

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ST. CHARLES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2015  
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

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

**Members Absent:** None

**Also Present:** Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager  
Ellen Johnson, Planner  
Chris Sanchez, Recording Secretary

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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 seven members present. There was a quorum.

**3. Approval of the agenda**

Chairman Smunt stated the agenda will stand as posted.

**4. Presentation of minutes of the May 6, 2015 meeting**

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

**5. COA: 305 W. Main St. (awning, signs)**

David Reyes, applicant, showed a picture of the building. He said they will be putting up a wooden sign on the side of the building that is facing the gas station. The feedback they have received on the awnings currently attached to the front of the building is that it looks like two different storefronts. They would like to keep it low profile, but adjoin the two awnings. He said they might have the awning go straight across and include window etchings that say "The Finery". He stated they would definitely like to put a sign on the side of the building with their logo.

Mr. Reyes did not have a rendering showing the awning going straight across the façade with the window etchings.

Chairman Smunt said the front elevation shows triangles, squares and rectilinear elements that are typical of the Arts & Crafts era. He noted the applicant is trying to put a curve in the entrance and suggested staying with something more triangular, such as a gabled sign.

Mr. Reyes said they are replacing the broken windows. He stated they would like to do something simple, but ornate, on the bottom of both sides to create a more uniform look. Chairman Smunt described what Smitty's did with a black panel behind the glass. Mr. Norris said that wasn't quite the right era for this building. Mr. Reyes said he likes the idea of keeping the awning more triangular (flush along the bottom with sharp angle on awning).

Mr. Norris clarified that Mr. Reyes is trying to define the entrance, but noted the scale and proportions are off. Mr. Reyes said they do not want to block the terra cotta along the top. They just want to mark the entrance. He said the awning would extend over the sidewalk about 8-12 inches. Mr. Norris stated they are on a state highway and would not be able to extend the awning out much further than that.

Mr. Reyes also mentioned putting up a wood sign. Mr. Norris said wood breaks down. Ms. Malay suggested Alumalite and noted it holds up much better.

Chairman Smunt asked if they are going to cover the glass block on the west side of the building. Mr. Reyes said whatever they do on the front, will also be done on the side.

Chairman Smunt said the Commission is not opposed to what the applicant is doing, but would like more details.

Ms. Malay advised the applicant to add lighting to the proposal, if they plan on adding exterior lighting.

Mr. Reyes said he will get another full rendering for the next meeting.

Chairman Smunt suggested looking at the Pub 222 awnings for ideas.

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

#### **6. COA: 203 W. Main St. (awning, signs)**

Tim Balatsoukas, applicant, was present. He is looking to put two signs and an awning on the building. The signs would be located on the south and east sides of the building. The material

for the signs is ¼ inch thick composite aluminum. The awning would be blue with his logo and website information on it.

Chairman Smunt noted the awning in the picture is blocking the architectural elements of the entryway. He stated he tends to oppose covering up elements that are defining characters of a building. Chairman Smunt suggested doing a partial clamshell awning by following the arch and then doing a flat east elevation. He noted that Mr. Balatsoukas would then be able to do everything he planned, but still keep in line with the architecture of the building.

Mr. Norris suggested ways to light the awning with a soccer ball design to make it pop.

Mr. Norris stated concern with the east side sign. He asked if the sign exceeds the allowable square footage permitted in the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Colby said it does not. Chairman Smunt suggested narrowing the sign on the east side of the building to balance out and match the spacing of the two windows to the north of the sign.

Mr. Norris asked if the east side sign could be lined up similar to the sign on the south side. Mr. Balatsoukas expressed concern with visibility.

Mr. Bobowiec suggested making the sign longer and placing it in between the two rows of windows on the first and second floors. Chairman Smunt suggested having all options drawn up for comparison.

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

**7. Historic Sign Designation: Don McCue Chevrolet, 2015 E. Main St.**

Mr. Colby said the applicant was not able to attend the meeting. The applicant requested the item be tabled.

Commission members had a discussion before tabling the item.

Mr. Colby reminded Commission that specific criteria in the ordinance need to be met in order for the Commission to provide a recommendation.

Chairman Smunt had objections to items in the materials submitted. He said item B1 and item C under the Zoning Ordinance do not qualify. Mr. Colby said item B has an “or” between 1 and 2. Chairman Smunt feels under item 1, the building is not historic, nor a landmark. Ms. Malay said item B2 qualifies in this case because it has been continuously operated as the same business.

Mr. Pretz indicated an operating sign for more than 40 years does have something to say about the uniqueness of that sign as times change. He said the applicant's signs have been with the family for the qualifying years and they have continued to be functional and maintained. He believes the applicant meets the criteria to be labeled as historic. Chairman Smunt clarified Mr. Pretz's intent, indicating because the ordinance has an "or" it qualifies under item B2.

Mr. Gibson raised concerns over what the signs looked like 40 years ago. He believes they may not be the original signs. Ms. Malay stated they need to make sure the posts have not been changed out in that time period. If they have, they would not qualify. Mr. Gibson indicated the posts appear much newer than 1975. Mr. Colby noted the information the applicant submitted appears to show the signs were there 40 years ago, but they do not have images documenting what the signs looked like at that time. Mr. Bobowiec said the center sign looks exactly like the sign at the new GMC dealership.

