

City of Excelsior  
Heritage Preservation Commission

Minutes

Tuesday, March 22, 2011

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. OATH OF OFFICE – Steve Finch and Dan Roden

Mayor Ruehl administered the Oath of Office to Commissioners Finch and Roden.

3. ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Bipes, Bolles, Finch, Meyer, Mueller, Roden, and Chair Sanders

Also Present: City Planner Fuchs, City Attorney Staunton, and City Clerk Johnson

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting of February 23, 2011

Commissioner Finch moved, Commissioner Mueller seconded, to approve the Minutes from the Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting of February 23, 2011 as presented. Motion carried 7/0.

5. CITIZEN REPORTS or COMMENTS

None

Commissioner Finch moved, Commissioner Bolles seconded, to move Item 8(a) up on the agenda, followed by Items 7(a) and (b), and then Item 6(a). Motion carried 7/0.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Site Alteration Permit for Exterior Alterations at 229 Water Street – Joseph Reger

Kathy Anderson, Architectural Consortium, the architect for the project, reviewed the changes that were made to the plans since the Commission's February 23, 2011 meeting. Commissioners stated that they liked the changes.

Commissioner Bolles moved, Commissioner Roden seconded, to approve the Site Alteration Permit as presented at the March 22, 2011 meeting.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Site Alteration Permit for Exterior Alterations at 229 Water Street – Joseph Reger - (Continued)

Finch suggested the following findings-of-fact and conditions be added to the motion. Commissioners Bolles and Roden amended their motion to include the following:

Conditions

1. Changes described in paragraph 1 of the March 15, 2011 Staff Memo will be included in the final design. The Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) approves the following changes:
  - a. Restoration and retention of the original window above the office entryway
  - b. The upper story windows will be double hung with two glass panes each
2. Changes described in paragraph 2 of the March 15, 2011 Staff Memo will be included in the final design. The HPC approves the following changes:
  - a. The proposed metal canopy over the entrance to the second floor
  - b. Staining of the brick on the base of the façade to match the color of the other brick on the front of the building
  - c. Proposed light fixtures
  - d. The first floor windows will be constructed with wood frames
  - e. The upper floor window frames will be either wood clad or utilize a composite material that appears as wood
  - f. The transom windows shall be installed with separate glass panes and true mutton bar

Findings of Fact

1. The HPC met and considered the Site Alteration Permit at its February 23, 2011 meeting, utilizing the Staff Report of February 17, 2011. It recommended certain changes to the plans, which were incorporated in the revised plans presented on March 22, 2011.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Site Alteration Permit for Exterior Alterations at 229 Water Street – Joseph Reger - (Continued)

2. The proposed work is of a character and quality that maintains the distinguishing features of the building. The building's distinctive architectural features were retained.
3. The proposed work brings back the original character of the building.
4. The staining of the first floor bricks to match the original bricks is in character with bringing back the original character of the building.
5. The revised drawing attached to the March 15, 2011 Staff Memo reflects an appropriate proportion of the storefront transom windows to the storefront display windows.
6. The proposed renovation of this building contributes to the Downtown Historic District.

Bolles suggested that the plans have cross-hatching where the bricks are proposed to be stained, so there is no confusion as to what bricks will be stained.

Motion carried 7/0.

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. Sketch Plan for Galpin Lake Road Properties – Minnesota Inboard

Bill Wolfson, commercial realtor with Coldwell Banker, representing the owners of Minnesota Inboard, Joe and Pam Mueller, said that the HPC has a sketch plan of what is being proposed for the Galpin Lake properties. He said they have been working with City staff to provide a site plan that conforms to planning and zoning requirements. He noted that with this proposal, the existing structures will be removed. He said that he has been the realtor marketing the property that is for sale for some time, and this is the first and best viable use for this site.

Sanders said that she has looked at the minutes from 2008 when the Commission considered and denied a Site Alteration Permit to demolish the historic building. She said the minutes outline what information needs to be submitted for the demolition of a historic structure to be considered. She said she would forward those minutes to Wolfson to review.

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. Sketch Plan for Galpin Lake Road Properties – Minnesota Inboard – (Continued)

Bolles said the site has a significant slope and this proposal will require a relatively flat site. He asked if there will be enough space to build a retaining wall to hold back the hill. Wolfson said the engineering has not been done, but they think that it can be accomplished on the site. They are working with the contractor who did the Ridgeview Clinic site.

Mueller asked how this proposal compares in size with what is currently on the site. Sanders said that one of the drawings shows the existing buildings and another drawing shows the new building.

Mueller said the proposal is significantly larger than what is currently on the site. Wolfson said that they have met the zoning requirements, which is not to exceed 60% hardcover.

