

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ST. CHARLES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2014  
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

**Members Present:** Chairman Smunt, Bobowiec, Gibson, Malay, Pretz

**Members Absent:** Norris, Withey

**Also Present:** Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager  
Ellen Johnson, Planner

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**1. Call to order:**

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

**2. Roll call:**

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

**3. Approval of the agenda:**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**4. Presentation of minutes of the September 3, 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.**

**5. COA: 307 Park Ave. (addition)**

Mr. Colby stated the Commission previously approved the COA for this project. The applicant is requesting to make a revision to the foundation material. A representative of the applicant was present and explained he would like to run siding down to near grade rather than matching the existing foundation block due to cost reasons. He noted that the air conditioning unit would block the view of the new foundation on one side of the house and a bay window will block the other side. The back will be covered by a deck.

Chairman Smunt asked about the skirt board. The applicant said it will continue horizontally across, but with siding below. Chairman Smunt asked if concrete could be poured up to the same level as the existing foundation with a shelf so that a block veneer could be installed at a later time and the applicant pointed out veneer could be installed on the frame.

Commissioners expressed support for the proposal.

Chairman Smunt asked if the applicant was able to rescale the windows to more closely match the proportion of the existing windows, as previously recommended by the Commission, and the applicant confirmed.

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

**6. COA: 320 W. Main St. (sign)**

Mr. Colby said the COA is for two signs; one for the front of building and one for the back. Tony Scheafler, applicant, was present and showed an image of the lighting proposed over the front sign. He stated the rear wall will be painted white or off-white and the signs as proposed meet sizing requirements. He also proposed an awning over the front storefront, which was submitted with the building permit application.

**A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Gibson with a unanimous voice vote to approve the COA, including both the signs and awning.**

**7. COA: 303 W. Main St. (sign)**

Mr. Colby stated the Commission previously approved this COA. The applicant is proposing the addition of a back panel for electric access, which will be grey. The sign is otherwise the same.

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

**8. Façade Improvement Grant: 201 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. (canopy fascia)**

Chairman Smunt said the Commission previously approved the COA for this project and the applicant has applied for a Façade Grant for the work approved under the COA. City Council already approved the grant, but the Commission must vote on the resolution recommending approval.

**A motion was made by Mr. Bobowiec and seconded by Ms. Malay with a unanimous voice vote to approve the resolution recommending City Council approval of the Façade Improvement Grant.**

**9. COA & Façade Improvement Grant: 411 S. 1<sup>st</sup> St. (front porch repair)**

Craig Simmons, applicant, was present and said he started work on the porch prior to Commission approval for safety reasons and the work has not been completed. He showed a sample of the flooring being installed; he would like to use the same material for the railings.

Ms. Malay asked about the guidelines on façade grants and work already started and Mr. Colby explained work started prior to approval of the grant does not qualify for the grant. Mr. Simmons

said he stopped completion of the work after speaking to Mr. Colby, but that he needed to finish enough of the floor for customers to come and go safely.

Chairman Smunt questioned Mr. Simmons' description of damage in the grant application based on his site visit to the property prior to the last meeting. He said that other than painting, about 85-90% of the deck was complete at that time. The only damage he identified was a small amount of damage to the balustrade, mainly some rot coming in from the end grain where the top railing meets the newel post, and caulk failure. He did not see significant enough damage to warrant a rebuild of the entire railing system or the City to pay for it through the grant.

Ms. Malay and Mr. Bobowiec reported similar observations as Chairman Smunt.

Mr. Simmons said he intends to bring the stair railing and porch balustrade up to code, as well as add a second stair rail.

Commissioners discussed the potential for the Building Division to require the porch balustrade be raised per code requirements if Mr. Simmons were to do a complete replacement, and the impact that would have on the building's integrity. Since the building is a landmark, the requirement may be waived or reduced.

Chairman Smunt said the balusters on the stairs do not exactly match the porch and are replacements, so replacing those would be acceptable, along with a newel post and new stair railing systems to match the existing balusters as closely as possible.

Commissioners agreed the flooring material is acceptable, as would be the addition of a second stair rail.

Chairman Smunt explained to Mr. Simmons that the Commission is interested in preserving original features of the home. He read item #6 of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation which states preference for repair rather than replacement of historical features. He stated that although the porch balusters may not be original to the building, they have been a part of its architecture for some time and are a defining architectural element of the folk Victorian style.

Mr. Bobowiec suggested Mr. Simmons lower the flat handrail on the staircase to the same height as the porch balustrade and add a round, ADA compliant rod above to meet code; the handrail must be ADA compliant since it is a commercial building.

For the replacement stair balusters, Chairman Smunt suggested a company that makes accurate duplications.

**A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Bobowiec with a unanimous voice vote to approve the COA for the work that has been completed as well as 1) maintenance of the porch rail system 2) replacement of the existing stair rail and balusters and addition of a second rail with balusters to closely duplicate existing, and 3) a hand grip added above or below the stair rail(s), per building code requirements, not to exceed the height of the existing rail and which can be resin or cedar.**

Next, Commissioners discussed the Façade Improvement Grant application and whether the project qualifies. Mr. Colby read from the Façade Improvement Grant program description stating an applicant may not be reimbursed for work done prior to City Council approval.

Ms. Malay pointed out that if they approve grant funds for work that has already been completed they will set a precedent, and Commissioners agreed the work completed is not eligible.

Mr. Simmons said he spoke with Mr. Colby after the floor had been started, which he had tried to stop. He got the application in right away and did not complete the job.

Commissioners agreed that all work that has been done will not qualify for the grant, but the work that remains can. They said the applicant could request City Council approve grant funds for the work already completed.

Commissioners directed Mr. Simmons not to do any more work and to come back with an itemized scope of work for the remaining elements and an estimate for that work from his contractor.

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

#### **10. Demonstration by On Cell Technology**

Melissa Carlisle from On Cell Technology addressed the Commission remotely. She provided information about the company's TourSphere web app and native app offerings which allow visitors to follow walking tours and access interpretive information on their mobile devices. On Cell offers two web app programs, which are accessed via QR code or web address: TourSphere Light for \$199 per month and TourSphere Pro for \$399 per month. There is no initiation or set-up fee if the client builds the app on their own. For the native app option, the app is published in app stores and costs \$474 per month, plus a \$600 set-up fee for publishing.

Ms. Carlisle showed the Commission several examples of apps that have been created by their clients for cultural tourism purposes, including Cultural Tourism DC and Historic Newport. The apps include features like a Google map with tour sites and connected information, geo alerts telling users when a tour site is nearby, video, and audio.

Mr. Gibson created a test account prior to the meeting and made an example of what an app for a historic site tour of St. Charles could look like and presented it to the Commission. He stated that set-up is easy and not very time-consuming. Commissioners reacted favorably to Mr. Gibson's efforts.

The Commission asked Ms. Carlisle about the ability to add partner organizations to the account and sponsor information, and she stated both are possible.

Ms. Carlisle provided the following website to access photos of signage communities have used to promote the app: [www.flickr.com/photos/oncell](http://www.flickr.com/photos/oncell). Other services On Cell provides are app visitor statistics, support for app building, and automatic adaptation to changes in technology.

Commissioners discussed the advantages of the web app vs. the native app. They discussed the challenge of obtaining a long-term funding stream and the potential for partnering with several organizations to share in the cost. They believe several groups would be interested in being involved in the project. Ms. Malay said she will share the idea with the Visitors Bureau and the Park District.

Mr. Colby said at the next meeting the Commission should put together an outline of the proposal.

**11. COA: 407 Park Ave.**

The applicant was not present and no new information has been submitted.

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

**12. Additional Business**

Ms. Malay reported the Jones Law Office is coming along nicely. Slight termite damage was taken care of and the cracked window had been broken before the move. She and Public Works staff are going to speak with a contractor about necessary repairs after the Camp Kane dedication. Mr. Colby mentioned repairs to the structure may be a good project for a CLG grant.

**13. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, October 1, 2014 at 7:00 pm in the Committee Room.**

**14. Adjournment:**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm.