

MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2015
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM

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

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager
Bob Vann, Building & Code Enforcement Division Manager
Chris Sanchez, Recording Secretary

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

Mr. Gibson added a discussion item about doing a bus tour/presentation to the City Council educating them on the historic preservation process. Mr. Pretz added a discussion item regarding the Jones Law Office. Both items were included under Additional Business.

4. Presentation of minutes of the May 20, 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, presented updated drawings of the proposal. Their awning will stay the same length and project out 4 inches. The Finery logo will be included on both existing awnings. The sign on the west side of the building measures 4 x 8 and is made up of aluminum. Mr. Reyes stated the glass blocks on the front of the building will be replaced with brick that matches the existing brick above the window. Ms. Malay asked about lighting plans. Mr. Reyes stated they will be using existing, pre-wired lighting that shines up. There will also be a light illuminating the door.

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

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

Tim Balatsoukas, applicant, presented updated drawings of his proposal. He changed the style of the awning to form a more circular shape as requested by the Commission. Mr. Balatsoukas also elongated the east side sign and positioned it between the upper and lower windows. He said he might shift the east side sign over to be centered over the first floor windows. The Commission agreed that either location was acceptable.

Mr. Balatsoukas asked the Commission if they had a preference on the two versions of the east side sign, with text running horizontal on one line, or on three lines. The Commission felt the text on one line was easier to read.

A motion was made by Mr. Bobowiec and seconded by Ms. Malay with a unanimous voice vote to approve the COA as presented, with the option to shift the sign to be centered over the 3 first floor windows.

7. COA: 117 N. 6th Ave. (porch, deck, door)

Michael Schramer, contractor, was present. The owner would like to update the building and is proposing adding a separate second access to the upper level second unit. The owner would like to add a 10 x 10 deck to the south side of the property.

Chairman Smunt expressed concerns about visibility from the public right of way. He would like to see the same type of railing system on the back as proposed on the front porch. He is unable to determine from the pictures presented what it would look like.

Mr. Schramer stated they will be replacing the deteriorated cedar wrap on the porch columns and overhead beam with new cedar, and repairing the handrails on the stairs. The homeowner is proposing adding handrails across all the openings which will consist of a 2 x 6 on the top of the rail, and a 2 x 4 edge support underneath that top which will hold 2 x 2 cedar balusters in place.

Chairman Smunt was concerned with the proposal being too contemporary for a turn of the century house in the historic district. He would like to see a more conventional handrail system consisting of an upper rail, a lower rail, and a square baluster. Chairman Smunt provided options.

Mr. Schramer said the lattice will be replaced with a similar type. Chairman Smunt suggested they include a frame for the lattice and a skirt board.

Mr. Vann advised he will need detailed documentation of the plan showing the changes recommended by the Commission.

Chairman Smunt clarified all the railing systems should match.

A motion was made by Mr. Withey and seconded by Ms. Malay with a unanimous voice vote to approve the COA contingent upon the discussed changes (traditional rail design with upper and lower rail and center set balusters, skirt board on front porch- minimum 1"x6", lattice in framing, consistent rail design for front and side decks).

8. COA: 301 W. Main St. (awnings, signs)

Robert Brescia, owner of the Rocket Fizz Soda Pop & Candy Shop, was present. He would like to install raceway mounted channel letters with an acrylic front to read "Rocket Fizz", illuminated from behind with LED lights. It will include a tag line that reads "Soda Pop and Candy Shop" also lit with bubble lettering on the front and on the side of the building. Mr. Brescia is also proposing adding awnings on the front and side of the building.

Mr. Brescia noted they would like to paint the store front. Mr. Colby advised there are color restrictions in the Zoning Ordinance limiting bright colors. He said although the Commission does not regulate colors, he said they can comment on the proposal. The Commissioners discussed using black color for the base of the storefront, and keeping the doors red.

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

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

Mike Navigato, Corporate Counsel for Don McCue Chevrolet, and Dale Baum, employee of Don McCue Chevrolet, were present. Mr. Navigato presented documentation from GM indicating the framing of the three signs was originally installed in 1974. He stated the business at this site has been operating as a car dealership since that time. He said they believe the signs, and the way they are erected, are representative of the era, and the signs as they currently exist are not in violation of any city codes.

Chairman Smunt indicated the criteria under Item C of the Zoning Ordinance caused some concern at the last meeting. His specific concerns are over the wording referencing contemporary signage. Chairman Smunt feels the style of the McCue signs can still be found in contemporary signs offered by GM and that there is nothing unique about them. Mr. Navigato explained that although GM continues to use a sign designed in the 1970's doesn't make it a

contemporary sign. He said the fact that the signs can still be replicated does not make it contemporary, nor does it take away from the fact that they are representative of the era in which they were installed.

Mr. Colby clarified based on the question at the last meeting that “contemporary” refers to current time.

Mr. Pretz stated he is in support of the designation because the dealership has been under the same ownership for the past 40 years and they have maintained the signs. He believes the signs are representative of that time period and should be designated as such. Ms. Malay stated these signs have been GM’s branding model and it is unique to them, and that in itself is historic. Mr. Bobowiec agreed. He said these signs are only seen at GM dealerships.

Mr. Vann provided history on how the City has regulated non-conforming signs, and how they were grandfathered previously. He noted that updates, like electrical, were not permitted for non-conforming signs, but because building permits were not sought for this work, the signs continued to be maintained. He said this was part of the reason the City chose to pursue amortization.

Mr. Vann questioned the Commission on how to respond to other property owners who ask why this business is able to keep the signs. He noted the GMC dealership down the street has the exact same sign. He also noted these signs are available to be installed as new signs.

The Commission discussed that Mr. Vann can refer them to the criteria and indicate that if they meet the criteria, they could also keep their signs. Mr. Navigato said that since the McCue signs meet the criteria, there doesn’t need to be further explanation provided to support the request. Mr. Vann asked if the Commission is supporting designation for all three signs. The Commission said yes.

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Withey with a unanimous voice vote recommend approve historic sign designation for all three signs.

10. Preliminary Review: 606 Cedar St.

Mr. Colby stated no action needs to be taken on this item. The property is under contract by another party.

11. Additional Business

a. Mobile Tour App Project

No updates.

b. Landmarks Research

No updates.

c. Historic District Trolley Tour

Mr. Gibson stated one of the aldermen took the tour over the Memorial Day weekend and was impressed with the information that was presented. Mr. Gibson said it might be worthwhile to set up a similar tour for the City Council/City Government followed by a boxed lunch presentation to provide information on the entire historic preservation process. The Commission liked the idea and discussed the benefits of pursuing this. Mr. Gibson will do further research and will report back.

d. Jones Law Office

Pat Pretz advised the Commission that Dan Otto no longer needed access to the office. He was able to see through the windows and had three suggestions regarding the work that needed to be done.

- 1) The floorboards need to be replaced with old wood. A stain would not be compatible.
- 2) The windows need glazing.
- 3) The door needs to be updated.

Ms. Pretz asked Mr. Otto to provide a quote for these projects.

Ms. Malay suggested doing a window restoration workshop and videotaping the various stages of the process. Chairman Smunt and Mr. Withey said they have experience working with old windows and offered to help with the workshop.

12. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, June 17, 2015 at 7:00 pm in the Council Committee Room.

13. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.