Sanders said that the entire site is historically designated, so anything done on the site will require approval of a Site Alteration Permit. Wolfson said that the City has someone who wants to keep their business in Excelsior. This is a family business that has historically been located in Excelsior.

Finch asked if there was any formal action that the HPC needs to take with regard to this agenda item. Staunton said that the City recently adopted a sketch plan process that applies to the City Council and the Planning Commission, but it doesn't apply to the HPC. The sketch plan process is intended to give an applicant informal feedback before they make a formal application.

Sanders said that the HPC would prefer to see the original structure stay and have it reused. The previous applicant did not provide any evidence that potential adaptive reuses of the site and structure were looked at or provide any factual basis that economic considerations had been analyzed.

Finch said the meetings were in August, September, and October of 2008. The HPC had approved an order and findings-of-fact at the October 2008 meeting. He agreed that it would be good for Wolfson to review the minutes from those meetings. He said it would also be good for Wolfson to review the sections from the City Code that the HPC would apply, which are Chapter 20 and Appendix E, Article 62 of the Zoning Code.

Sanders said there was some dispute on the age of the house; a local historian believes the house was built in 1850's. Wolfson said he could not come up with any findings to support the age of the structure and he does not want to dispute whether it is an historic house. The proposal helps the City get rid of a blighted site and also helps a business relocate to a new location within the City. In the

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. Sketch Plan for Galpin Lake Road Properties – Minnesota Inboard – (Continued)

two years he's been marketing the site, he has run into difficulties with ADA accessibility and fire code requirements. He does not believe it is practical to reuse the existing structure.

Finch said even if the age of the building is not taken into consideration, there are other issues that will need to be addressed. All of the items that are required will need to be addressed. Wolfson said they would prefer to have a larger building, but instead looked at a larger buffer to make it fit within the neighborhood. A significant amount of time has been spent looking at this site. It is not economical, viable, or possible to reuse the buildings.

Wolfson thanked the Commissioners for their time and comments. He said that he will review the minutes of the HPC meetings in 2008 as suggested.

b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library

Sanders stated the order of business for this agenda item, first the City Attorney will review the City Planner's report, then the architect and library representatives will give a presentation, and then the Commission will take comments from the public. She asked that comments be no more than 3 or 4 minutes and that people provide new information and not repeat what has already been stated.

Staunton said that the Commission has been provided with a Staff Report from City Planner Richards, the application itself with a narrative, and a memorandum and chart of the standards that the HPC has talked about in previous meetings from him. He said following the public comments, the Commission should ask any questions they have for staff or the applicant. The Commission should then discuss and define the area that the proposal shall be compatible with, which is a question somewhat unresolved. The HPC should then review the ten elements, examining each of the elements and discussing if the proposal is compatible with the surrounding area and adjacent properties. By the end of the meeting tonight, the HPC can continue this item to the April meeting and staff can draft the order and decision document from the findings that are identified this evening.

Bolles said assuming the HPC will not finish with this item tonight he thought there was discussion of having a second meeting on March 29<sup>th</sup> versus continuing this item to the April 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Staunton said the HPC can discuss if it wants to have an additional meeting, but it may make sense to wait until it gets to that part of the meeting.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

Lee Anderson, Hennepin County Property Services, Planning Project Manager, said the County has given a presentation to the HPC at a previous meeting and the County has also done similar presentations to the Planning Commission and City Council. He noticed that there are some members here tonight that weren't here at that time. He would suggest that they forgo the presentation this evening, as he knows that everyone has received the information.

Bolles said he thinks it would be good for the County to give a short presentation for the HPC and audience. He suggested that the presentation focus on the exterior since the HPC's regulations cover exterior, not interior.

Lois Thompson, Hennepin County Library Director, spoke about the importance of the building and the value it brings to the community. Hennepin County wants to update the facility for the public and provide an open and airy space. She said the new library will provide a meeting room for the community, which is something that is needed. She said Hennepin County wants this to be a good experience for all.

Mark Wentzell, 292 Design Group, architect for the project, talked about what libraries provide. He said the new library is proposed to be placed on the old Lyman Lumber site, which is on Water Street between the regional trail and Artworks. The parking will be placed in the rear of the site and the building will be next to Water Street. Wentzell showed the site plan, identifying where the driveway will be situated and where bicycle parking will be located. There is only one door to access the building and that fronts the regional trail. The interior layout is multi-functional. There will be little nooks with windows built in for people to sit and read, and window seats built into the windows along Water Street. They wanted to create a dynamic library with a variety of important and energetic spaces and have a lot of natural light coming in.

