

City of Excelsior  
Hennepin County, Minnesota

MINUTES  
EXCELSIOR CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, April 7, 2014

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Gaylord called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Present: Councilmembers Beattie, Miller and Mayor Gaylord

Absent: Councilmember Caron, Fulkerson

Also Present: Heritage Preservation Commissioners Bipes, Bolles, Brabec, and Finch

City Manager Luger, City Planner Smith and City Clerk Johnson

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Beattie moved, Miller seconded, to approve the agenda. Motion carried 3/0.

3. JOINT WORK SESSION WITH THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Mayor Gaylord discussed the Heritage Preservation Commission's (HPC) goals for 2014.

- 1) Explore Modifying the Planned Unit Development Review Process (Joint Item with the Planning Commission)

Mayor Gaylord asked the Commissioners if the HPC has worked on this. Commissioner Bipes said there was a work session a year ago. Mayor Gaylord said the Planning Commission has had this item on their agenda, along with formula businesses that they will be working on, also. Mayor Gaylord said the Planning Commission should have another joint meeting with the HPC. Mayor Gaylord said to leave this item on as an HPC goal.

- 2) Review Design Standards (Joint Item with the Planning Commission)

Commissioner Bipes said the Planning Commission is working on related items. He said that some items are of concern to the HPC and they will become involved. Commissioner Bipes said there will be discussion on this subject at the April 8<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting.

- 3) Evaluate Application Standards for Commercial Applications (Joint Item with the Planning Commission)

Commissioner Bipes said this is included in goal number one.

3. JOINT WORK SESSION WITH THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION -  
*Continued*

Commissioner Finch provided a list of possible goals for the HPC for 2014:

- 1) Ensuring that HPC's quality standards are met before completion of a project.

Commissioner Finch said one thing that is happening is that the HPC has specific standards but if the applicant isn't following those standards, there should be a process for the applicant to meet those standards before they are issued a Certificate of Occupancy.

Commissioner Finch said one example is the awning that has been out of compliance for many months. He said the HPC denied the awning, but the applicant put it up, anyway. Commissioner Brabec said the HPC never knows if the final product meets the quality the HPC intends for it to meet and asked if anyone checks that things are done properly. Commissioner Finch said the word "quality" could be replaced with "required."

Commissioner Bolles said his concern is that there is different qualities of workmanship. Victor's at 205 Water Street was a big concern for him. He said the glazed brick is such a precise brick and the quality of the restoration is important. Commissioner Bolles would like to have someone check on the quality of a project before it's finished. He said it's the quality of the work they do that is very important to the quality of the appearance of the project when it's done. He said it would be better to discuss the results on a small area of the project before the entire project is complete.

Commissioner Finch said another example is Yumi's Sushi Bar. Commissioner Bipes asked Smith about his comfort level in reviewing brick, mortar and such. Smith said this is more of a planning issue, as compared to a preservation issue. In the past, Smith said he has done site visits to ensure recommendations are met. He said each visit was to be sure the project is meeting the standards. Smith said this is part of his job description. Smith said he has always asked developers to provide a brick sample so it matches or compliments the existing brick. Commissioner Finch said he has not seen this role of inspector in Excelsior in the past. Mayor Gaylord asked if this would be good use of a building inspector's time. Commissioner Finch said a building inspector is not familiar with historic standards. Commissioner Bolles said it's not part of the building inspector's job and said that they are only inspecting according to the uniform building code. In historical preservation, Commissioner Bolles said it's important to observe and inspect and know how to direct the contractor to do their work.

Commissioner Bolles said a significant item is the concern about the brick on the new library. He said they have washed a portion of it and you can see how dramatic the color of the mortar is, which indirectly changes the color of the brick. Commissioner Bolles said a building inspector may not care about what color the mortar is. He said the person inspecting it needs to have some professional expertise on historic preservation. Mayor Gaylord said this is a good goal to pursue.

