

City of Excelsior
Hennepin County, Minnesota

Minutes
Heritage Preservation Commission

Tuesday, July 28, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Macpherson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Macpherson, Bolles, Caron, Finch, Brabec, Reece, Salita

Commissioners Absent: None

Also Present: City Planner Becker

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion by Bolles, seconded by Caron to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried 5/0 (Reece and Brabec not present at the time this motion carried).

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) June 16, 2020

Commissioner Caron moved, Commissioner Bolles seconded, to approve the minutes for the June 16, 2020 meeting as amended. Motion carried 7/0.

4. CITIZEN COMMENTS OR REPORTS

Peter Hartwich, 186 George Street, had spoken regarding the hotel. He wishes that every building structure had the same scrutiny placed on those under the Heritage Preservation Commission.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) 234 Water Street Window Replacement and Exterior Improvements (HPC No. 20-16)

Becker presented the report. Bolles commented that the windows on the storefront of the building were not of the layout that were discussed, as the doors were seven feet high and were supposed to be eight feet high, and the mullions are approximately a foot lower than what they were on the original historic building. He felt that some of the descriptions were a bit confusing and did notice that there was no showing of a dumpster or dumpster enclosure on the back of the property. Brabec wanted to hear from the subcommittee. She felt that there should be wood on the bottom of the façade as opposed to aluminum, as it feels like a strip mall with aluminum. Caron felt that the plan looked pretty good but would like to talk about ghost signs. If there are visible ghost signs on the front of the building, it would be important to incorporate into the front of the building. He would like to understand the view of the commission on the importance of Hennessy signage on the back of the building. He would like to make sure that the HVAC units being added to the roof will not be visible from across the street. Tyler Nelson, applicant, said that they would not be visible from across the street. He wasn't sure about the ghost signs, as it would be too much demolition at that point. Caron asked if he would be open to evaluating the ghost signs with the subcommittee, and Nelson said that he would. Finch wanted to know how the pergola would be built without removing the tree, and Nelson wasn't sure. Finch also asked about the concrete wall, and Nelson said that it already exists on the property. Reece didn't have anything further to add. Salita wanted to save the ghost signs and preferred the aluminum as compared to wood or brick. Macpherson noted that the transom window got larger and the door got smaller. There was discussion regarding redoing the drawings so that the windows and doors would be closer to the historic appearance. Salita felt that the Commission should not get bogged down with very specific details and should be focusing on the design standards and whether or not the project meets them. There was discussion regarding utilizing aluminum vs. wood or brick. Macpherson suggested that the proposed materials remain as is. Nelson pointed out that storefront materials are the same size as the

the Excelsior Library. Brabec felt that if aluminum makes more sense in the long run, she is sold. Finch motioned to approve the Site Alteration Permit as-is with recommended conditions that the subcommittee look at the tree, window mullion height, door system and the ghost signs, and dumpster location for the rear elevation, with an approved dumpster location and enclosure if required. Seconded by Salita, motion carried 7-0.

b) 243 Water Street Awning Removal and Barber Pole Replacement (HPC No. 20-15)

Becker presented the report. Brabec asked if the pole was the one from the back. Ralph Paro, applicant, had said that it was the original barber pole and not the pole from the back of the building. Bolles wanted to add a condition that the awning hardware would not be removed. Caron wanted to know if the awning frame would be removed, and Paro clarified that it would. He also wanted to know if the reason to remove the awning was to accommodate the sign or for aesthetic reason. Paro said it was for aesthetic reasons, as he feels it dwarfs the size of the building. Caron was concerned that this would result in not a lot of interesting detail on the building. He wanted the applicant to consider keeping the awning hardware or if there was a different way to keep the interesting elements on the building. Caron suggested that all of the hardware of the sign should stay, and that the awning fabric only be removed. Paro was okay with this. Motion by Caron to approve the Site Alteration to approve the installation of the historic barber pole in the original mortar joint, approve the removal of the awning fabric with the hardware to be retained in place on the face of the building and that the applicant would be asked to reconsider the use of the decorative sign bracket as the mechanism to hold the new sign face. Seconded by Bolles. Motion carried 7-0.

c) 366 Water Street Addition and Remodel (HPC No. 20-10)

Becker presented the report. Concern about showing the utilities on the plan were discussed. Finch was concerned with only having one staircase to the top of the building. He also wanted to know what the final dimensions were on the screen porch. Bill Ziegler, applicant, said that the dimensions were 12 feet, and Caron thought that the dimensions would be 10 feet based on the applicant's discussions with the subcommittee. Macpherson wanted to make an amendment to the conditions that restorations of the siding of the rear elevation would be allowed. Caron asked whether the original garage would be removed, and John Harrington, son-in-law of the applicant, said that it would. Harrington also said that the garage doors could be used in some other sort of addition to the property. Finch moved to approve the Site Alteration Permit with the amended conditions that no rear addition is approved and "no work besides the demolition of the rear deck and restoration of the rear wall siding shall be allowed." Seconded by Salita. Motion carried 7-0.

e) 6 Third Street Partial Demolition, Remodel and Addition (HPC No. 20-17)

Becker presented the report. Caron wanted to make sure that the turret would be preserved including the finneal at the top, the stained-glass windows, the roofline from the lake from the original part of the house and preserve the chimney. Finch wanted to know if the hardcover was being significantly increased, and Dan Brattland, applicant, said that the increase in hardcover was mostly due to the addition of the wraparound porch. Motion by Caron to approve the Site Alteration Permit subject to the findings and conditions discussed. Seconded by Brabec. Finch wanted to add a condition relative to the variances. Caron amended the motion to recommend granting any variance that would support preservation of the historical character of the site and structure. Motion amended as suggested. Motion carried 7-0.

f) 10 Water Street Condominium Sketch Plan (HPC No. 20-14)

Becker presented the report. Brabec felt that there was too much unknown. Macpherson suggested a subcommittee to steer the applicant in the right direction on how to proceed forth with the application. Finch does not see how this proposal is consistent with other projects that have been brought forth, as usually this is done to help an applicant with a

complete or near complete application get to a point where the subcommittee agrees on the materials and design, not at the sketch plan phase. Charlie James, owner, gave a history of the proposed project and how it came about. He explained that due to COVID-19 that the hotel proposal would not be feasible due to the decline of the tourism industry.

Brabec wanted to know if the plan was the same as the previous plan proposed and wanted to gain clarification on the height of the building. Neil Weber, architect, said that he was excited to gain feedback from a subcommittee, as he doesn't feel that he has ever gained proper feedback from the Heritage Preservation Commission. Caron wanted to clarify that the applicant had received the Heritage Preservation Design Guidelines, and Weber said that they had received the guidelines. Bolles wanted to know how much square footage was allocated to the different public entities within the first floor and how much the cost to those specific entities would be. Weber said that he has had conversations with the Chamber of Commerce, and the intent was that the space would be donated, and they would pay utility costs and taxes.

Finch was disappointed to hear that the applicant felt that the Heritage Preservation Commission did not hear the previous application, as he felt that they did. Reece felt that if the proposed development fit within the mass and scale of the area, it would be extraordinary if done right. Brabec felt that having an empty lot in a prime piece of real estate was disappointing. She believes that maybe there was something in there that could be adapted. She liked the idea of a condominium rather than a hotel. Macpherson said that the concern was not the use but that the exterior building itself does not meet Excelsior City ordinances. As proposed, it does not meet City ordinances, as it is too tall, and there are issues with the size and scale. Weber would like to set up a subcommittee. Finch feels that it is frustrating that the applicant came in with the same plan as previously proposed. Brabec would like to continue working with the applicant, and Reece agrees. Reece, Salita and Brabec are willing to work with the applicant on the subcommittee. John Adams, applicant, had explained that the footprint could be expanded with bringing the height down. He pointed out that it is the largest site in downtown Excelsior. Caron pointed out that the this proposal is unlike other proposals where a subcommittee was set up in which the application facially met the guidelines but needed additional work for a complete proposal

but was fine with setting up a subcommittee to ensure that the application met the guidelines. Motion by Macpherson to table the item to a future meeting until the applicant has revised the proposed site design to ensure that it has complied with Excelsior's guidelines. Seconded by Bolles. Finch pointed out that he did not hear the applicants say that a building would be built that met Excelsior's guidelines. Motion carried 7-0.

g) 2020 Preservation Award

Becker presented information on what the subcommittee for the 2020 Preservation Award has accomplished so far. No action was needed on this.

Salita suggested that members take turns ensuring that applications are complete before they are presented to the commission as a whole. He suggested that the commission take a few weeks to think it over and make Salita the point person for any feedback.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Caron, seconded by Brabec, to adjourn at 9:41 p.m. Motion carried 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Becker
City Planner