Along the Water Street side of the building, there is a large center bay window with smaller bay windows on each side of the center window that are set back a short distance. This is tied together with a cornice line that wraps around the entire building and colonnades along the front to make a formal entrance and protect people from the elements. There are two light monitors, one in the center and a smaller one by the front door to help light the library throughout the day. A view of the building at night was shown, which Wentzell said will light up like a lantern at night. A view from the back was shown, which has a service entrance, an area for staff to have lunch outside, and mechanicals that will be screened from public view.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

Wentzell showed drawings looking down Water Street, looking from across the street, a photo montage of Water Street from George Street to Third Street. He said it is important that the building has representation from other buildings along the street. There will be light coming in from the small light monitor above the entrance and natural light from the large light monitor down the center.

Wentzell showed a materials board with examples of the bricks, natural zinc, and wood that is proposed to be used. In addition, stucco will be used in the back part of the building.

Chair Sanders opened the meeting for comments.

Susan Bowers, 194 West Lake Street, said she is a lifelong resident of Excelsior. She has heard from a lot of different people that they find the proposed building out of character with anything in Excelsior. The building is clinical looking.

Thomas Lane, 166 Maple Street, asked if the public will be able to use the meeting room when it's not in use. Wentzell said yes, the meeting room will be open for the public for studying and reading.

Sara Bowers, 194 West Lake Street, read a statement that was several pages long. She stated that she is 18 years old and has lived here all of her life. Excelsior embodies the epitome of the classic American 'Main Street' small town. Excelsior's breadths of shopping, dining, entertainment are truly remarkable for such a tiny place. She has reviewed the pictures of the proposed library and believes the 'modern' design is already as obsolete as the idea of a library in general. The costs of constructing and maintaining such a building seems excessive in the age of glorified but almost never actualized 'fiscal responsibility'. She emphasized how obsolete the idea of a library is in the age of vast online cataloguing of information. Building a library falls on deaf ears when you're talking to someone in her generation; almost nobody her age uses the library. To use the argument that everyone should have Internet access in town to justify building this massive, ghastly library is a little extreme.

She proposed scaling back the project to a smaller building that is more Internet-café than it is a library, and then have a few classrooms to teach the older tech-inept generation how to operate a computer or hold other community classes. What libraries are good for today is the preservation of priceless historical documents and volumes that cannot be digitalized. She is particularly interested in this topic, because she is an avid art and architecture student. When she looks at this design she is awestruck by its lack of aesthetic merit. Its hard edges and

7. NEW BUSINESS

- b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

laboratory-clean surfaces are meant to appear contemporary, but just appear cold. An aesthetically pleasing building is usually deemed so because it fits in and complements its surroundings. She would ask the people of Excelsior to seriously consider what will happen if this building is allowed to be built on the Lyman Park property. Everyone loves and cherishes the main street for its Americana small-town style and people come here because it's cute. Let's not ruin what attracts people to the town.

Bolles said that the HPC's meeting is not videotaped. The Planning Commission will hold a special meeting on Thursday evening, which will be videotaped. He suggested that people might want to make these comments again at the Planning Commission meeting.

Jon Monson, 202 Water Street, said that Sara said it all clearly and concisely. He said that the question of the validity of the library is a good one, but everyone loves having the library in the City. At the City Council meeting Monday night, someone said that his three kids loved the library so maybe it's a generational thing. The HPC has three choices: it can affirm, reject, or conditionally approve and support it. The HPC probably won't be able to make a decision tonight. Tempering the nature of the structure is an excellent point. The design is not necessarily contemporary, but a retro-modern facility; Mr. Wentzell is a very talented architect. He encouraged the HPC to listen to everyone, tread carefully, and think about the future.

Don Shelby, 130 First Street, said he chose to build a home in Excelsior because of its historic nature. He has a deep regard for history and historic preservation and believes that we tend to lose what we most respect. The house that he is in the process of building looks like it was a part of the original platting and built in the 1890's. It will be the first Green Star house built in Minnesota. The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District has partnered with him to keep all the runoff on the property and there will be cisterns to recapture the rain. He said it is possible to do modern things and still keep the character you are trying to maintain. Wentzell's design from the interior perspective is remarkable, it is the center of community where people can go and meet. Libraries are important to communities; it's not just looks, they serve a function. Libraries are filled with computers. For years he got stories done without the help of Google. There is something about holding a book in your hand and having the printed work. If you are reading to enjoy, it is a different process. There is a value to having a library and he hopes it stays here. He knows there is a concern that Hennepin County will pull out if the library does not get built the way it is being proposed. He

7. NEW BUSINESS

b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

hopes that something is built that is compatible with the area. What is being proposed is a beautiful building, but he's not sure it belongs on Water Street or that it fits in historic Excelsior. He's not sure why he's spending so much money to build an 1890's structure if the City is continuing to change. There are alternative suggestions that would make the building look more historic. Keeping that compatibility and historic nature is the HPC's charge.

