

City of Excelsior
Heritage Preservation Commission
Minutes
Tuesday, January 26, 2010

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Barnard called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Barnard, Howell, Meyer, Mueller, Roden, Sanders

Commissioners Absent: Reid

Also Present: City Planner Fuchs, Advisor Caron

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting of December 22, 2009

It was moved by Commissioner Roden, seconded by Commissioner Meyer, to approve the minutes as written. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. CITIZEN REPORTS or COMMENTS

None.

4. MISCELLANEOUS/COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

a. Recent City Council Actions

Fuchs reported on recent City Council matters, including changes to the City's utility billing for water and sewer services, referral to the Planning Commission for action on the Parking Task Force Report conclusions, discussion of residential dock rates, and annual advisory committee appointments.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Site Alteration Permit for Signage at 436 Second Street — Chuck Gross

Fuchs indicated that he expected the applicant to attend the meeting to discuss the signage plan for the site. It was moved by Commissioner Sanders, seconded by Commissioner Roden, to table this item until the representative for the applicant arrived. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. NEW BUSINESS

b. Paperless Agenda Packets

Fuchs reported that the Commission's agendas and packets would now be distributed by electronic mail (pdfs), but that a paper copy could be requested by those without access to a computer.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Administrative Approval of Signage

The Commission discussed the intent and wording of the proposed policy, which allows the HPC to delegate to staff the authority to review certain signs rather than refer them to the Commission. The Commission expressed support for an administrative policy that grants staff the authority to administratively review and approve projecting signs that are similar in nature to those found compatible with signs approved in the past, but staff must refer signs that are not compatible to the Commission for review and discussion. In the draft policy, the reference to awnings requiring Commission approval in all cases should be deleted or amended and awnings should be added to the list of signs that may be administratively approved, as long as the awning replacement is substantially similar in size, color, style, material, wording, and typography to the awning to be replaced.

The Commission determined that it would like to further consider a revised signage policy draft at its next meeting that makes the following revisions: delete the reference to Planning Commission and Council action, as these fall outside the scope of the Commission review; delete the reference to review of all awnings and add awning replacement (with the conditions listed above) to the types of signs that may qualify for administrative approval; add removable stencils on windows to the types of signs that may be administratively approved; add signs where placement of message has been previously approved by the Commission to the list of signs that may be administratively approved (for further consideration by the HPC); and change "backlit" to "lit" in signs requiring Commission review.

The revised Administrative Policy should also add that staff will report to the Commission monthly on all administrative approvals, per the draft policy in the prior meeting minutes. Fuchs agreed to revise the policy to make these changes for consideration at the next meeting.

It was moved by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, to continue this item to the next meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

b. Color Palette Policy

The Commission discussed the draft policy contained in the previous meeting minutes, as follows:

“Administrative approval may be granted by City staff for repainting in historic districts or sites and may allow use of historic palettes to be available at City Hall as guidance for appropriate historic colors for illustrative use, but the applicants should still pick colors compatible with the period of the structure at issue or the surrounding historic district. Acceptable colors may include the entire color blocks of historic colors, not just those depicted in the color folder. The HPC ordinance requirements shall still apply — e.g., paint should not be applied to unpainted masonry surfaces, the manner of application should be compatible with the historic resource and surrounding historic district structures, the paint should not cover or obscure historic features, and the Commission reserves the ability to review and provide guidance on appropriate paint colors for projects that otherwise come before it for review. This policy does not authorize approval of application of new coverings other than paint, such as stucco or plaster, even if subsequently painted. Staff will report each month and provide an illustration or description of any repainting that has been administratively approved since the last Commission meeting.”

After discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Sanders, to adopt the foregoing policy as Administrative Policy No. HPC-01. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Site Alteration Permit for Signage at 436 Second Street — Chuck Gross

It was then moved and seconded to return discussion of Item 5.a. from the table. Fuchs reported that he had reached Mr. Gross and he was not able to attend the meeting. Mr. Gross has agreed to work with his tenants in the building to make sure that all signage is compliant with City requirements. Fuchs stated that all of the signs placed on the property have been placed illegally over approximately the past 10 years, and no permits have been applied for or granted by the City. Fuchs presented a matrix describing the existing signage and is working with the applicant to confirm that the signage meets City sign requirements.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Site Alteration Permit for Signage at 436 Second Street — Chuck Gross -
(Continued)

The Commission reviewed the matrix that staff compiled and provided with the staff report. The Commission could not determine which signage was proposed to be retained or removed. Fuchs stated that the proposed signage for the building exceeds City Code requirements and would need to be reduced in some way. The Commission discussed continuing the matter to the next meeting, but Fuchs noted that the submission date of the Site Alteration Permit was January 4, 2010, so without a special meeting the date for Commission action would expire before the next HPC meeting.

It was moved by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Meyer, to deny the Site Alteration Permit application for signage, based on the following findings:

1. The proposed signage plan exceeds the maximum allowable signage per City Code
2. Five of the nine proposed locations may not be permitted by the City's sign code, which results in an incomplete application for HPC review.
3. The signs on the porch fascia obscure the woodwork, which is an architectural feature of the building; and
4. Certain signs are visible on the roof plane, which is not compatible with HPC ordinance standards.

The Commission directed the applicant to resubmit for review when a signage plan meeting City sign code requirements has been submitted. The motion was unanimously approved.

7. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

a. Update on Designation of 441 Oak Street, Excelsior Elementary School

Barnard reported that she had not had any recent contact with representatives of the School District. She noted that the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota had suggested making a presentation to the Minnetonka School Board. Sanders also mentioned that an Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society presentation is scheduled in March regarding the history of the Minnetonka schools that might present an opportunity for community education and input.

7. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

- a. Update on Designation of 441 Oak Street, Excelsior Elementary School -
(Continued)

It was moved by Commissioner Howell, seconded by Commissioner Mueller, to continue this item to the next meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

- b. 2009 Commission Goals and Objectives

The Commission reviewed its goals and objectives in preparation for its 2010 goal setting session. Caron presented comments on the draft ordinance summary circulated by Barnard at the previous meeting along with a detailed matrix of citations, showing that both the old and new versions of the ordinance summary do not conflict with the HPC ordinance.

8. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commissioner Mueller, seconded by Commissioner Meyer, to adjourn. The motion was unanimously approved. Adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Becca Sanders
Secretary