3. JOINT WORK SESSION WITH THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION -  
*Continued*

- 2) Provide an historic photo display of both residential and commercial buildings in the new City Council Chambers (current library space)

Commissioner Finch said the only issue is to remove the word "photo" from the title of this goal because there could also be other items displayed. Commissioner Bolles feels we should help educate the people and provide them with a way to see the importance of preserving history. Commissioner Bolles is more in favor of having a panoramic view of Water Street. He said it would be beneficial to both the Planning and Heritage Preservation Commissioners to see the history of the area. He said one row could have current photos and another row could have 50 years ago or some time in the past. Commissioner Bolles also suggested having some photos of the homes in Excelsior, so as to encourage residents to preserve their home's past, similar to what Mayor Gaylord has done with his home. Commissioner Bolles said the HPC has thanked Mayor Gaylord for what he has done and what he is currently doing with the work on his home. Commissioner Bolles would like to see this history displayed in the new Council Chambers. Commissioner Bolles is also asking that some funds be considered or set aside for this pictorial presentation. He thinks we should start thinking about this and planning for it now. Commissioner Bolles said the HPC is looking for direction from the Council.

Mayor Gaylord said this is a really good idea and that we should explore costs. He said he also likes the idea of combining commercial and residential properties in the display. Mayor Gaylord said this item should clearly be on the HPC goals list.

- 3) Create a Process Whereby the HPC can be more Consultative, Proactive and Productive by Reviewing PUD's and Other Critical Documents Earlier in the Concept Stage

Commissioner Finch believes this item goes with item number 1. Mayor Gaylord agrees that it should be added to number 1.

- 4) Continue to Pursue Grant Funding for Historic Designation Studies

Mayor Gaylord said this item was pulled from last fall's budget. Commissioner Finch said as long as we pursue grants, many require matching. Mayor Gaylord said we should always consider a grant, even with matching fund requirements. Mayor Gaylord said to keep this one on the list.

- 5) Work with the Planning Commission on Residential Design Standards and Options for Reuse of Older Housing Stock

Commissioner Finch said this item is relatively new. He said the HPC works within the historic district, which is primarily commercial, but he said there are things that need to be done in the residential area, also. Mayor Gaylord

3. JOINT WORK SESSION WITH THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION -  
*Continued*

- 5) Work with the Planning Commission on Residential Design Standards and Options for Reuse of Older Housing Stock - *Continued*

agreed but said that when it comes down to cost, it may cost twice as much to save a building. Mayor Gaylord said this goes with the idea of having a historic district. Commissioner Finch said there isn't a balance because there are no standards for residential and would like to explore putting those together.

Beattie asked if the problem is because we can't have a residential historic district. Commissioner Bolles said he and Tim Caron were previously on the HPC and that around 2002, there were segments of town that they started to group houses together, especially in the core part of town where there are more historic homes over 50 years old. He said there is potential in areas where this could be done.

Smith said that item number 14 (Continue the Education of HPC Members in Historic Preservation Issues, Conservation Districts, SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office), and Natural Recourses Related to Preservation) could be considered for residential areas. He said he has seen other areas with conservation districts with similar characteristics and is something we could discuss here. Commissioner Finch said item number 14 could be joined with item number 5. He also said item 6 (Prevent Unnecessary Demolition with Ordinances and Other Mechanisms) and item 7 (Revisit List of Historic Homes, Priority Homes, 100-Year Homes, and Other Significant Homes) could be tied in, also. Commissioner Finch said the loophole is to allow a home to deteriorate in order to take it down. Commissioner Finch said items 7 through 10 could all go under item 14.

- 6) Prevent Unnecessary Demolition with Ordinances and Other Mechanisms
- 7) Revisit List of Historic Homes, Priority Homes, 100-Year Homes, and Other Significant Homes
- 8) Educate Homeowners on the Benefits of Preserving a Historic or Noteworthy Home
- 9) Educate the Community about the Process for Establishing a Residential Historic District
- 10) Use the Olds-Purchase-Gaylord Home as a Case Study on Historic Preservation

Mayor Gaylord said he talked with Chair Schmidt regarding setting up an annual open house or tour of homes in Excelsior, where proceeds would go to the HPC. Mayor Gaylord said Edina did this last fall and it was a nice tour. Commissioner Finch and Commissioner Bolles said Excelsior did this about 15 years ago. Mayor Gaylord said it could be done again and a lot of people would be interested in it. Beattie said there is another 15 years of history on

3. JOINT WORK SESSION WITH THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION -  
*Continued*

- 10) Use the Olds-Purchase-Gaylord Home as a Case Study on Historic Preservation  
- *Continued*

those properties that were on the original tour. Mayor Gaylord said Edina charged about \$15 per ticket for their tour and the proceeds went to the Edina HPC. Mayor Gaylord thinks there are a lot of people in town who would open their homes for the day. Commissioner Finch said his home was on the tour and it was interesting to hear the stories of people and their memories of his home from years ago. Mayor Gaylord said if the HPC wants to come up with something on a case study, he would be more than happy to help them with it.

