

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ST. CHARLES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2015  
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

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

**Members Absent:** Pretz, Withey

**Also Present:** Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager

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**1. Call to order**

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

**2. Roll call**

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

**3. Approval of the agenda**

Chairman Smunt mentioned a discussion about the Heritage Center history pin project under Mobile Tour App.

**4. Presentation of minutes of the March 4, 2015 meeting**

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

**5. COA: 217 W. Main St. (sign)**

Scott Corbin, applicant, was present. Mr. Colby said the proposal is to replace an existing awning with a wall sign, utilizing an existing sign panel under the awning.

Chairman Smunt asked what was going to be done with the existing awning. Mr. Corbin said he had no plans for the awning. Chairman Smunt suggested storing the awning somewhere, as the awning could be reused in the future.

Ms. Malay asked if any illumination was planned. Mr. Corbin said he thought there was already adequate ambient lighting. Ms. Malay said as a suggestion that lighting would attract more attention to the store. Chairman Smunt asked if the store would be open during the evenings. Mr. Corbin said yes.

Mr. Corbin said his father had a guitar store in this same location 30 years ago.

Chairman Smunt noted the storefront brick has Art Deco design, so some type of Art Deco light fixture could be used instead of a typical gooseneck light fixture.

Mr. Norris asked about the sign band material and if it is wood. Mr. Corbin said the existing wood panel would be covered with an aluminum panel per the sign proposal.

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

**6. Discussion Item: 502 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave.**

Joseph Stuart, owner of 502 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave., was present. Mr. Stuart said he appeared before the Commission before and received positive direction about landmarking his house, but he wanted to wait to complete some changes to the building.

Mr. Stuart said there is some ambiguity related to the age of the house. He said he has evidence that suggests it may be older than 1852. He provided research from previous owners and Adam Gibbons. He circulated photos of several houses from the 1840s that had similar design elements. He said he wants to be as close as he can to the correct date.

Ms. Malay said it looked like early 1840s, she would guess about 1842. Mr. Stuart noted similarities to the original Beith House on Prairie St. (1843) and the Beith House on Indiana St. (1845).

Mr. Gibson said a structure appears at this location in older maps. He recalled the early owners, the Long family, were bricklayers that built St. Patrick's Church. Mr. Stuart said he had more genealogical history on the family.

Chairman Smunt said this architectural and construction style existed for several decades, so using only this information for dating the building is probably not adequate. He said there is a tendency to want to date something earlier than the hard evidence indicates, which in this case is 1852. He said the house could be dated "circa 1852". Mr. Stuart said the house could also be dated "circa 1840s" as well.

Mr. Gibson said there are earlier maps showing the house in the property, he thought from 1847. Chairman Smunt said that is the type of evidence needed. Mr. Gibson said otherwise there isn't any mention of the structure prior to 1852.

Mr. Stuart asked the Commission to confirm that landmarking would prevent the house from being demolished in the future. Chairman Smunt said there is a review process required, but the landmarking is the same as if a structure is in a historic district. A review process is required for any changes to the structure and changes are evaluated based on ordinance criteria. He said landmark buildings are considered significant.

Mr. Colby asked Mr. Stuart if he wanted input on the application form itself. Mr. Stuart asked about the architectural style of Greek Revival vs. National style. Chairman Smunt said Greek Revival is more of an architectural style, while National is more of a building form with no ornamentation. He said fascia returns are seen on many styles from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so that in and of itself does not define the house as Greek Revival. He said National style might be more appropriate.

Mr. Gibson asked if the house was stuccoed over. Chairman Smunt said he isn't sure when it was stuccoed; it could have been original to the structure or much later. Mr. Stuart questioned why there would be stone lintels if the house was originally stuccoed. Mr. Gibson asked if the now removed stucco might have contained more Greek Revival details or ornamentation. Mr. Stuart said there doesn't appear to be space for decorative elements around the door. Chairman Smunt said in the future, if evidence is found, the Commission can amend the application.

Mr. Stuart mentioned Dennis Long was a Civil War veteran. Chairman Smunt suggested including this in the application as a part of the City's Civil War history. Mr. Stuart said Mr. Long was not in the 8<sup>th</sup> Illinois Cavalry.

Mr. Stuart said he would hold off with his landmark nomination until the pre-1852 map can be found to confirm an earlier date of construction.

## **7. Additional Business**

### **a. Mobile Tour App Project**

Chairman Smunt said he went to a meeting with the Heritage Center and they are interested in collaborating with other organizations on mobile tours. He said the Heritage Center is looking at using a website, [historypin.org](http://historypin.org), which is public photo/information database website.

Mr. Gibson showed the Commission his site, [historicstc.com](http://historicstc.com), which includes all of the information from the Library historic buildings site. He said a public site like [historypin.org](http://historypin.org) couldn't be controlled and the information could be changed. He said his site could do audio or video or host other information. He said this is a site he personally made with public data to see what it would look like. He said the site takes some technical skill with Word Press and he could

teach others to use the site. He noted Google maps based free sites don't have very accurate locations for data points.

Chairman Smunt said the Heritage Center was looking at the history pin site as being a no cost option. Mr. Gibson said he would be happy to allow someone from the Heritage Center to use his site. Chairman Smunt said historypin.org can supposedly build walking tours from the information. Mr. Gibson said it is possible to do this with his site in an automated way.

Chairman Smunt said it would be good for Ms. Constanzo, the Heritage Center director, to meet with Mr. Gibson. He will contact Ms. Costanzo to provide information on Mr. Gibson's site. The Commission discussed having a workshop to learn to work with Mr. Gibson's website.

#### **b. Landmarks Research**

Chairman Smunt said his work has been delayed by other commitments. Ms. Malay said she has completed her research and needs to settle on a date of construction. Mr. Gibson said since his owner was at the meeting, so he is more or less done. Mr. Bobowiec said he has the application ready, but can't get the owner to come to a meeting and sign off on the form.

Mr. Colby mentioned that Mr. Pretz provided some additional research on the Jones Law Office that would be included with the landmark application. Ms. Malay mentioned the City was given an award from Preservation Partners for the preservation of the Jones Law Office. She mentioned that the Mayor and City Administrator Koenen were supportive of the Commission's contributions.

#### **8. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, April 1, 2015 at 7:00 pm in the Committee Room.**

#### **9. Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.