

City of Excelsior
Hennepin County, Minnesota

MINUTES
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

JANUARY 27, 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: Bolles, Brabec, Finch, Macpherson, Nelson and Schmidt

Commissioners Absent: None

Also Present: City Planner Smith and Advisor Caron

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Heritage Preservation Commission Special Meeting of December 22, 2014

Commissioner Bolles moved, Commissioner Macpherson seconded, to approve the Minutes as presented. Motion carried 6/0.

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

Brabec and Nelson proposed to amend the minutes to state that they would arrange for cookies and coffee, not that they would bring cookies and coffee to the Open House.

Commissioner Bolles moved, Commissioner Macpherson seconded, to approve the Minutes as amended. Motion carried 5/0/1, with Finch abstaining.

4. CITIZEN REPORTS OR COMMENTS

None

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) Public Comment at Special HPC Meetings

Smith stated that the HPC's by-laws govern the order of business at its meetings, and while the by-laws provide for public comment at the Commission's regular meetings, they are silent on whether at a special meeting the Commission will take public comment. Following the last special HPC meeting, it was suggested that comments should also be permitted at a special meeting. The City Attorney stated that Robert's Rules of Order do not require public comment at any meeting, so it is up to the Commission to decide whether public comments should be allowed.

Schmidt questioned whether the by-laws should state explicitly that no public comments should be permitted at special meetings. Finch stated that he thought that the Commission should allow limited public comment when it is relevant to the topic of the meeting, and in the case of a special meeting, the public may be recognized at the discretion of the Chair. Schmidt provided context for his decision

to limit public comment at the special meeting with HPC consultant Zahn, who was being paid for his time attending the meeting, and the purpose of the meeting was limited to introducing the consultant to the HPC and allowing for HPC questions regarding the scope of work.

Macpherson stated that the Commission should encourage public input, but any comments should be brief, and if the input requires more extensive discussion, the Commission should determine whether the matter is appropriate to be placed on a future meeting agenda. Schmidt stated that he felt that the comments made at the special meeting were out of order and not relevant to the topic being discussed. Bolles suggested that the Commission could duplicate what the Council does in terms of allowing time-limited comments on non-agenda items.

It was determined that Commissioners Finch and Macpherson would work with staff on by-laws language concerning public comments for consideration at a future meeting.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) Heritage Preservation Commission Review of Planned Unit Development Applications - continued

Smith stated that the Planning Commission had reviewed and recommended approval of the revised PUD ordinance, which reflected the previous comments of the HPC, which were edited into their final form by Finch. Schmidt complimented Finch on the wording changes. Finch noted that there were several substantive changes that he would recommend making to the revised draft ordinance to alert applicants to specific HPC submission requirements. In Section 65-6, subparagraph 7, the application should provide "elevation drawings of the proposed and existing buildings adjacent to the proposed development, as well as the planned materials, signage and colors of the exterior of the proposed building." In Section 65-7, the general plan phase should require "representative elevations and/or photographs illustrative of the scale, perspective and proportion of the adjacent buildings along with the color and types of materials used in the exterior of those buildings." The Commission discussed the importance of perspective drawings of adjacent buildings in the HPC review process and the acceptability of properly scaled photographs as an alternative to elevation drawings, as long as they provide an accurate perspective of the proposed scale, proportion and colors of the proposed and existing adjacent buildings.

Commissioner Finch moved, Commissioner Nelson seconded, to include these revisions to the ordinance in Sections 65-6 and 65-7. Motion carried 6/0.

7. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

a) Historic Preservation Ordinance Steering Committee

Smith stated that the Steering Committee met the previous Thursday and discussed the ramifications of a National Register Historic District designation and the display boards to be used for the public Open House to be held at the open space in the former library building on Thursday, February 26. The Open House would allow interested persons to visit the displays anytime between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to provide comments. The proposed communication plan would include mailing postcards to residents, flyers distributed through the Chamber of Commerce, a City website notice, and posted signs. Smith stated that he is preparing numerous

information boards that will be displayed on easels.

Macpherson stated that the Steering Committee meetings to date have been rather short, and that consultant Tom Zahn is getting more information on the National Register district designation process. Schmidt commented that the district nomination work would cost approximately \$12-15,000, plus \$10,000 for preparation of the application, and there is the prospect that this work could be done entirely by grants at no cost to the City and might allow for tax credits to be obtained for recent projects that qualify. Nelson stated that she would like to quantify the value of the tax credits for the historic district overall, or in the case of a specific example.

Smith stated that the Open House displays would be as simple as possible, but that there would be handouts available with more detail, and could include information on tax credits. For the National Register application, 51% of the affected property owners would need to be in favor of the district designation, and Smith suggested that the National Register district boundaries should be addressed. Zahn will recommend a new proposed boundary for the district, which could distinguish between the locally-designated district vs. the National Register district, as they can have different boundaries. Smith stated that he plans to consult with the City's expert on what district boundaries would be most likely to achieve National Register status.

Commissioner Finch moved, Commissioner Macpherson seconded, that the Scenic Byway item be removed from future agendas as a standing Communications and Reports item. Motion carried 6/0.

- b) Site Alteration Permits Approved Administratively
- c) Next Planning Commission Meeting – February 9, 2015
- d) Next City Council Meeting – February 2, 2015
- e) Next HPC Meeting – Tuesday, February 24, 2015

8. MISCELLANEOUS / COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

- a) Recent City Council Actions

Smith reported that the City Council had approved an amendment to the Planning Commission's design standards to require that all parking lots must be set back 50 feet from the front property line to encourage buildings along Water Street and parking behind. The Council also approved a concept plan for a PUD for 18 townhomes to be constructed behind the Excelsior Mill by Bill Stoddard. The Mill site will be replatted as a separate parcel and is located within the downtown historic district, whereas the PUD area is not. Tom Zahn also met with the Council and staff, and the City submitted a new grant application in January for the HPC Ordinance work, and hopes to hear back on the grant in February.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Nelson moved, Commissioner Macpherson seconded, to adjourn at 8:25 p.m. Motion carried 6/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Caron
Recording Secretary