- 11) Continue to Identify, Assess, and Update the List of Buildings and Spaces in Excelsior that have a Special Historical, Community, or Other Interest or Value (e.g., "Scenic Byways" project)

Mayor Gaylord said this ties into the scenic byways project and asked what the feedback is from everyone. Mayor Gaylord thinks it makes sense, but the negatives he has heard is that there will be too many people from out of town and too much traffic. Beattie said it will increase business. Commissioner Finch said there are many ideas of what it may be like and said the HPC will be giving a presentation about the project to the Council sometime in May. Commissioner Bolles said it's good to plan and be proactive to see what the Council has in mind for Excelsior. Mayor Gaylord and Beattie agreed and said to keep this item on the list.

- 12) Explore Grant Funding to Beautify Oak Hill Cemetery

Commissioner Finch asked if the Council or any other commission have plans in regards to this item. Luger said the gambling proceeds are being designated to the cemetery and decisions are pending on whether those proceeds should be designated to another fund. Mayor Gaylord asked why we want to change the designation of the gambling money. Luger said beautifying the cemetery is one of the Council's goals.

Commissioner Bolles said that restoration was looked at several years ago for some of the monuments that needed to be put back together. He said some of the stones needed to be restraightened before they tipped over, especially the larger ones.

Beattie asked if there is an active cemetery association. Luger said there is one in existence but they dissolved and never transferred the cemetery over to the City. Luger said staff is in process of getting the land transferred. Luger said the City has two out of three parcels claimed, but the part with the 810 Excelsior Boulevard building needs to be split in half so the cemetery would end naturally and the rest of the land would be the parking lot. Beattie said it may take a judicial action or charitable trust and an order from the Hennepin County District Court for transferring ownership at some point or to give the City charitable control over it.

3. JOINT WORK SESSION WITH THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION -  
*Continued*

12) Explore Grant Funding to Beautify Oak Hill Cemetery - *Continued*

Mayor Gaylord said this item should include direction on what the Council wants to see in regards to the cemetery and also the gambling funds designation.

Beattie said it makes sense to include the restoration of monuments. Commissioner Bolles said the rock retaining walls were put in to hold the dirt back. Luger said the Council discussed the fencing and entrance gate in the past. Luger said there is no privacy and that a fence and entrance gate would create a sense of place for the property. Commissioner Bolles said the railing from the old bridge was saved and could become part of a fence along the cemetery.

13) Create a Foundation for Effective Preservation Education and Activism

14) Continue the Education of HPC Members in Historic Preservation Issues, Conservation Districts, SHPO, and Natural Resources Related to Preservation

15) Discuss With the School Board the Potential and Benefits of Locating the Old High School on the National Register or Local Register

Mayor Gaylord said the school district was considering this. Commissioner Finch said there was discussion with them at the School Board level. He said two or three board members were interested. Commissioner Finch said they did a great job on the Cafenadium and matched the historic look of the building. Commissioner Brabec said the mascot for the school was the Blue Jays prior to them being Skippers and that the Blue Jay is included in the new floor.

Commissioner Finch said there is limited time to accomplish all of the goals. Commissioner Brabec asked about hiring an intern. Luger said there isn't enough money in the budget for an intern. Luger said she tried to get someone to do a project as a graduate thesis, but had trouble finding anyone interested. Luger said if building permit levels are down, Smith will have more time to dedicate to the HPC. Smith said he would like to ask the HPC to prioritize their goal list and the top seven items will become his workload for the next year. Mayor Gaylord suggested five, instead of seven, items. Commissioner Bolles thanked Luger and the City Council for hiring Smith and said this was a very good choice.

Beattie asked what the building permit level is now. Smith said there are one or two mechanical, plumbing or building permits a day. Smith said that just this year, there have been three new homes.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Miller moved, Beattie seconded, to adjourn at 6:56 p.m. Motion carried 3/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Johnson  
City Clerk