Rhoda Brooks, 859 Excelsior Boulevard, said she has lived in her home for 44 years and has seen most of the changes that have come along during that time. She thinks this design is exciting and the ideas behind it are spectacular. She thinks it would look exciting on the Lyman property. The surrounding buildings have a non-descript character to them and they are not historic, so she does not think this building would be incompatible with the buildings around it. This area needs to be spruced up. As far as the use, we are a long way from libraries being obsolete. She loves to read books. Kindles and nooks cost money, and she can check out books from the library for free. Everything can't stay in the 19<sup>th</sup> century forever; there needs to be something from the 21<sup>st</sup> century and pronounce that this is the future. The library is the future. The light areas and porticos and windows open to the street are wonderful design ideas. She knows she's a minority, but it's important that everyone is heard. It is an exciting design and something they the City really needs to pursue.

John Anderson, 200 George Street, really appreciates the comments. His sons would probably echo Sara Bower's comments, but he also agrees with Rhoda Brooks that people like to have books in their hands to read. He served as mayor for 6 years and he's lived in Excelsior for years. Having a library is the best thing the City could do. The design is nice, but he does not think it's appropriate for Water Street and downtown Excelsior. The design could be softened. He likes the idea of having a bright open space. The HPC's charge is to protect the heritage of the City and they've done a good job of that over the years. Acting as the community representatives, the current HPC members owe it to the community to continue to do the job of their predecessors. There needs to be a compromise and the County needs to recognize that Excelsior is unique and historic. He worked as a teacher for 40 years. Exciting things are happening. The HPC should do what it can to make this project work in Excelsior and not allow a project to come in and be built the way an applicant wants it built. The HPC should provide input to make the project compatible with downtown Excelsior. He hopes that the County and architect are willing to bend a little to make this work.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

Diane Bolles, 229 George Street and 310 Water Street, said that Rhoda Brooks referred to The Mill as a non-descript building. She said her business has been there for 27 years and the building itself was started in 1906. She has had a viable business since she opened 27 years ago, and she is proud to be able to help contribute to the viability of Excelsior. She said Excelsior was established a few years before Minnesota became a state. The rich history of Excelsior gives us an identity which sets us apart as a destination for visitors, a center of activity on Lake Minnetonka, a cherished home for our residents, and a sense of pride to all who reside, work, and gather here. Many call Excelsior their town even though they reside in other cities. Excelsior has been blessed with people who have invested confidently in our City. Excelsior has had substantial new development in recent years. Our economic vitality, even during these recent challenging financial times, has largely been based on our historic identity. The ultra contemporary design for the new library jeopardizes the integrity of our historic identity, our community, and our economic vitality. The City has written ordinances and formulated the Comprehensive Plan to promote development and protect what Excelsior has. If this ultra contemporary design is allow in the B-1 historic district, more will follow and historic Excelsior will disappear along with its assets. She asked that the design for this building be brought into compliance with the City's Design Standards and historic preservation standards for new construction. The design should contribute to rather than distract from the historic character of downtown Excelsior.

Sally Hofmeister, 4320 Trillium Lane West, Minnetrista, said she grew up in Deephaven and remembers the amusement park. Excelsior is a special spot and has a lot of character. When she saw the design for this building it broke her heart. She can't believe the City would put a building with no soul or heart in downtown Excelsior. There are many people over the years who have worked hard to keep Excelsior as it is. She loves libraries, but this design is such a white elephant.

Thomas Lane, 166 Maple Street, said that he thinks the exterior of the building looks robotic and does not fit with the downtown and would really hate to see it built as it is proposed.

Thom Lofquist, 740 Pleasant Street, said the County spent a lot of time and knowingly chose the location, so why would it propose a contemporary style.

Wentzell said that the best way to answer that question is to look at the presentation that Michael Koop from the Minnesota State Historical Preservation Office gave to the City Council that showed what the Winona Historical Society did

7. NEW BUSINESS

- b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

in creating a new architecture that worked with the historic building. Good architecture can come out of every era. It doesn't do service to freeze an era. Keep it alive and vibrant. Excelsior could become a museum piece if it is frozen in time. The County wanted to put the library on a site that is fragmented and open so it can sit on its own, looks forward, and brings a new vitality. The City of Excelsior's website says that the City has old and new. Old has already been done and new architecture is a great way to celebrate old architecture.

Lofquist said he is excited and thankful that the County is doing the library in Excelsior, but he does not think the architecture fits in this location. It would look good out on Highway 7, but not in downtown Excelsior. He asked how willing the County is to work with the community.

Wentzell said that Lofquist's comments are valid. New architecture is difficult for people to understand and that is why they held the preview meetings before they started the official process. They've asked people to look at this design with an open mind. It is not a reconstruction and they are not wed to this design. No one has ever said that the County is planning to leave. Excelsior doesn't make it easy to develop a project. They have worked a long time on this. He's been an architect for 30 years and taught architecture at the University of Minnesota for 15 years.

Lofquist said that everyone has agreed that they want the project and want to work with the County. He likes the interior and the natural lighting in the building. There needs to be focus on what the City is and build and add value to the City. This design will not work on Water Street. He would like to see something that fits better with the surrounding area.

Myrle Mackenzie, long-time Shorewood resident and local business person, said she worked for many years to help promote businesses and get shoppers to come to Excelsior. That has been the big focus for the last 15 years. Excelsior has been successful because the shop and building owners have worked together. Shoppers and tourists come to Excelsior because they have found it charming. People have moved to Excelsior because of the charm and historic nature. This building is not charming. The library's mission statement is to nourish minds, transform lives, and build community together, which this proposal does not do. She hopes the HPC will protect Excelsior and not give approval to this design.

Sara Bowers said that there have been a lot of comments on how architecture should be challenging. The City has done a great job of preserving historic districts. The new buildings in the last century compliment their surroundings, she does not see how this building does that.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

Mark Bowers, 194 West Lake Street, said his background is in marketing and he has done branding work for Fortune 500 companies. When he thinks about the work that he does and hears about respecting the old with the new, this design does not connect or complement with what Excelsior is all about. Excelsior is about heritage and the exterior of this building does not complement that. This design is not consistent with what Excelsior would have come up with. He hopes the County and architect will be understanding of that and will help build on the heritage position rather than challenge it.

Lisa Kopas Lane, 166 Maple Street, said that the library has been very important to their family. She has lived here for 20 years and their family is heavy users of the library. She works for General Mills in a very contemporary building, but every day when she comes home she is happy to be in Excelsior. It is a very special place because of the feeling and warmth it gives her. She chooses to live here. She would like the building to look different and hopes everyone can work together toward that goal.

Jon Monson said that he is an architect, and as an architect he is obligated to listen to his client and does what the client asks him to do. He's wondering if Wentzell knows who the client is. In this case, the community is the client. From day one the community has been told that this is what you need. He thinks it's important that the community be heard. The community wants the library here. He likes an exciting building too, and he thinks this design could be great somewhere. He would ask that the County and everyone who is involved with the design process listen to the client, which are the community members.

Charles Babcock, Shorewood resident, said that Excelsior has one chance to pull the town together. There should be a blend between the historical part and the other area. He hopes the HPC will follow the historical ordinance. He knows Excelsior really wants the library, but Excelsior should not be asked to sell its historic soul to get it. The historic flavor is why people come here. There is an opportunity to blend with the downtown area versus be an ultra modern building. If this is approved, twenty years from now it will stand out but in the wrong way.

Sanders closed the public comment portion and Commissioners took a five minute recess.

Mueller said she has given some thought to defining the surrounding area and it's important that they take into consideration the entire length of Water Street from Lake Street to Third Street, which is the historic business district.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

Bolles said he would include the entire B-1 zoning district on Water Street otherwise it would not include the block where the proposed project will be located. A proposal has been approved by the City for a building to be built where the parking lot is located on the corner of Third and Water Streets. It has to address the parking issue before it can be built. The design of the proposed building is very compatible to the neighboring building. It is similar in character to the building next to it and has historically sensitive elements incorporated into the design from the adjacent building, which is within the historic district. There was a proposal before the City several years ago for a three story building on the First Class Car Care property. The building was not approved, but it was also designed to be historically sensitive to the community. It was a contemporary building but it did not have a stark contemporary look like the library does. The City's Comprehensive Plan talks about wanting to extend the look on Water Street between Second and Third Streets and extending it down toward George Street. The Comprehensive Plan also talks to having buildings be similar in size and have an historic nature to them. That is what he is looking at this evening.

Finch said that there are five underlying business zoning districts within the Downtown Historic District and there are different architectural elements in each of the zoning districts. He would recommend that the HPC include just the B-1 zoning district when looking at the surrounding area. Bolles said that the other half of the block that the library will be situated is in the B-2 zoning district and the HPC needs to look at surrounding structures as well as the surrounding area.

Roden said that in his eight years serving on the HPC, he has never thought or looked at just one little area. The HPC has always looked at the whole Downtown Historic District. He does not think they should just look at the Water Street block between Third and George Streets.

Sanders said that 90% of the Site Alteration Permit Applications that the HPC looks at are for properties on Water Street.

Meyer distributed a picture showing an area of the Downtown Historic District between Second and Third Streets. He said that the application has a collage of the block on Water Street between Third and George Streets. The B-1 zoning district ends in the middle of this block. The importance of the buildings between Third Street and Second Street has not been taken into consideration. This site needs to respect those buildings. He said that the HPC does not want people to build old buildings and that point has been missed here. Wentzell said that City staff had requested that they provide the picture showing that block.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

Meyer said that if the proposed library building was superimposed on the vacant lot at the corner of Third and Water Streets, it would be easy to see that the design does not fit in with the area.

