

City of Excelsior  
Hennepin County, Minnesota

MINUTES  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

October 20, 2015

7:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Schmidt called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Macpherson, Nelson, Salita and Schmidt

Commissioners Absent: Brabec, Finch

Also Present: City Planner Smith, Advisor Caron, Mayor Gaylord, Consultant Zahn

3. OATH OF OFFICE

Mayor Gaylord administered the oath of office to Dean Salita.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting of September 22, 2015

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

b) Heritage Preservation Commission Special Meeting of October 8, 2015

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

5. CITIZEN REPORTS OR COMMENTS

None

6. NEW BUSINESS

a) Site Alteration Permit - 219 Water Street (HPC No. 15-13)

Smith stated that the windows have been replaced on the rear of the building and a new storefront installed, and all of these improvements are consistent with the plans approved by the HPC. The owner is renovating the interior space to accommodate both front and rear-facing tenants, and the rear tenant proposes to paint signage on the rear brick face showing its business logo, Buck + Fir. The signage meets the city size standards for signs and the design is similar to the recently-approved Golden Rule painted signage. The HPC ordinance states that signs must not clutter the building's appearance or obscure architectural details, and any signs should be consistent with historic signs. Painting is not allowed on masonry buildings, but the rear of this building and the area where the sign will be placed is already painted.

Schmidt asked Zahn about how this application would be reviewed under the new draft design manual. Zahn stated that, in his experience, such signage should be reversible and should be centered over the storefront window. Macpherson stated that any sign should be painted horizontally in an even manner, and not skewed as shown in the illustration. Also, he notes that the wood area around the new storefront window should not be exposed raw wood as shown. Smith stated that he would check to make sure that the edging around the window is finished.

Commissioners expressed concern about the sign's modern appearance and lack of a traditional sign border. Potential distinction between a cottage commercial house sign and more formal signage in the core of the historic district on a masonry building (which tends to follow a particular traditional form) was discussed. Nelson noted that this signage is for the rear of building, which should not be subject to rules as strict as those intended for a front elevation. Schmidt stated that there should be an advisory recommendation that this type of painted signage would not be allowed on an unpainted masonry building. Findings for this sign included that it is reversible and meets the city sign size standards and does not impact any architectural features or diminish the historic character of the building due to its position on the rear elevation where the masonry is already painted. Commissioner Nelson moved, Commissioner Salita seconded, to approve the Site Alteration Permit with the understanding that this type of sign might not be acceptable if widely replicated in the downtown, consistent with the findings and staff report. Motion carried 6/0.

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

Smith stated that the proposed design guidelines for the downtown district (as called for by the new draft HPC ordinance) and the program for preservation are included within the draft design manual. The diagrams are still missing and will be supplied later. He is seeking Commission comments on the process language and the draft guidelines. Schmidt clarified that the design manual will be incorporated by reference into the new ordinance. Macpherson noted that the use of "shall" should be "may" in the section on administrative approvals, since any approval depends on the type of change proposed. Zahn stated that staff should consult with commissioners if in any doubt about the appropriateness of administrative approvals. Smith suggested using the more detailed type of list used by Chaska to describe items for administrative approval that involve minor classes of work. Macpherson stated that reroofing should require both a Site Alteration Permit and a building permit and may be administratively approved. The Commission agreed to review a more detailed list of administrative approval items at its next meeting. Caron stated that he would also review the Site Alteration Permit process table and compare the draft HPC ordinance to the final draft design manual for consistency.

Zahn noted that he is seeking to provide a general introduction for property owners in the first part of the manual and feature more specific review standards and in the second part. The manual will eventually be expanded to include information for residential-type structures, both commercial and residential. He will supply the graphics after the text is done. An appendix has the city's current designated structures. In a conflict between the ordinance and the manual, the ordinance governs. The Commons may also need a separate section.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) None

8. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

- a) Next Planning Commission Meeting – November 9, 2015
  
- d) Next City Council Meeting – November 2, 2015
  
- e) Next HPC Meeting – Tuesday, November 24, 2015

9. MISCELLANEOUS / COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

- a) Recent City Council Actions

Smith stated that the City Council approved the Stoddard rowhouse development behind the Excelsior Mill. The Council continued its discussion of residential scale standards to receive input from the public open house.

Smith also stated that the contractor would like to re-side the rear of the 444 2<sup>nd</sup> Street building in brick. The Commission agreed to hold a special meeting on November 17 to review the changes.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Nelson moved, Commissioner Salida seconded, to adjourn at 8:49 p.m.  
Motion carried 4/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Caron  
Recording Secretary