

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2015
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM**

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

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager

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

Ms. Malay asked that an item be added for Camp Kane under Additional Business. There were no objections.

4. Presentation of minutes of the January 7, 2015 meeting

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

5. COA: 312 W. Main St.

Chuck Bleck, architect, participated in the meeting by phone. Mr. Bleck said the owner of the restaurant has run into some unforeseen issues during demolition and issues with the project budget. He said they are planning to keep the same façade look as previously approved, but with a revision to the projection on the building. He said the proposal is to use an 8 inch projection, which will have a shadow line. He said the projecting sign can then be larger, with a shorter projection, and have greater visibility.

Mr. Colby clarified the projecting sign could only extend a total of 4 ft. from the building wall. The canopy projection that was approved by the Commission was 3 ft., and then the projecting sign was an additional 1 ft.

Chairman Smunt questioned the reason for removing the original steel support members from the existing overhang. He said the Commission did not approve of this element being demolished. Mr. Bleck said he was unaware of what was originally supporting the canopy.

Mr. Norris said there were wide flanges that extended out from the inside that appear to have been cut off at the building face. Mr. Bleck said he has not seen the demolition work in progress. He asked if the wide flanges appear to be fresh cut. Mr. Norris said yes. Mr. Bleck said he has not seen this first hand.

Chairman Smunt asked about the projection of the original steel. Mr. Norris said maybe 4 to 5 feet, which was encased with wood panels when restaurant/bar was renovated.

Chairman Smunt said the contractor has demolished a structural element that was not approved to be removed. He said he finds it hard to be sympathetic about a budget concern when an architectural element was destroyed by a contractor.

Mr. Bleck clarified the contractor is working for the owner and he does not have information on what occurred. He said constructing and cladding the proposed projection takes a fair amount of framing, roofing, material, labor, lighting, soffits, etc., so there is a substantial cost savings to scale the projection back to the building, but still maintain enough of a shadow line.

Chairman Smunt asked about the projection on the west side and whether this would be larger than 8 inches. Mr. Bleck referenced the drawing the Commission has, which shows the same 3 ft. projection as previously proposed. He said the façade will still read the same, with the south facing elevation and shadow line that will be created; it will just not be as defined.

Mr. Pretz questioned how Mr. Bleck would perceive this change if he was on the Historic Commission. Mr. Bleck clarified that his brother, Bob, was present for the first meeting on the project and he has served on the historic commission in Libertyville.

Mr. Pretz asked if Mr. Bleck had a conversation with the demolition contractor discussing that the project is in a historic district and that during the demolition, they should reach out to talk to someone before removing an architectural element. Mr. Bleck asked if Mr. Pretz meant the plywood. Mr. Pretz said no, the steel that was part of the original building. Mr. Bleck said he couldn't speak to this; it would be a question for the owner.

Ms. Malay noted the issue is that the building has always had this projection, but now we are talking about cutting it back. Mr. Bobowiec asked why the demolition contractor would take it upon themselves to cut off the steel supports without stopping and getting permission when they

know this has to be reviewed. Ms. Malay said the contractor may have been under the impression that they had approval to remove the entire canopy.

Mr. Pretz said the architects should have enough expertise and have responsibility to communicate with the people who have been hired. Mr. Bleck said his relationship is only with the client, who is the owner and operator of the restaurant, and he will talk to the owner. He said as architects on this project, they do not have control or leverage over the contractors.

Ms. Malay asked why is the cost such a factor that now the project is being scaled back so drastically. She said she would have thought costs would have been known before moving forward with building permits. Mr. Withey said the architect can only speak to the new design; this is really a question for the owner.

Mr. Gibson noted the wall sign on the plans appears to project out 8 inches as well, which is the same as the canopy projection.

Mr. Bleck asked about the Commission's next meeting date so that he can communicate with the client and prepare a new rendering. He referenced some other potential fenestration changes that may be planned also. He said some of the siding material may be up there currently if the Commission would like to see it.

Mr. Bleck said they might need time to regroup and consider if a different design direction should be considered. Chairman Smunt asked the Commission to table the item to the next meeting on Feb. 4.

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

Mr. Bleck confirmed that they could proceed based on the previously approved design. The phone call with Mr. Bleck was ended.

Mr. Pretz said there should have been conversation about the historic preservation requirements before the project started.

Ms. Malay said the Commission might want to consider how situations like this occur to prevent them in the future. She said playing devil's advocate, the Commission never asked if the structure was to be preserved; the Commission simply approved the elevations as drawn. She said maybe the Commission needs to clarify this in the future when a demolition permit is

issued. Mr. Pretz said the contractors should be directed to stop work when they encounter a structural element like this.

Mr. Gibson noted the architect did not directly say that the cost is attributed to replacing the structure that was demolished. Mr. Pretz said there may be other structural issues they are encountering with other aspects of the project.

Mr. Gibson asked if there is something more than an 8 inch projection that might be considered by the Commission. Chairman Smunt noted that the projection was previously continuous around the building.

Mr. Norris stated that the wide flanges may have been removed as a result of the interior work to open up a two story space. Chairman Smunt said there should have been some investigation of the structure before work began.

Mr. Colby said he will check if there was actually a permit issued to demolish any of the exterior. He also said in the future, perhaps the Commission should ask questions about potential structural changes to prevent a similar situation.

Mr. Gibson speculated that there may be costs that could be saved on the interior instead of the exterior.

6. Additional Business

a. Mobile Tour App Project

Mr. Colby stated that funding has been included in the initial proposed department budget for the coming year.

b. Camp Kane

Ms. Malay asked for an update on the Camp Kane landmark designation. Mr. Colby said he is working on obtaining a legal description for a lower cost. He said he thinks the landmarking could be complete in April, as the process should be relatively quick.

c. Landmarks Research

The Commission discussed strategies for communicating with property owners to gain their support for the landmark nominations, including offering up potential benefits.

7. Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, February 4, 2015 at 7:00 pm in the Committee Room.

8. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.