Sanders said there are ten standards that the HPC needs to evaluate when they review new construction. The standards are height, width, façade proportion, relationship to street, roof and cornice form, façade composition, rhythm, proportion of openings, materials, and colors.

Sanders asked for comments with regard to the height. Roden said the overall height is appropriate and fits within the historic district; the proportion is where the project has difficulties.

Bolles said the height of the building conforms to the City's regulations. The light monitor is inappropriate in his view. Based on the HPC's standards, the roof skyline should fit in with the rest of the district and area. The architect has said in previous meetings that the light monitor will be a beacon at night and tonight the term lantern was used instead of beacon. When he thinks of a beacon, he thinks of a lighthouse. Wentzell responded that the light monitor won't be as bright as a lighthouse. Bolles said the building should not have a beacon and he believes the light monitors do not meet the standards for skylines. Water Street has predominately flat roof buildings and skylights and vents are to be setback from the front façade. Staunton said that the light monitors will be discussed when the HPC applies the standards for the roof and cornice.

The Commissioners agreed that the project meets the height standard.

Sanders asked for comments on the width of the building. Roden asked if this standard pertains to the lower portion of the building. Commissioners agreed it would be the footprint of the building.

Finch said that the building visually appears a bit wider than other buildings, but looks appropriate for the lot size. Sanders said the architect generally did a good job on the massing and scale of the building and put some good effort into keeping that part compatible with the surrounding structures.

Bolles said it's a matter of interpretation, depending on what would be considered the front of the building. The front is typically Water Street. With this building, the front will be considered the trail side of the building. He doesn't disagree with the comments about the front of the building, but he looks at this building as having three fronts: the Water Street side, the trail side, and the parking lot side.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

Sanders asked for comments with regard to the façade proportion. Mueller said she doesn't think any of the descriptions fit this building and she doesn't believe the façades comply with the standards. The windows are too big and are the focal point. The natural light is nice but a library can have electric lights. The front should be broken up proportionately and there should be an entrance door on Water Street. There should be something besides glass; it looks like a goldfish bowl to her.

Sanders asked if it is the amount of glass. Mueller said there is too much glass in comparison to the amount of brick. Adding a door, making the windows smaller, and adding more brick would make the front more proportionate with other buildings. Meyer said he agrees that the building would look better if it had additional brick to break up the windows.

Bolles said he thinks the Water Street windows are too large and have an ultra contemporary appearance, and there is not enough brick on the front façade to make it look proportionate. The bottom of the windows should be raised. The architect has talked about the bench and windows being 18 inches above the floor for children to sit and read. The window shouldn't be the same level as the cushion. The windows should be brought in from the sides to what the architect refers to as pilasters, but what he thinks of as a wing wall. He would also lower the top of window and put a horizontal window frame in to divide the vertical section of the window. A horizontal framing on the window would create a main window with a transom above it. The windows on the trail side of the building have to be standardized; repetitive elements in the building will make the design more compatible. The windows along the side should be large double hung and more traditional.

Finch said that in order to do the evaluation he looks for guidance from the Comprehensive Plan, Design Standards, and what exists. In the Design Standards, continuous build out is important and this building has two areas setback.

Roden said he really struggles with this building with regard to the façade proportion. The proportion of the size windows and doors should be compatible with surrounding areas. He can't picture any building in the historic district that this building mirrors or honors. The façade proportions do not meet the standards.

Finch said the Design Standards state that the base of the façade should reflect the predominant base level height of neighboring buildings.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

Sanders asked for comments with relationship to the street. She does not have an issue with the setback, but it is an issue that the front does not orient toward Water Street and that the main entrance is on the side facing the trail. She understands why it was designed this way, but it makes it less inviting when the entrance is not on Water Street. Mueller said that there is not a welcoming door.

Finch said the entire width of the building should be at the same setback. The setback for the whole width of the building should be consistent with the B-1 zoning district. Bolles clarified that the Pump and Gary's First Class Car Care are in the B-5 zoning district, not the B-1.

Finch said he believes that every other building is up against the sidewalk in the B-1 District, but he noted that there is not a front yard setback in the B-1 zoning district. He would prefer to have the building situated at the sidewalk, but he doesn't see any regulations requiring that. He also believes an entrance on Water Street is imperative. There are only two properties that do not have an entrance oriented toward Water Street and they are on the corners and have a 45-degree angle entrance.

Roden said he had attended a number of the meetings that the library held early on and he was shocked to see that there was not an entrance on Water Street. He understands why they do not want that, but new construction should be oriented toward the street and provide an inviting environment to pedestrians. If the entrance is going to be on the side, it is not very inviting for pedestrians. The current orientation does not seem inviting to him. It also does not seem safe or inviting to have the crosswalk, bicycles, and traffic entering and exiting The Pump, The Mill, and Gary's First Class Car Care all coming together at the driveway entrance. The driveway should be on the opposite side of the property versus the trail side. The building's relationship to the street is nonexistent. If it was outside the historic district it might be okay, but it does not fit here.

Sanders asked for comments on the roof and cornice.

Meyers said there is no place in the City that has light monitors. The light monitors do not fit anywhere within the City. Roden and Mueller agreed.

Sanders said because the building is plain and simple the light monitors is one of the stronger architectural features on the building. She said the corrugated zinc also gives the building a very industrial look, which is also out of place. She agrees that the light monitors are not compatible with the surrounding area.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

Lee Anderson, Hennepin County Property Services Department, Planning Project Manager, said it is interesting to hear the comments so they can consider making changes or adjustments that might fit. The County also needs to think about program requirements and one of the elements is to bring in natural light into the center, so he would like to understand what would be acceptable. Sanders said that skylights are typically hidden behind the parapet of the building so they are not seen from the street. City Planner Fuchs said that they are typically hidden in some manner.

Bolles said the roof is predominantly flat. The cornice is not acceptable and neither is the height of light monitors. It might help if the light monitors were reduced down two to three feet or just a little higher. The light monitors appear to be taller than the interior space of the building and have a heavy elevator shaft appearance. He said the material and style for the cornice is also wrong. The building has a residential type overhang. The building should have a brick cornice that extends up maybe two feet above the roof line like a parapet, this will help hide the smaller light monitors.

Wentzell said it is helpful if the Commission identifies what it does not like or what elements do not comply; designing the building for them is not helpful.

Meyer said the building roof should relate to other predominate roof shapes or historic buildings.

Finch said that the Design Standards say that cornice treatments should be prominent and complementary. This cornice is pronounced but rather plain. It does not meet this standard because the cornice is not a predominate feature. Mueller agreed that the cornice is not compatible.

Sanders asked for comments on the façade composition. She said the Commission covered this some when they were discussing the proportion of the windows.

Meyer said that there should be some brick work to create a separation and have the windows come in conformity with the rhythm.

Finch said the Design Standards require that all buildings have a principal entryway from the street. The entrance door should be on the street and be a major architectural feature.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

Bolles said there should be more masonry around the windows. The proportions are not reminiscent of the proportions that are reflected in the surrounding area. The windows along the side need to be a consistent size to create a rhythm. Finch said the same standards would apply to the windows along the trail side.

Roden said he doesn't see any rhythm on the trail side and the light monitors don't have any proportion. His eye doesn't know where to go on that side of the building.

Bolles said the columns and canopy cornice should be brick. He said the material for the building should be predominantly brick.

Sanders asked for comments with regard to rhythm. Meyer said that has been covered already in the discussions. Sanders said the building has an industrial look to it, so it does not appear to be compatible with the surrounding area. Bolles said it would help if some of the elements from other buildings were brought into the design.

Sanders asked for comments regarding the materials. Bolles said the major shortcoming with the design is that there is not enough brick when brick should be the most prominent material. There should be a brick cornice and it should extend up to the parapet. There should be brick along the entire trail side of the building and probably extend around the entire building. The rear of the building should also be considered a front façade because of the parking. The privacy fencing in back should be brick instead of wood. Brick is more durable for an institutional type building; a wood privacy fence is not appropriate. Sanders said that might be more of a preference. She does not have any criticism with using wood as one of the materials.

Finch asked if the City has a standard calculation with regard to the proportion of brick and glass. Fuchs responded yes, and the proportion of glass and brick meet the City's requirements.

Bolles said he doesn't think the use of stucco for the back of the building is appropriate. Sanders said she doesn't believe that stucco is prohibited. Finch named several properties that have stucco.

Roden said he has issues with the light monitors being wrapped in zinc with no façade, overhang, or fascia. There isn't anything more industrial than this design element. He can't visualize this element anywhere in the City, let alone in the

7. NEW BUSINESS

- b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

historic district. The standards say that a building material should not be introduced that is not currently in the historic district and there is a lot of zinc used on the light monitors. Bolles agreed that zinc is not an acceptable material.

Meyer said he does not think the color of the brick is compatible with the historic district. Bolles, Finch, and Sanders all agreed. Sanders said that the HPC has been strict about incorporating "red" type colored bricks with all new projects; the brown color is not compatible with the historic district.

Sanders said the last standard is color. Bolles said the cornice should also be a darker reddish color brick and the zinc eliminated. Using a dark bronze aluminum would be more harmonious with the surrounding area.

Finch said the parking lot should have the historic light fixtures. Bolles said the height of the poles should not exceed 14 feet in height and high pressure sodium lighting should be used. The goal has been to maintain a more pedestrian height light fixture.

Finch said that page 23 of the Design Standards states that materials for fences, trash enclosures, etc. should be consistent with the materials in the principal structures.

Finch read an excerpt from page 65 of the City's Comprehensive Plan, which said one of the purposes of the B-1, Central Business District is: "To promote high standards of building and site design which will foster compact commercial developments with pedestrian convenience and human scale, and which will preserve and strengthen the historic character of the B-1 District." He strongly supports this statement. The library is important, but it is also important to have a building that is historic in nature and enhances the brand that Excelsior has.

Bolles said that Michael Koop from the Minnesota State Historical Preservation Office spoke at the City Council meeting last night on regulating new construction. Koop provided the Council with a paper written by Eleanor Esser Gorski, AIA, titled "Regulating New Construction in Historic Districts". He requested that the following excerpt from the document be put in the minutes to provide a basis for the HPC's findings-of-fact:

"The Secretary's Standards state that we need to discern new from old in infill construction. That charge can be interpreted as taking a fresh approach to new construction. Take a FRESH approach! Use these five

7. NEW BUSINESS

b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

tests to see if a new building will fit in. They won't guarantee good design, nothing can; but they can keep the intruders out and make the new building re-FRESH-ing!

FRESH...Infill should be FRESH!

- F. Footprint and Foundation. The footprint and foundation for the new structure should be similar to the ones surrounding the new structure.
- R. Roof Shape. The new roof should match existing roofs in pitch, complexity, and orientation.
- E. Envelope. If you shrink-wrapped a building and removed everything but the shrink-wrap, that is the envelope. The new structure should match the existing ones in projections, height, bulk, relationships between height and width, etc.
- S. Skin. What is the envelope clad in? What is the surface material and what are its characteristics? New structures should be clad in a visually and physically similar material.
- H. Holes. Where are the doors, windows, attic vents, etc.? How are they divided and segmented? Is it an asymmetrical arrangement or is it more symmetrical?"

Meyer said when Michael Koop from the Minnesota State Historical Preservation Office was asked at the City Council meeting last night what involvement his office has had in the local review of this project, Koop had said his office has had no involvement with the local HPC on this project.

Sanders said she looked at the portfolio of the architectural firm and sincerely hopes that they can come up with something that everyone finds acceptable within the context of materials that are allowed in the historic district. She believes a good looking building can come out of the discussions.

Commissioner Finch moved, Commissioner Mueller seconded, to continue this agenda item to the next scheduled meeting, with direction to staff to prepare findings-of-facts based on the discussions this evening.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- b. Site Alteration Permit for New Library Building at 337 Water Street – Hennepin County Library – (Continued)

Bolles said the Commission should consider this application again before their April 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Finch said that's why the motion was to continue the application to the next scheduled meeting versus the April 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Staunton said the Commission has until April 30<sup>th</sup> to make a decision. If the Commission wants to schedule a meeting prior to the April 19<sup>th</sup> meeting it has the ability to do that. There has been a lot of direction given to the applicant this evening, and the applicant will need some time to take those comments into consideration.

Motion carried 7/0.

Commissioner Finch moved, Commissioner Mueller seconded, to continue the remaining agenda items to the April 19, 2011 Heritage Preservation Commission meeting. Motion carried 7/0.

Bipes said the Commission needs to have additional discussion on this application and the findings before the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Wentzell said if the Commission is requesting design revisions, it will take more than one week's time to get those done.

Commissioner Finch moved, Commissioner Bolles seconded, to schedule a special meeting for Thursday, April 7, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. so the Commission can begin to review the findings-of-fact. If Advisory Caron is unavailable to attend that meeting, the Chair shall schedule a date when Caron is available. Motion carried 7/0.

6. MISCELLANEOUS / COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

- a. Recent City Council Actions

Due to the late hour, no report was given.

9. ANNUAL MEETING

- a. Election of Officers - Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary

This agenda item was continued to the April 19, 2011 meeting.

9. ANNUAL MEETING

b. Review of By-Laws

This agenda item was continued to the April 19, 2011 meeting.

c. Goals and Objectives for 2011

This agenda item was continued to the April 19, 2011 meeting.

d. Code of Conduct and Decorum for Appointed Officials

This agenda item was continued to the April 19, 2011 meeting.

10. COMMUNICATIONS and REPORT

a. Site Alteration Permits Administratively Approved

There were no Site Alteration Permits administratively approved since the last meeting.

b. Next Meeting – Tuesday, April 19, 2011

Information only.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Mueller moved, Commissioner Meyer seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 p.m. Motion carried 7/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheri Johnson  
City Clerk