

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION
CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA
Lower Level – Room 41, City Hall/Court House, 15 West Kellogg Boulevard
February 28, 2013

Present: Richard Dana, Robert Ferguson, Matt Hill, Michael Justin, Rich Laffin, Matt Mazanec, David Riehle, Steve Trimble, Diane Trout-Oertel

Absent: Renee Hutter Barnes (excused), David Wagner (excused)

Staff Present: Christine Boulware, Bill Dermody, Amy Spong

BUSINESS MEETING

- I. **Call to Order:** 5:06 p.m.
- II. **Approval of the Agenda:** Commissioner Dana moved to approve the agenda; Commissioner Riehle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- III. **Approval of the meeting minutes:** Commissioner Dana moved to approve the minutes with changes. Commissioner Hill seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
 - A. ~~December 6, 2012 Business Meeting~~
 - B. **January 10, 2013 Annual Meeting**
 - C. **January 24, 2013 Public Hearing** – Commissioner Hill asked that the discussion that asked the applicant for the justification for the 18 foot width be included in the minutes.
- IV. **Conflicts of Interest:** There were none stated.
- V. **Chair's Announcements:** Chair Laffin informed the commission that Art Panels proposed for installation at the Union Depot will be coming to the HPC for review. He also informed the commission that local bands would be performing at the Amsterdam Bar and Hall after the meeting and invited commissioners and staff to join him if they liked.
- VI. **Staff Announcements:**
 - A. Sixth Street Sidewalk appeal is on the City Council Agenda for March 6. It is the third item on the public hearing agenda which begins at 5:30. There will be a staff report. Commissioner Hill informed that he plans to attend the appeal hearing.
 - B. Staff updated the commission on the Ballpark design committee. Commissioner Barnes volunteered, but staff have not heard back from the Capitol River Council about the appointment.
 - C. MetroState will present their campus plan to the HPC on March 14.
 - D. Staff updated the commissioners on the Jackson Street Shops. 25 Empire (the pattern shop) has been stabilized. STAR funds will pay for six months of stabilization and a legacy grant will help to fund the report and hire a structural engineer. 27 Empire has also experience truss failure and wall deflection.
 - E. The Preservation Alliance of Minnesota has a new program called Sites Worth Saving. The deadline is April 1. The HPC may consider nominating the Jackson Street Shops.

F. March 8 at 1:30, Commissioner Trout-Oertel will give a presentation on Minnesota architect Mary Colter. On March 10, Commissioner Trimble will give a presentation on Ethel Steward. Both presentations are at the Landmark Center and are sponsored by the Ramsey County Historical Society as part of Women's History Month.

VII. After-the-Fact Permit Review/Public Hearings

A. 296-298 Seventh Street East, Lowertown Historic District, by Lawrence Sign, for an after-the-fact sign permit to install 18" tall band of vinyl "Super Mom's" graphics on the windows around the property (~24 sq.ft.). The advertising was installed without a sign permit or HPC review and approval. **File #13-013** (Boulware, 266-6715)

Staff read the report recommending partial approval of the sign permit application. Mike Waich, Lawrence Signs, was present to discuss the application. He stated that he was okay with the staff recommendation and will remove the other graphics. Commissioner Dana asked if he knew that a permit was necessary to install the signs. Mr. