

MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING,
Thursday, January 14, 2016 @ 4:30 p.m.
Training Room, City Hall, 101 First Street SE

Members Present: Amanda McKnight-Grafton Chair
Todd McNall
Bob Grafton
Ron Mussman
Tim Oberbroeckling
Mark Stoffer Hunter
Barb Westercamp
Pat Cargin
Caitlin Hartman

Members Absent: Sam Bergus
BJ Hobart

City Staff: Jeff Hintz, Planner
Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director
Bill Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director
Kevin Ciabatti, Building Services Director
Anne Kroll, Administrative Assistant II

Call Meeting to Order

- Amanda McKnight Grafton called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.
- Nine (9) Commissioners were present with two (2) absent.

1. Public Comment

- No public comment

Item 3 was considered next.

3. Approve Meeting Minutes

- Barb Westercamp made a motion to approve the minutes from December 10, 2015. Tim Oberbroeckling seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Action Items

a) National Register Nomination

i. Sinclair Building (Smulekoffs Furniture Store) 97 3rd Avenue SE

- Jeff Hintz stated that the nomination is being pursued by the future property owner. The City currently owns the property but there is a development agreement moving forward. Documentation information indicates Criteria A is applicable. Criteria A states “That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of

our history”. Staff recommendation is for the Commission to concur with the NRHP documentation Criteria A is the most appropriate for this structure and to recommend to Council and SHPO that the structure be added to NRHP.

- Amanda McKnight Grafton asked if the future owner has permission to apply for the National Register. Jeff Hintz stated that it is part of the initial agreement for the future owner to apply.
- Mark Stoffer Hunter provided some history on the building.
- Bob Grafton asked what should be done if the narrative on the building is not accurate. Jeff Hintz stated that any corrections should be sent to staff so that staff can send those corrections on to the State. Mark Stoffer Hunter will do historic proofing on the document to catch any mistakes.
- Tim Oberbroeckling made a motion to approve the staff recommendation to concur with the NRHP documentation that Criteria A is the most appropriate for this structure and to recommend to Council and SHPO that the structure be added to NRHP. Barb Westercamp seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Section 106 Review – Iowa Theater Building 102 3rd Street SE

- Jeff Hintz stated that this was initiated by the Iowa DOT and this is an invitation for the Commission to comment. The project removes the existing connection between the Iowa Theatre Building and the parking garage to the south. There will be construction of a new walkway along the south side of the building. Mr. Hintz shared a plan view of the project along with the renderings of the new walkway. The proposal conditions from the Iowa DOT are consultation with SHPO on the project and following the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation Historic Buildings along with care to avoid replacement of character defining features. If replacement is necessary, SHPO will be consulted. Staff’s recommendation is to make comment that the project scope and conditions as outlined be followed as described.

Todd McNall arrived at the meeting at 4:50 p.m.

- Tim Oberbroeckling asked if the new walkway is free standing or connected to the building. Kevin Vrchoticky, Civil Engineer and project manager with the City of Cedar Rapids, stated that it is not connected to the building.
- Bob Grafton asked if the alley will be vacated for this structure. Mr. Vrchoticky stated that it will be built at the edge of the alley with the intent that traffic could still go through the alley.
- Amanda McKnight asked how the Iowa Theater Building will be restored after the existing connection is demolished. Tim Roach, from Shive-Hattery, stated that brick will be put up to match as closely as possible with the existing brick.
- Mark Stoffer Hunter stated that he is excited for this project as it will connect the skywalk system and made a motion to approve the project scope as described, but to note the comment that the brick match the existing brick as closely as possible. Tim Oberbroeckling seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Election of Officers for 2016

- Jeff Hintz stated that, according to the by-laws, the Commission will need to elect a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary at the first meeting of the year for the next calendar year. The current Chair is Amanda McKnight Grafton, the current Vice Chair is Todd McNall, and the current Secretary is Bob Grafton.

- Tim Oberbroeckling made a motion to re-elect Amanda McKnight Grafton as Chair, Todd McNall as Vice Chair, and Bob Grafton as Secretary. Barb Westercamp seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. New Business

a) 2015 Certified Local Government Report

- Jeff Hintz stated that these reports are done every year and the purpose of the report is that it makes SHPO aware of Commission/Staff activities, provides a summary of the 2015 year, highlights changes to historic structures and districts, and includes a summary of Commissioners. Any changes or additions the Commissioners have need to be submitted to staff by January 26, 2016. The CLG report will be presented to City Council for approval.
- Ron Mussman stated that the Knutson Building discussions should be added to number eight (8) in the report.
- Bob Grafton stated that the initiative to revamp Chapter 18 should be added to the report.

Jennifer Pratt arrived at the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

b) Discussion of Potential Local Historic in the 3rd Street & 16th Avenue SE Area

- Bill Micheel shared the background for this item:
 - June 2015: Meeting with City staff and representatives of the Czech Village/New Bohemia Main Street District
 - November 2015: Request from Commissioner for input from the Commission
- Mr. Micheel shared the eight (8) steps to creating a Local Historic District
 - 1) cursory survey to determine potential eligibility – *Citywide Survey, November 2014*
 - 2) Outreach and buy in from stakeholders and community groups
 - 3) Intensive Survey and Research of an area identified as potentially historic to:
 - a. Identify District Boundaries
 - b. Develop Site Inventory Forms
 - c. Identify Contributing and non-Contributing Properties
 - 4) Signatures of 51% of property owners within proposed historic district – includes outreach
 - 5) Review and recommendation by HPC
 - 6) Review of intensive survey and district boundaries by State Historic Preservation Office
 - 7) Review and recommendation of proposed district by City Planning Commission
 - 8) Public hearing and possible introduction of an ordinance by City Council
- Mr. Micheel reviewed the issues to consider
 - Historic Preservation Plan:
 - Two main initiatives identified by the Commission include: 1) Update to Chapter 18, and 2) Update to the Guidelines for Cedar Rapids Historic Districts
 - Prioritizing areas identified for intensive survey is scheduled to commence within 2-3 years of Plan adoption
 - Outreach to Property Owners:
 - Current update to Chapter 18 complicates outreach
 - City staff cannot accurately provide information to property owners until Chapter 18 and Guidelines are updated

- Multiple planning efforts going on in the area:
 - Creation of SSMID
 - Update to Overlay District
 - Existing Reviewing Body:
 - DRTAC makes recommendations on the exterior design of new structures within the existing Czech Bohemia Overlay District
- Todd McNall asked what the update to the Overlay District is. Jennifer Pratt stated that the biggest update is a change in the boundary is proposed. The other updates add more clarification. The MedQ had hired a consultant to help them with a master planning process and they had much more specific areas of consideration for those design elements. Staff liked the way this was approached and so staff took that model to the NewBo Czech Village Overlay group and they went through a process on what applied to their district and what did not and used that as a template. Todd McNall asked what the boundary change was. Jennifer Pratt stated that it takes out the single family residential area. Already in the overlay ordinance it does not apply to single family residential so this was a way to remove them from the overlay.
- Mr. Micheel stated that staff is committed to working with the HPC and others on the creation of new local districts. Staff recommends completing the following two initiatives in the Historic Preservation Plan prior to pursuing a new local historic district designation: the Chapter 18 Update and the update to the Guidelines.
- Todd McNall discussed what the boundaries could be for the Local Historic District as well as who in the area is interested. Mr. McNall also discussed the possibility of a Conservation District. Mr. McNall stated that it will have to be figured out how a Local Historic District will intermesh with DRTAC Guidelines.
- The Commission discussed contributing and noncontributing properties in the area as well as what happens if someone is not interested in being a part of the Local Historic District.
- Amanda McKnight Grafton asked if the property owners in this potential Local Historic District could be invited to the public outreach for Chapter 18 update. Jeff Hintz stated that they are already included in the distribution list for those outreach events. B Avenue and Auto Row property owners have also been included.

Bill Micheel left the meeting at 5:27 p.m.

- Todd McNall stated that the current Local Historic District Ordinance does not include any guidelines for commercial structures. For this specific area we could adopt the existing guidelines that are in place for DRTAC. Jeff Hintz stated that staff does want to include guidelines for commercial structures.
- The Commission agreed with staff's recommendation to wait until the updates to Chapter 18 and the Guidelines are finished before creating a new local district.

c) **Discussion of Commission Meeting Format and Procedures**

- Jeff Hintz shared the background for this discussion.
 - January 4, 2016:
 - HPC Chapter 18 Update Sub-Committee discussed ways to streamline Commission meetings
 - Sub-Committee requested input from the full Commission
- Mr. Hintz shared some possible opportunities to streamline the meetings:

- Run Meetings Similar to CPC:
 - CPC follows a structured process that could be replicated for COAs and demo review:
 - Chairperson announces the agenda item and acknowledges City staff
 - City staff presents the project
 - Chairperson acknowledges applicant who is provided 5 minutes to speak
 - Commission discussion, which may include questions to the staff and applicant
 - Commission Etiquette:
 - Wait to speak until acknowledged by the Chairperson
 - Raise your hand to let the Chairperson know you have a comment
 - Announcements:
 - Every HPC agenda includes an opportunity for Commission members and staff to share good news and provide quick updates
 - Comments should be restricted to announcements only
 - Commission can only discuss items that are specifically listed on the agenda
 - Focus Discussion of Demos & COAs:
 - Demolition review should focus on determination of historic significance
 - COA discussions should focus on whether the proposal is consistent with the design guidelines
- The Commission liked the idea of having a structured process like CPC does. They also liked the idea of not bantering with the applicants and not having sidebar conversations and interrupting each other.
 - Amanda McKnight Grafton asked what to do when the Commission has a lot of questions for the applicant. Jeff Hintz suggested having the Chair collect the questions and then ask the applicant to answer them. If the Chair collects the questions it helps minimize repeated questions and interruptions.
 - Bob Grafton asked that staff strongly suggest that the applicant bring pictures of the project because that would expedite HPC's recommendation.
 - Todd McNall stated that the Commission should not be asked to choose between options. It is the Commission's role to look at one thing and decide if it is appropriate or not.
 - Bob Grafton suggested setting up the tables differently at meetings so that everyone can be seen by each other and the Chair.
 - Jeff Hintz stated that staff will work with the Commission to make the changes to the format of meetings and the table set up for the meetings.

6. Knutson Building Update

- Jennifer Pratt stated that City Council authorized stabilization based on the cost estimate of \$167,500. Staff was able to use emergency measures to go out and find a contractor without the RFP process. Staff contacted Ryan Companies and they are not willing to stabilize due to environmental hazards. Asbestos is the big issue. RDG gave the cost estimates and their estimate did not take into account asbestos. Staff then contacted ECCO Midwest and they are not willing to abate environmental hazards due to structural issues and an unsafe environment. Preliminary clean-up of the building would cost around \$370,000 in addition to the \$167,500 for stabilization. Ryan Companies has given staff contacts for specialized contractors that may be able to both abate and stabilize at the same time. There is no additional information at this time. Since there is no one local

that can do this it will cost a significant amount of money. There is someone local who is interested in the building and if they have a contractor who wants to do a walkthrough staff will let them into the building.

- Ron Mussman asked if it makes sense now to go out for bids to find the contractor to do both the abatement and stabilization. Ms. Pratt stated staff cannot put a bid out because only \$167,500 has been authorized by City Council.
- The Commission discussed some ideas for keeping the façade of the building and demolishing the rest, as well as saving exterior walls and gutting the inside. Amanda McKnight Grafton shared examples of saved façades in other communities.
- Ron Mussman asked why there has not been a Section 106 discussion on this property. Jennifer Pratt stated that the 106 review is triggered by a federally funded project. The City does not have a federally funded Flood Control System project on the west side of the river. The Knutson Building would not be demolished because of the Flood Control System. There is an alignment that works with the Knutson Building being saved that is not yet final.
- Ron Mussman discussed Section 110 K that deals with anticipatory demolitions and neglect of eligible properties in order to avoid compliance. Mr. Mussman would like clarification on this. Jennifer Pratt stated that staff will work on getting something back to the Commission on Section 110 K.
- Tim Oberbroeckling asked how the money will be raised for the Knutson Building in the time period given. Jennifer Pratt stated that the stabilization has been delayed due to the asbestos issue. If stabilization can be done, staff will take the project back to Council to update the entire timeline including the fundraising. There are people interested in the fundraising. It was not Council's intention for the fundraising component to be HPC's responsibility. The first priority here is to get the cost estimates for the abatement and stabilization.
- The Commission discussed some possible contacts that could help with the Knutson Building. Staff will follow up with these contacts once contact information is received.
- Ron Mussman stated that the CLG Report highly encourages cities to fund their HPC organizations and asked if staff has submitted anything for this budget year. Jennifer Pratt stated that staff has submitted a request, but it has not been submitted to Council yet and noted that this is also a recommendation in the Historic Preservation Plan.

Jennifer Pratt left the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

7. MOA/LOA Project Updates

- Jeff Hintz stated that the GIS Database has launched.
- Jeff Hintz stated that the National Register Nominations for the Downtown District, Harper and McIntire Building, and St. James United Methodist Church were listed.
- Jeff Hintz stated that Ed McMahan from the Urban Planning Institute will be in Cedar Rapids on February 4, 2016 at the library to discuss creating successful communities.

8. Announcements

- There were no announcements.

9. Adjournment

- Todd McNall made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Tim Oberbroeckling seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anne Kroll, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development