Mr. Colby said even if they are not able to find evidence to support the same signs were there 40 years ago, the Commission still needs to make a recommendation under item C.

Chairman Smunt distributed a handout to show the same style of signs can still be ordered online and stated this still does not qualify under item C. He said it is not a unique shape and can still be found in contemporary signs available to GM dealers today. Mr. Pretz questioned if this should be a penalty to the applicant just because GM keeps a certain standard, or specifications, that are being created today for their dealerships. Chairman Smunt said it can still be ordered today from a stock catalog.

Mr. Colby said the Commission can decide only one or two of the signs meet the criteria.

Mr. Bobowiec said if the dealership can prove that GM designed that sign since 1974, they would qualify. Chairman Smunt noted a new dealership can open up today and still buy the identical sign. Ms. Malay said it is a fine line.

Chairman Smunt noted the ordinance says "not commonly found" and said it is still commonly found today. He said item C is the objection for him.

Ms. Malay moved to table item per the applicant's request. Mr. Pretz said to table it with concerns so when the representative comes in, they can address those specific issues.

Mr. Gibson asked if they could get an opinion from the City, or an attorney, to clarify what item C should mean in terms of "contemporary".

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

**8. Jones Law Office furnishings**

Pat Pretz spoke with Karen Armbrust from the Wayne Historical Society who informed Ms. Pretz the law office furnishings were in storage. Ms. Armbrust personally packed the items and took them out of the Dunham-Hunt Museum. Ms. Pretz passed around pictures of the items and what it looked like when the law office restoration was completed.

Ms. Pretz is a member of Questers and they asked her to submit a request for funding.

Ms. Pretz discussed the cast iron stove which was a missing piece. Dan Otto, who did the restoration, has a stove. The cost is \$500. He obtained it after the restoration. Ms. Pretz said Questers loves it and approved the funding for \$500 with a matching \$500 gift. Ms. Pretz had to act on funding since Questers was wrapping up for the summer. She said she did not want to lose out on funds by waiting for the Commission meeting. Questers works in education, preservation, and research. Every year they do a project and focus study. This year it was on St. Charles.

Ms. Pretz said the stove will not be operational. It is purely decorative, but it will look authentic.

Ms. Pretz said it is fine if the Commission decides not to put back the furniture Jane Dunham used. She can go back and say they will purchase something for the History Museum.

Ms. Malay said it would be nice to do something to commemorate the drawings that are on the walls in the law office. She said they would like to use some Plexiglas to protect them.

Ms. Pretz said they would like to fix the door. Ms. Malay mentioned they have \$500 for repairs for the building.

Ms. Pretz asked if they can arrange for a time for Dan Otto to look at the building to see where he would locate the stove. Ms. Malay said the Commission just needs to arrange it with the Public Works Dept.

Mr. Colby stated the ultimate intent is to have an agreement amongst all parties that have an interest in the law office. Part of the agreement would be for the Historic Preservation Commission to review and bless any changes inside and out.

**A motion was made by Mr. Norris and seconded by Mr. Withey with a unanimous voice vote to approve placement in the Jones Law Office of the stove and the original furniture. Ms. Malay and Mr. Bobowiec abstained.**

## **9. Additional Business**

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

Mr. Gibson said he never heard back from Allison at the St. Charles History Museum. He explained the main scope of the project was to create an application that would educate on historic buildings. He said the app being created by the St. Charles History Museum is doing that. Ms. Malay asked if their app could be expanded upon to do what the Commission wanted. Mr. Gibson said yes. He stated Allison is already working on an app to include an historic walking tour. He said Allison is also looking at the story.com application as having the capability both inside the museum, and potentially outside with beacons that provide GPS location. He said they have not been asked for input into their project.

Mr. Pretz said the Commission's role was to get it started because nobody else was doing it, but other groups should be taking it over.

Mr. Gibson mentioned they need to ensure the original education component is still there. He suggested they back off for now. If they find out later that the original intent is not there, then they can revisit this.

Ms. Malay said they need to make sure that the education component, and what they are presenting, meets what the Commission would have wanted.

Mr. Colby stated the Commission should stay involved.

Ms. Malay said it would be smart if all involved organizations came together to look at cost comparisons and discuss what each group wants to see come out of this.

Chairman Smunt asked if the City's website is mobile optimized. He suggested the City build upon that site.

Ms. Malay noted other groups could get grants for funding. She said it would be smart to have a discussion with those groups to combine efforts and get this done as a tourism app.

Chairman Smunt referred back to using the City's website until the other organizations are ready. He would like to push the IT department to get Historic Preservation mobile optimized.

**b. Landmarks Research**

Mr. Gibson stated his landmark has been scheduled for public hearing. There were no other updates.

**c. Historic District Trolley Tour**

Chairman Smunt said they needed one more volunteer to cover one tour. Mr. Gibson volunteered.

Chairman Smunt said the History museum is having a pig roast fundraiser on June 20<sup>th</sup>. He said the museum relies on the fundraiser and encouraged members to attend if they are available.

Ms. Malay said the St. Charles Park Foundation is holding their first annual golf outing on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. She said to contact her if anyone is interested in a foursome for golf.

**10. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, June 3, 2015 at 7:00 pm in the Council Committee Room.**

**11. Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.