

City of Excelsior
Heritage Preservation Commission
Minutes
Tuesday, September 17, 2013

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Schmidt called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Bipes, Bolles, Brabec, Finch, Nelson, Schmidt

Absent: Macpherson

Also Present: City Planner Richards, Advisor Caron

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

It was moved by Finch, seconded by Nelson, to approve the agenda. Approved unanimously.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting of August 20, 2013

It was moved by Nelson, seconded by Bipes, to approve the minutes as written. Approved unanimously.

4. CITIZEN REPORTS or COMMENTS

None.

5. MISCELLANEOUS/COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

a. Recent City Council Actions

Nelson reported that she had attended the annual SHPO Conference with City Planner Braaten. The Minnesota Historical Society speaker outlined ways for organizations to get funding for historic projects. Nelson suggested that application for a tourism grant be considered due to general interest in the Lake Minnetonka area. She also reported that they had spoken with Tom Belkin of the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, who had been involved with the Lake Harriet bandshell. Nelson suggested that a multi-tiered grant application might be developed to span both tourism and a historical digital app, repurposing existing Lake Minnetonka historical information from Excelsior and other communities around the lake. It might be possible to use St. Paul Historical or Minneapolis Historical as a template for the Excelsior/Lake Minnetonka app and link the sites together in some way.

5. MISCELLANEOUS/COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

a. Recent City Council Actions – (continued)

Nelson agreed to get in touch with the Minnesota Historical Society and propose a concept for a potential grant and report on progress at the next meeting. It was moved by Bolles, seconded by Bipes, to authorize Nelson to pursue the outreach. Approved unanimously.

Schmidt reported that he had given historical tours on Apple Day and was interested in putting a tour on digital devices that could be used as self-guided tours for visitors. He also suggested putting more information at the Port of Excelsior ticket booth regarding Excelsior's history. A possible historical display at the new Excelsior library was also discussed.

Bipes reported on his attendance at the last Planning Commission meeting, which discussed types of exterior lighting and what should be permitted by the City Code , as well as the use of galvanized metal on the exterior of buildings. Richards clarified that the backlighting of advertising signs was being discussed in connection several recent signs that have been installed in the downtown that have a contemporary suburban appearance that some Planning Commissioners consider not in keeping with a historical downtown area, and the use of certain exterior materials is being revisited in the Council's consideration of a residential design standards ordinance. He also stated that the signage proposal would be presented to the HPC so that the compatibility of the downtown ordinances can be maintained.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Site Alteration Permit for Exterior Alterations at 421 Third Street--Excelsior Brewing Company

Richards described the proposed project in which Excelsior Brewing Company will expand to occupy the entire building and make related exterior changes. The applicant proposes to remove the stucco finish on the Third Street portion of the building to expose the brick beneath and make other changes that would make the storefront appearance more like that of the car dealership that occupied the building in the mid-1900s. Richards presented a memo from the City Attorney outlining potential legal issues that might impact the project as proposed, which concluded that the HPC could either defer action on the application until the legal issues have been resolved or take action subject to the condition that any approval is contingent on securing the legal authority to proceed with the plan as proposed and that the applicant return with any required revisions to the plan. Richards also stated that the Fire Marshal is currently evaluating the issue of fire access to adjacent buildings along the alley.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Site Alteration Permit for Exterior Alterations at 421 Third Street--Excelsior Brewing Company – (continued)

John Klick, Jon Lewin and Patrick Foss appeared on behalf of Excelsior Brewing and stated that they have decided to exercise their option for acquiring expansion space in the building under their lease. They stated that documents can be provided to establish their right to occupy the entire building as of October 1, 2013, and that the storage areas and adjacent private parking is included in the lease area. They stated that they are willing to allow for pedestrian access through the alley to the rear entrances of adjacent Water Street buildings, but since the City is requiring screening of all dumpsters, the alley would be blocked to traffic by a new dumpster enclosure and outdoor seating area. The Commission explored alternate dumpster locations that might allow the alley to remain open.

The plan proposes no alterations to the rear elevation of the building, except that they might come back with a new application in the future if they decide to install a business sign in the rear.

In the front section, some windows and transoms are original. They propose to remove the stucco and expose the brick underneath, and intend to replace some original windows with insulated glass for energy efficiency. They intend to replace all of the storefront windows on the Third Street elevation and also replace the front door with a new full view door.

LHB Architects commented on the untraditional style of the new storefront awnings to be added, which are designed to be high so the transom windows behind can be seen.

Commissioners asked whether the condition of the brick had been determined. The applicants stated that they could see some brick from the inside that appeared to be in good condition, but none of the stucco had been removed to assess the exterior brick surfaces, and they would not proceed with the stucco removal if costly brick repairs were found to be needed. It was suggested that the applicants remove some small areas of stucco to see whether the plan is feasible.

The Commission discussed the condition of the windows and which specific windows were proposed to be replaced and which retained, since this was not clearly indicated in the application. Finch suggested that, since the outcome of the removal of the stucco and the assessment of the brick condition will likely determine the outcome of whether the applicants proceed with the submitted plan, and this will take a few weeks, this would provide an opportunity for the applicant to review the windows to determine which are original, assess the condition of the

windows, and bring forward a window preservation plan.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Site Alteration Permit for Exterior Alterations at 421 Third Street--Excelsior Brewing Company – (continued)

Richards noted that the wood screening for the mechanicals visible on the roof should be smooth wood with a horizontal orientation, which is not detailed on the plan. The applicants stated that they might be replacing the existing air handler with the same size unit, which should not be visible from street or else will need screening. The Commission agreed to revisit this at the next meeting. The applicants clarified that no approval was being sought for the rear silo shown on the plans.

The sidewalk seating area would use salvaged fencing from the former Biella outdoor seating area, but will be expanded in a similar style to fit the front sidewalk area. The details of that will need to be submitted with the application. The building will have a caterer's kitchen available, but no regular food service will be offered. There will be no table wait staff, and customers will come to the bar to get beer service.

The proposed awning materials were presented in white and blue logo colors. Issues still to be addressed are details on the rooftop mechanicals screening, and Richards noted that the proposed light fixtures on the front and alley side elevations are not historic in appearance. The Commission noted that any light fixtures should emit a warm or yellowish glow. The front elevation will have a blade sign over the front door with attached down lighting. The sign will be of sandblasted wood with a metal mounting bracket.

No awnings will be mounting in the face of the brick, since the mounting will be within the storefront area. The Commission discussed that the style of awning is more contemporary than exists elsewhere in the historic district, since it has a non-horizontal support. Schmidt suggested that the unique style of awning might in this case preserve the visibility of the original transom windows and reflect the automotive heritage of the building, and not present a precedent for Water Street since it is located on a side street.

Richards also noted that an illustration of the proposed street furniture is needed.

The architect agreed to revise the plans to label clearly which windows are proposed to be replaced and which are to be retained, and a subcommittee would then meet on site to review the condition of any original windows and doors proposed for replacement to see whether preservation of original features is feasible, to consist of Macpherson, Brabec and Finch. Any window muntins will be white, as depicted in the historic building photo. The front door is proposed to

6. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Site Alteration Permit for Exterior Alterations at 421 Third Street--Excelsior Brewing Company – (continued)

be replaced, as it is not believed to be original or of historic significance, which will be confirmed on site by the subcommittee.

It was moved by Finch, seconded by Brabec, to continue to this item to a special meeting in lieu of the Commission's regular meeting, to be held on Wednesday, October 16, 2013 at 7:00 p.m., and to continue any discussion of the remainder of the agenda to that meeting. Approved unanimously.

Richards commented that the Planning Commission's proposed ordinance amendment regarding sign standards to eliminate back lit signage is being considered, and asked for any comments from the Commission. The Commission discussed that cool toned lighting should be prohibited, and the ordinance should address replacement of lights under CUPs where previous types of lighting may be grandfathered.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. None

8. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS

- a. Exploring Grant Funds for Oak Hill Cemetery
- b. Possibility of Historically Designating Portions of Excelsior Elementary School
- c. Scenic Byway
- d. Designate Liaison for Planning Commission Meeting - October 8, 2013
Schmidt agreed to attend.
- e. Site Alteration Permits Administratively Approved
- f. Next Meeting - Tuesday, October 22, 2013 (now changed to a special meeting in lieu of the regular meeting on Wednesday, October 16)

9. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Finch, seconded by Bipes, to adjourn. Approved unanimously.
Adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Tim Caron
Recording Secretary