

City of Excelsior
Hennepin County, Minnesota

MINUTES
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

NOVEMBER 24, 2015

7:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Schmidt called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Brabec, Macpherson, Nelson and Schmidt

Commissioners Absent: Anderson, Finch, Salita

Also Present: City Planner Smith, Advisor Caron, Consultant Zahn, Planning Consultant Richards

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting of October 20, 2015

Schmidt stated that he would like to clarify the term "reversible" by adding "meaning that it can be painted over." He also stated that he would like to see numbered findings. There was discussion over the purpose of findings. Commissioner Schmidt moved, Commissioner Nelson seconded, to approve the amendment to the minutes. Motion carried 4/0.

Commissioner Macpherson moved, Commissioner Nelson seconded, to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried 4/0.

b) Heritage Preservation Commission Special Meeting of November 12, 2015

Commissioner Brabec moved, Commissioner Macpherson seconded, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried 4/0.

Commissioner Nelson moved, Commissioner Brabec seconded, to add discussion of a Site Alteration Permit to the agenda for 206 Water Street under New Business. Macpherson expressed caution about adding items to the agenda where no public notice has been given. Motion carried 4/0.

4. CITIZEN REPORTS OR COMMENTS

None

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) Site Alteration Permit - 206 Water Street

Smith stated that Kate Regan is expanding her interior design business from the Second Street portion of the building to add Water Street frontage as well. **Sitting Room Studio and Home signs will be added to the Water Street façade, which meet the City's sign size requirements.** Smith reviewed the HPC standards for signs,

namely whether the proposed signage preserves the historic character of the building and does not conceal architectural details. Staff found that the proposal met finding one, that the character of the property was preserved, and finding two, that the signs do not conceal any architectural detail, and therefore the proposal is compatible with the building and historic district. The Commission discussed past Site Alteration Permits for the building.

Commissioner Brabec moved, Commissioner Macpherson seconded, to approve the Site Alteration Permit consistent with the staff recommendation. Motion carried 3/0 with Schmidt abstaining.

b) Site Alteration Permit - 289 Water Street (HPC No. 15-15)

Richards presented the application. He stated that this proposal is in the Planned Unit Development (PUD) concept phase seeking HPC input only. On June 22, 2010, the HPC approved a similar concept. Deficit parking spaces were an issue for the City with the earlier project approval. The current proposal has eliminated the previously proposed underground parking since the applicant has no control of the alleyway needed for access. The second floor of the building has also been pulled back in the rear to reduce the square footage. The upper story window style on the earlier proposal was evaluated by the HPC and the arched or Palladian style windows were approved. The use of a corner door was also approved on the earlier proposal. Parking allowances would be needed for this project as proposed. The PUD ordinance allows for two buildings on a single lot. The Council is considering allowing parking to be grandfathered for this proposal. The HPC should comment on the design compatibility with the historic district. Since this is a concept review, general comments on the proposed design elements, height, massing, French balconies, windows, etc. are appropriate. He noted that Brian Burdick, the applicant, is present.

Macpherson asked about the status of the changes to the PUD ordinance. Smith stated that the HPC's proposed changes to the PUD ordinance have not yet been enacted. Macpherson stated that it is important that HPC review occur at the concept stage and that it not be pro forma, but should raise issues that would be important at the Site Alteration Permit stage.

The Commission discussed the proposed balconies and whether they are decorative or usable. Brian Burdick of Burdick Properties stated that they are not intended as usable balconies but the doors and windows are operable for airflow. Richards stated that the revised plan meets the 200 square foot patio limit on the roof. The remaining open area is not used. Burdick was asked about snow load and he said it should not be an issue.

Brabec asked about the rhythm of windows. Nelson stated that the **façade** is more embellished than that of other buildings in the district. Macpherson noted that there are precedents for arched windows on other downtown buildings, so he believes it is in keeping with the historic feel of the downtown area. There is also other wrought iron detail in the downtown, such as on the Odd Fellows building. Burdick stated that the materials would be Minnesota buff limestone, and a brick similar to that on the Excelsior Elementary building. Schmidt expressed that some people have concerns about the ornateness of the adjacent building at 287 Water Street, and believe that it is not in keeping with simpler downtown architecture. Burdick stated that he would like this building to fit in. Macpherson stated that he would prefer that the brick not match that on 287 Water Street so there is visual differentiation of the facade. Inclusion of the quoin detail on the building also helps to offset it from the adjacent building. He noted that the proposed sills look tall for the building.

The Commission discussed the size, mass and scale of the structure. Macpherson stated that he believes that a two-story building would be appropriate, especially for a prominent corner building. It reflects the overall skyline of Water Street. It also fills a vacant spot in the streetscape. Regarding windows, Nelson stated that the NW (Water Street elevation) windows on the second level are too embellished. She prefers the rhythm of windows on the SW (Third Street) elevation. The window arrangement could be reversed and the wider windows move to where there is more **façade** room on Third Street. Zahn noted that Palladian windows are usually centered on the building, not divided and located on the sides. Schmidt stated that he is generally comfortable with the rounded window tops. Macpherson stated that the sills are probably too massive for the building, but it is hard to tell on such a small drawing. He would like to see more detail on the limestone and the contrasting brick color. Schmidt would prefer to avoid see intricate railings on the upper level like those on the 287 Water facade. It was noted that the cornice detail would also be important.

Smith stated that the Commission should request that the applicant prepare a cross-section view from Water Street to assess the visibility of the proposed roof patio and fencing.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Draft Design Manual (HPC No. 14-09)

Zahn described the current draft of the Design Manual. He will add a statement that the work must be completed within a prescribed timeframe and will look for an appropriate place to include it. Smith stated that providing local incentives are still under consideration. Schmidt stated that he is still concerned about definitions of contributing and noncontributing and period of significance. Zahn stated that significance relates to the period in which building was important, and can be applied to a district. Schmidt stated that it should be defined in this manner and a reference included to the 50 year National Register rule. Macpherson suggested changing the order of terms to shall, should, and may, then period of significance, contributing, and non-contributing, then primary and secondary elevations, for ease of use.

7. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

- a) Site Alteration Permits Approved Administratively
- b) Next Planning Commission Meeting – December 15 or 16, 2015
- d) Next City Council Meeting – December 7, 2015
- e) Next HPC Meeting – Tuesday, December 22, 2015

8. MISCELLANEOUS / COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

- a) Recent City Council Actions

Smith stated that the Council discussed the historic district boundaries, but only four Councilmembers were at the meeting, so the discussion was continued to the

December 7 meeting. Regarding single-family ordinance standards, Gaylord and Caron are working on the details. Changes to the minimum lot size standards are being examined by the Planning Commission. The proposed PUD ordinance changes are still being revised, making the sketch plan language stronger and adding more on conditions that the developer must meet in exchange for PUD allowances.

Smith suggested that the Commission might consider giving recognition awards for worthy projects. The hotel project deadline is now December 7 for the applicant to present financing and an operator.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Macpherson moved, Commissioner Brabec seconded, to adjourn at 9:20 p.m. Motion carried 4/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Caron
Recording Secretary