

City of Excelsior
Heritage Preservation Commission
Minutes
Tuesday, July 17, 2012

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

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

Present: Bolles, Macpherson, Meyer, Mueller, Sanders

Absent: Finch, Roden

Also Present: City Planner Braaten, Planning Consultant Richards, Advisor Caron

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting of June 19, 2012

It was noted that on the 3rd page of the minutes, a new heading for the library discussion should be added.

It was moved by Mueller, seconded by Macpherson, to approve the minutes as corrected. Approved unanimously.

3. CITIZEN REPORTS or COMMENTS

None.

4. MISCELLANEOUS/COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

a. Recent City Council Actions

Sanders reported on the appeal of the HPC denial of the Capers application for a Site Alteration Permit for relocation of its awning to the City Council, which occurred the previous evening. She stated that she had described the process and standards followed by the Commission in making its decision, and after further discussion and comments from the Councilmembers, the applicant decided to withdraw the appeal. She noted that the applicant will be required to come back to the HPC with a workable plan to replace the awning, which will likely occur at the Commission's next meeting.

Richards reported that the Excelsior Hotel concept plan was approved by the Council, and a general plan with Site Alteration Permit will likely be before the Commission in October, and that given the scope and complexity of the project, it

4. MISCELLANEOUS/COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

a. Recent City Council Actions – (Continued)

may require two HPC meetings, with the Planning Commission starting its review in November. Macpherson reported that, at the special Planning Commission meeting he had attended as HPC liaison, there was much discussion of the hotel and a number of concerns expressed with the building details, traffic impacts, noise, event parking impacts, and the adequacy of the market study. So far, there does not appear to be much detail on the specific building design elements and materials.

Sanders reported that the Hennepin County Library project had been recommended for approval at the regular Planning Commission meeting she had attended. Richards noted that the design of the library sign had been changed and it would be coming back to the HPC for review at a future meeting.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Site Alteration Permit for Exterior Alterations at 371 Water Street -- Gretchen Wahlstedt

Gretchen Wahlstedt presented the application for alterations to the carriage house building at the rear of the property. She stated that there is currently a 4 foot landing at the top of the existing stairs along the side of the carriage house. She proposes to enlarge and replace the deck with a new deck that will measure approximately 12 feet by 16 feet, with a new set of stairs leading from the direction of the Clark House, resulting in two staircases leading to the deck. She noted that these sites were separate parcels of property that were combined into a single parcel a few years ago. The affected carriage house accessory building was built in approximately 1989. The deck alteration will use turned spindles on the railing to match the design of those on the historic Clark House. The Commission discussed that, while the ordinance generally discourages second story decks as incompatible, the alteration is to enlarge an existing feature on a non-historic structure that is not facing the principal street, which factors may justify some flexibility.

It was moved by Bolles, seconded by Macpherson, to approve the Site Alteration Permit for alterations as presented, with the existing staircase to remain.
Approved unanimously

- b. Site Alteration Permit for Exterior Alteration at 344 Water Street -- Tim Caron, Madelena Properties, LLC

Sanders introduced the topic. Mr. Caron asked that Commissioner Bolles be recused from the topic due to a conflict of interests. The Commission discussed this and agreed that Commissioner Bolles should recuse himself from this Site Alteration Permit Application. Commissioner Bolles agreed to recuse himself as a voting member for this application.

Mr. Caron explained that they were revisiting the exterior of the building and that they would like to amend the previous Site Alteration Permit that was approved for 344 Water Street. Mr. Caron went on to explain the details that had changed from the last application and that they were currently working with the building official to flesh out some of the final issues. Mr. Caron asked that the HPC give him some flexibility in the Site Alteration Permit in order to address any items that may change due to building code and/or final design issues.

The Commission discussed the differences between the previous Site Alteration Permit approval and this submittal.

Mr. Bob Bolles, 229 George Street, commented that he was pleased with the re-submittal overall, but he had a few concerns regarding the application. Mr. Bolles stated that he was concerned that the trash enclosure and sidewalk had not been shown on the Certificate of Survey, which he believed was necessary and appropriate. He also had concerns regarding the minimal size of the trash enclosure and how the trash service would work for the property if used as a restaurant. He stated that a lot of changes had already been made to the roof and that the staff report did not properly reflect what had been done. He also commented that there had been no reference in the staff report of the chimney being torn off and that the new plan did not show any outdoor seating. The previous application had shown two outdoor sidewalk tables. Mr. Caron replied that they still intended to have some outdoor seating and that they would be back with that application at a future date. Mr. Bolles also asked that the dumpster and fire separation also be addressed.

Richards replied to the concerns of Mr. Bolles stating that the trash enclosure looked to be sufficient in size and that the applicant had looked into the frequency of trash pickup. He also stated that minor changes had been done to the roof and when he visited the site prior to the meeting he had also noticed that the chimney had been removed. Richards informed the Commission that the

5. NEW BUSINESS

- b. Site Alteration Permit for Exterior Alteration at 344 Water Street -- Tim Caron, Madelena Properties, LLC – (Continued)

building official had no problem with the location of the trash enclosure in regard to fire separation.

Mr. Caron informed the Commission that he had been issued a roofing permit due to the existing leaks in the roof. He stated that it was a repair that had to be made and that they had not finished the roof because he wanted to get the approval of the HPC before installing any final materials on the building.

It was moved by Mueller, seconded by Meyer, to approve the Site Alteration Permit for alterations as presented including the flexibility to slightly alter the proposed red paint, the three side windows, the side door, the existing side window and proposed new window, and the exact location of the trash enclosure. Furthermore, they moved to appoint a subcommittee of Rick Meyer and Mark Macpherson to review and approve all proposed changes to the afore-mentioned items before the work commences. Approved unanimously.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Exploring Grant Funds for Oak Hill Cemetery

Meyer compiled and presented a conceptual program for approaching future improvements to the Oak Hill Cemetery site. Bolles stated that he might have some useful information regarding the cemetery. Meyer proposed documenting the existing condition of the cemetery's gravestones through photographs. Macpherson suggested that it might be valuable to also tabulate how many gravestones are in need of repair, how many require resetting, etc., to inform a preservation program and attract potential funding.

Richards stated that a City intern is currently creating an electronic file and map of the cemetery survey and its individual plots. Sanders mentioned that it might be useful to contact the City of Wayzata to see what had been done to obtain a grant under similar circumstances, as was reported in the newspaper. Meyer suggesting that a first step might be to tour the cemetery as a group to inspect the condition of the site. The general view of the Commission is that, due to the many aspects of the cemetery that need restoration and repair, a preservation plan with a series of phases will likely be needed. Richards suggested the he

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Exploring Grant Funds for Oak Hill Cemetery – (Continued)

would report back at the Commission's next meeting on the status of the electronic cemetery map and survey.

It was moved by Macpherson, seconded by Bolles, to continue this item to the next meeting. Approved unanimously.

b. Excelsior Downtown Historic District Boundaries

The Commission reviewed the history of the downtown historic district and the current options available for finalizing the boundary. Upon review, it appears that several properties that were intended to be included in the district based on the text of the historic survey were apparently left out of the district map boundaries due to an oversight. Several designated properties recently have been approved for demolition, and these sites should be removed, but the Commission expressed a desire to better understand the justification on a site-by-site basis for inclusion or exclusion within the district boundaries. Caron agreed to prepare a table summarizing each property, any recommendations for inclusion or exclusion from the historic surveys, and possible options and justifications to be considered in recommending final district boundaries.

It was moved by Mueller, seconded by Macpherson, to continue this item to the next meeting. Approved unanimously.

c. Possibility of Designating Portions of Excelsior Elementary School

It was moved by Bolles, seconded by Macpherson, to continue this item to the next meeting. Approved unanimously.

d. Adopt Goals and Objectives for 2012

Planner Braaten presented the revised goals and objectives description, which reflected the language change that had been requested by the Commission. It was moved by Macpherson, seconded by Mueller, to adopt the Goals and Objectives for 2012 as presented. Approved unanimously.

7. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

a. Designate Liaison for Planning Commission Meeting - August 7, 2012

Richards noted that the meeting is currently being rescheduled due to National Night Out.

b. Site Alteration Permits Administratively Approved

Betsy Hannah, who has her salon business in the Gould Greenhouse building which will be demolished on George Street, is relocating her business to 436 Second Street, the Bennett Livery building, and is seeking administrative approval for a projecting sign permit and wall sign. The total signage for the building is currently under City review.

Mary Knudsen submitted a Site Alteration Permit for proposed alterations to the Wyer-Pearce House, as she is having trouble with peeling paint on the front porch and steps. She is proposing to use power sanding to remove the existing finish and to repaint the porch in the same color, which can be administratively approved as a repair. After discussion, the HPC determined that the Wyer deck could be routinely repainted in the same color without review (maintenance), but if there were to be a change in color, removal of paint (e.g., by sanding) in a method that could damage historic materials, or the use of a different type of coating (such as stain) that could change the appearance, it should be reviewed on site. If, upon review, the appearance would be the same and no damage would occur from the manner of application, the permit could be approved administratively. Otherwise, it should come back to the HPC for further review.

Macpherson and Meyer agreed to visit the site and assist staff in its evaluation of whether administrative review is indicated or further HPC review is warranted.

c. Next Meeting - Tuesday, August 21, 2012

8. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Meyer, seconded by Macpherson, to adjourn. Approved unanimously.

Adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Tim Caron
Recording Secretary