

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2014
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

Members Present: Chairman Smunt, Bobowiec, Gibson, Malay, Pretz, Withey, Norris (7:06)

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:

The following items were added:

- 12a. Farnsworth Mansion project
- 12b. Heritage Tourism discussion
- 12c. Jones Law Office
- 12c. Landmarking
- 4b. Presentation from Preservation Partners

Item 8 would be tabled.

A motion was made by Mr. Gibson and seconded by Ms. Malay with a unanimous voice vote to amend the agenda.

4. Presentation of minutes from April 2, 2014 meeting.

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

4b. Presentation from Preservation Partners

Liz Safanda of Preservation Partners presented information on a local "This Place Matters" program, where 24 local landmarks in the Tri Cities and Wayne will be highlighted, specifically those that are lesser known/recognized and/or outside of Historic Districts and not protected. She said yellow signs will be placed at the locations and people will be asked to vote. A bus tour will be held at the end of June. She listed the locations planned for the St. Charles area: The Judd

Mansion, Jones Law Office, Pottowattomie Golf Course, a mid century modern home in Wildrose, the Wheeler Mansion on Rt. 31, and the Perkins Homestead on Illinois Ave. Ms. Malay suggested considering the Young/Marsden house on Cedar St. Ms. Safanda said she would bring this for her board's consideration. She encouraged the Commission to participate in the voting.

5. COA: 111 W. Main St. (sign)

Mr. Colby stated this is the sign for the Steel Beam Theatre that the Commission approved for a Façade Grant. The sign was slightly reduced in size to comply with zoning requirements but is otherwise unchanged.

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

6. COA: 509 Indiana St. (windows)

Larry Domark of Pella Windows presented that the proposal is to replace existing wood double hung windows and aluminum storms with new wood aluminum clad windows. The windows will be double pane with no grilles and will match the windows in the addition to the rear. He said the windows on the front porch will remain.

Mr. Norris asked if the existing windows are original. Mr. Domark said yes, he believes they are the original wood windows.

Chairman Smunt noted the outside will be white and the inside could be stained to match the trim. Ms. Malay noted the windows will be sized to the existing openings. Mr. Domark confirmed this.

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

7. COA: 24 S. 2nd St. (signs)

Mr. Colby presented that the proposal is to replace a number of signs on the Private Bank building with similar signs matching the bank's new logo. No size or materials will change. The existing backlit sign will be replaced with a similar backlit sign.

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

8. COA: 201 S. 2nd St.

This item was tabled with the approval of the agenda.

9. COA & Façade Improvement Grant: 100 W. Main St.- Hotel Baker

Mr. Colby stated the Commission previously reviewed the grant request and expressed support for the project, but tabled the item so that they could further discuss the issue of the glazing failure on the windows. He said he communicated this to the applicant and the applicant did provide additional information on the type of paint to be used and the warranty.

Mr. Norris noted that glazing needs to be allowed to dry and then be painted. Chairman Smunt said he wants to know the underlying causes of the failure of the compound, which is likely due to moisture. He suggested they Commission could stipulate that silicone caulk be applied to prevent moisture from getting behind the glazing.

The Commission discussed whether to table the item. Mr. Colby suggested the Commission can recommend approval of the grant to keep it on the planned approval schedule, but require the applicant return before the Commission to obtain a COA before starting the work.

A motion was made by Mr. Pretz and seconded by Mr. Gibson with a unanimous voice vote to recommend the City Council approval of the Façade Improvement Grant, subject to the applicant and contractor attending a future Commission meeting to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to starting the work.

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

10. COA & Façade Improvement Grant: 117 E. Main St.- Berry's Barbershop

Michael Hayden, applicant, was present. He said he is the business owner and would be doing the work himself with the approval of the building owner. He referenced pictures showing that the concrete entry steps, which are on a wood frame, need to be replaced. He referenced pictures showing a window leak and said the windows will be replaced along with new frames. The vertical panel siding on the front will be replaced.

Ms. Malay asked about whether the glass block windows could be exposed and the sign located on the wall above. Mr. Hayden referenced a picture showing that the glass blocks are no longer present and he said the glass has not been found inside the building. Chairman Smunt said the openings could be replaced with glass panels, but an area would need to be boxed out of the existing drop ceiling. Mr. Hayden said he is concerned with modifying or opening the drop ceiling. Mr. Norris suggested considering an awning over the storefront, which would be less expensive and would cover the paneling.

The Commission discussed the replacement of the vertical siding. Chairman Smunt suggested using frame panels or trim with a box design, similar to the storefront immediately to the east. The Commission discussed use of a framed flat panel for the sign area, but Mr. Hayden expressed concern about the sign being reduced in size. The Commission said the frame would be omitted or reduced in size.

The Commission discussed the remainder of the paneling below the sign. Chairman Smunt referenced a picture of 318-320 W. Main St. as an example of a design for the paneling. The Commission discussed how the panel design could carry into the recessed entry area. Chairman Smunt suggested that Mr. Hayden have his contractor sketch a layout and then return with a sketch showing the final design for the COA approval. Mr. Hayden agreed.

A motion was made by Mr. Norris and seconded by Mr. Bobowiec with a unanimous voice vote to recommend the City Council approval of the Façade Improvement Grant, subject to the applicant presenting a design for the storefront paneling for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

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

Mr. Hayden confirmed that the Commission has also supported inclusion of the sign on the 2nd Ave. elevation as a part of the grant request. The Commission confirmed this was part of the recommendation on the application. Mr. Colby noted there is some question as to whether zoning will allow this sign, but this is yet to be determined.

11. Election of Officers

Chairman Smunt expressed his interest in continuing to serve as Chair, and Mr. Norris expressed his interest to continue to serve as Vice Chair.

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Bobowiec with a unanimous voice vote to elect Chairman Smunt to continue as Chair and Mr. Norris to continue as Vice Chair.

12. Additional Business

a. Farnsworth Mansion project

Ms. Malay updated the Commission that discussions are occurring on the Farnsworth Mansion project and that the City Council has expressed to her an interest in resurrecting the project. She said the museum would be called the “Farnsworth Underground Railroad and Civil War Discovery Center”. The exterior would be a recreation of the Farnsworth Mansion, but the

interior would be designed as a museum. She said the museum would not just be local, but would be interactive with an underground railroad and civil war focus, with a digital library component. She said the museum could have statewide recognition. She mentioned there are plans to rededicate Camp Kane more officially in September.

Chairman Smunt asked where operating funds would come from. Ms. Malay said they are working to obtain access to the City's lobbyists to pursue grants and other avenues to make the museum self-sustainable. She mentioned that geno-sequencing (genology) research can attract funding.

Chairman Smunt asked what role the Commission would play. Ms. Malay said the Commission can support the project and promote the protection of related historic sites in the City, in particular underground railroad sites that have been identified. She mentioned the Kane County Anti-Slavery Society list provides member addresses that are potential sites to be researched.

b. Heritage Tourism Discussion

Ms. Malay discussed that there is an interest in promoting heritage tourism in the City through a phone app, which may be an extension of the historic district walking tour app the Commission has been discussing. She said Council members are supportive of the concept, which would link historic sites information, visitor's bureau information, and special event information, such as the Sculpture in the Park event, together in a single app. Mr. Bobowiec suggested creating a central location for this information would better promote tourism, which in turn will help develop business revenue. Mr. Colby mentioned the CLG grants are usually submitted in the fall.

Mr. Gibson said the original concept of the walking tour app was to take existing information and making it GPS linked, which would be a stepping stone to building something more sophisticated. He said the information would need to be compiled in a database that can convert website information into menu text and links. He said it is a matter of establishing consistent data fields. He suggested the basic app success can be leveraged to expand the scope and have sitdown discussions with other groups that can participate. He said he would be able to produce a basic framework that he could share at a future Commission meeting.

c. Jones Law Office

Pat Pretz noted that with the City Council approved funds to relocate the Jones Law Office to the Langum Park/Camp Kane site, which was a victory for saving the building but was not her preferred choice for location. She said there are efforts underway to find a more optimum site and through discussion, the library has been suggested as a possible location. Ms. Pretz passed around plans showing two potential locations for the building that take into account the possible

future expansion of the library facility. She said the item would be up for discussion before the library board on May 14.

Mr. Colby said the City is requesting an extension of the date when the Law Office building must be relocated, and this extension is based on the Langum Park location, which is the default location.

d. Landmarking

Mr. Pretz said he and Chairman Smunt went to Kane County to research their landmark houses. He said there is an individual in the recorder's office that is extremely helpful if you are able to work with him. He said once they understand you are from the Historic Commission and researching a property, the staff there will be of assistance.

Chairman Smunt discussed that as a part of the landmarking initiative, the next step will be to draft a narrative on the history and significance of each property. The narrative can then be provided to the property owner and they can consider whether they would like to have their property landmarked. He noted the application form is simple and can be filled out once we know the owner supports the application.

13. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, April 16, 2014 at 7:00pm in the Committee Room.

14. Adjournment:

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.