

City of Excelsior
Heritage Preservation Commission
Minutes
Tuesday, August 19, 2014

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

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

Present: Bipes, Bolles, Brabec, Macpherson, Schmidt

Absent: Finch, Nelson

Also Present: City Planner Smith, Advisor Caron, Planner Richards, City Attorney Staunton

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting of July 22, 2014

It was moved by Bolles, seconded by Bipes, to continue approval of minutes from several recent meetings to the next meeting. Approved unanimously.

4. CITIZEN REPORTS or COMMENTS

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Hennepin County Monument Sign

Smith stated that this item is on the agenda for information only. Monument signage for the new library was previously approved by the HPC in 2012. Hennepin County is now coming back with a formal sign permit and the sign will be internally lit. Staff has determined that the backlit sign is considered to be grandfathered, even though an ordinance has since been passed by the Council that prohibits backlit signs. The County had proposed LED lights that will be illuminated behind the plastic sign face.

b. Site Alteration Permit for Exterior Alterations – 200 Second Street

Smith stated that Kathy and Dennis Brand, the owners of the home at 200 Second Street, are proposing adding a deck on the southwest corner of the house. The proposal would remove the rear concrete stairs and add 3 windows to the back of the residence, as well as a sliding glass door to access the new deck.

Smith reviewed the applicable ordinance standards and his report concluded that the historic character of the house will be preserved as the deck is minimal in size, does not destroy any historic features of the property, the new trim will match the existing trim, the alterations could be removed in the future without damaging the historic structure, and the style of new windows will be compatible with the existing style. The addition of the deck on the rear to minimize its visibility from the street further makes the proposal appropriate under the applicable standards of review. Staff is recommending approval.

Schmidt stated that he is the immediately adjacent neighbor, and is in favor of the proposal. Commissioners commented that the proposal seems appropriate and in keeping with the character of the historic home. It was moved by Bolles, seconded by Macpherson, to approve the Site Alteration Permit as presented. Approved unanimously.

c. Planned Unit Development General Plan and Site Alteration Permit for Construction of a Building at 400 Water Street -- Mason Motors Site

Richards stated that the PUD concept plan had been previously reviewed by the Commission, and that the HPC should confine its formal permit review to the new 400 Water Street building. He stated that the plans for the building have been changed to reflect the comments provided by the Commission.

A soldier course of brick has been added on the north side of the building, and the front parapet height along Water Street will be 43-1/2 inches above the roof patio surface so that a railing will not be required under the building code. The issue of a roof patio was discussed by the City Council at a recent meeting and was determined to be acceptable on the condition that all furniture and other patio objects must not be visible from the street. Landscaping has been added to the north side of the building and the new site plan has a relocated dumpster enclosure. Site lighting fixtures will be standard globe-type fixtures with glare shields installed and a photometric footcandle at .04 at the property line. Staff is recommending as conditions to any approval that the building must be substantially similar to the plan presented and any roof furniture should not be visible from streets or sidewalks.

Bolles stated that he was concerned about the lights, which are proposed to be LED and not yellow high pressure sodium like elsewhere in the downtown, and that the LED lights will be too blue/white and create glare. Richards stated that the Planning Commission is also concerned about light quality on the project. Schmidt asked that the overall site lighting not be discussed as it is beyond the jurisdiction of the Commission. Bolles stated that the objective of the request for dumpster relocation is to move it away from the home on the adjacent property. Macpherson stated that he believes that the dumpster location is also beyond the HPC's jurisdiction, unless the concern relates to its appearance.

The Commission asked about the orientation of the building perpendicular to Water Street, which is contrary to the City's downtown planning goals. Staunton read from the

2012 resolution regarding the previous proposal for the site and noted that the Commission had included a statement of concern about this aspect of the proposal in 2012 and it could be added to this resolution as well. Macpherson stated that he believes it should be included. Staunton added the statement as paragraph 8 to the draft resolution. Staunton also explained the draft resolution and recommended several revisions, and noted that the draft carries over many of the same findings from the 2012 version except that the proposed new building is described as two story with a set back along Water Street. The ordinance new construction standards for compatibility should relate to those in the historic district across George Street and diagonally across Water Street, which have a variety of roof treatments. Regarding the guideline that decks should be kept to the rear and integrated into the design of the building, staff construes this guideline to refer to decks jutting out from buildings like fire escapes and balconies, and not rooftop patios, and the purpose of the guideline is to prevent such structural elements from projecting out of the front elevation of the historic building. He recommended that any approval adopt Planner Richard's conditions from the staff report.

It was moved by Macpherson, seconded by Bipes, to approve the draft resolution as presented and amended. Approved unanimously. Macpherson stated that the City Council needs to determine policy direction for rooftop patios, dealing not just with visual clutter but also regulate potential noise and behavior issues. He requested that staff relay this concern to the Council and ask that it be addressed. Staunton noted that there was a lengthy discussion at a recent Council meeting of a related point.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. HPC Review of PUD

Smith recommended that this item be continued to the next meeting. It was moved by Macpherson, seconded by Bipes, to continue this item. Approved unanimously.

8. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

a. Site Alteration Permits Administratively Approved

None

b. Scenic Byway

Schmidt reported that the committee has taken the position that all Lake cities must agree to proceed to explore the byway, and recently cities such as Orono, Greenwood and Deephaven stated that they did not wish to participate. Some kind of Lake Minnetonka marketing promotion might still be possible. Macpherson and Bolles stated that other cities might still pursue some kind of initiative and they believed that Excelsior should continue to be involved. The Commission expressed interest in hearing from Finch if he has anything to add from his attendance at the committee meetings. It was

moved by Macpherson, seconded by Bolles, to continue to pursue this item and to continue discussion to a future meeting. Approved unanimously.

c. Liaison for Planning Commission Meeting -- September 3, 2014

Bolles agreed to attend and encouraged others to attend as well.

d. Next Meeting – Tuesday, September 16, 2014

9. MISCELLANEOUS/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

a. Recent City Council Actions

Smith reported that the City received a letter from the hotel developer who still hopes to move forward in the next 90 days. The Martin's addition was discussed, and it was a very difficult decision for the Council, with two council members in favor of the compromise, another unclear as to whether 1 foot vs. 15 feet setback is preferable, resulting in a 3-2 vote to approve the compromise, which did not pass. The Council then voted to uphold the staff appeal and overturn the HPC decision, which was approved 4-1. The Council is considering a moratorium on rooftop additions and establishment of a task force to develop standards for rooftop additions. Smith stated that he is pursuing a grant for the City's preservation guidelines to be updated with more illustrations and diagrams to clarify the language.

The Commission asked about the process for National Register nomination for the downtown. Smith stated that it would be a two step process, with an eligibility study that Hess Roise estimates would cost about \$7,000, followed by SHPO review of the national register designation, and if the review is positive, the City could apply for a Legacy Fund grant for the formal application, which would cost about \$35,000. The City could seek a matching grant. Schmidt asked the City Attorney whether the City could recoup costs from building owners for tax credits received to pay the cost of getting listed on the Register. Staunton was not sure. Smith stated that there is no downside to National Register designation. Bolles asked whether the City could seek sequential grants to cover more of the cost. Smith stated that the grant terms would require identifying where the other funds would come from. It was moved by Macpherson, seconded by Bolles, to direct staff to explore obtaining a grant for an eligibility study for National Register nomination of the downtown historic district. Approved unanimously.

9. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Macpherson, seconded by Bipes, to adjourn. Approved unanimously. Adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Tim Caron
Recording Secretary

