porch being reconstructed to match the existing.

Chairman Smunt asked about whether they considered using turned columns that are more typical of a Queen Anne style, vs. the straight columns proposed. He said the appropriate design might depend on the type of railing system to be used. Mr. Hunecke said based on the grading plan, no railing would be needed on the porch. His plan was to use a similar column, but they might consider the suggestion.

Regarding the siding, Mr. Hunecke said the existing asbestos siding would be removed to expose the clapboard siding below, which appears to be in good condition.

The Commission expressed excitement for the project.

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

8. Façade Improvement Grant: 221 W. Main St. and 5 S. 2nd Ave./119 E. Main St.

Mr. Colby stated the applicant was unable to attend, but he has requested more information on the project and the Commission can provide some preliminary comments to share with the applicant for the next meeting.

Mr. Colby explained the proposal for the 221 W. Main St. building which includes removal of all awnings and exposing the transom windows, cleaning and repainting the building, and removing the metal siding material below the storefront windows.

Chairman Smunt asked about what would replace the metal siding below the windows. Mr. Colby was unsure but said it was not known what material was underneath and it may be concrete. Mr. Norris noted that the kick panel area below the storefronts is subject to a lot of damage from weather and salt. The Commission would like more information on what material will be used here.

Chairman Smunt asked about signage. Mr. Colby said the existing awning advertises a previous business. The proposal is to remove it entirely, and the business intends to keep only the window sign. The Commission discussed that the business may want to install a sign later, and the appropriate location would be on the wall above the transom windows. The Commission discussed that the awning is inappropriate and Mr. Colby clarified that if the applicant chose to, they could recover the awning, but only with a canvas material, but for now, the plan is to remove it entirely. Overall, the Commission was satisfied with the proposal for the 221 W. Main St. building.

Mr. Colby explained the proposal for the 5 S. 2nd Ave. building, starting on the front elevation. Chairman Smunt noted the second floor windows were not what the Commission thought they were approving a few years back and they needed to be careful about clarifying all of the details of the proposal. Mr. Colby stated the proposal is to remove all of the existing paneling from the storefronts and repair the damaged brick. The Commission discussed that the brick repair needed to be done correctly, as the issue appears to be a beam that is rusting and pushing the brick out. They requested the contractor doing the work attend the meeting to explain how this would be corrected. Chairman Smunt noted this is a critical repair and the project should not otherwise be funded unless this issue is correctly addressed.

Mr. Colby explained that on the 2nd Ave. side elevation, the proposal includes replacement of the side entry door. He recalled the Commission in the past only would allow the door to be repaired or partially replaced with a like-in-kind replacement. Chairman Smunt noted the first floor windows appear to have been replaced without a permit. He suggested that if the applicant properly corrects other issues, including the windows on this elevation, he is inclined to support replacement of the door with another material, provided it matches the existing design.

Mr. Colby explained that the proposal also includes renovating the back alley as a rear entrance. The existing alley is fenced off and contains debris. The proposal is to restore the alleyway and install an open iron fence. He said more information is needed on the details of the proposal and a site visit might be beneficial to understand what exists behind the building.

The Commission was overall supportive of the grant application for 5 S. 2nd Ave., but wants more details and specifics on the proposal, including having the brick contractor attend to discuss how the issue on the front elevation will be addressed.

A motion was made by Mr. Bobowiec and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a unanimous voice vote to table the Façade Improvement Grant.

9. Additional Business

There was none.

10. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, July 17, 2013 at 7:00pm in the Committee Room.

The July 3 meeting will be cancelled and rescheduled if necessary, depending if any items require a review.

11. Adjournment:

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Steven Smunt, Chairman
St. Charles Historic Preservation Commission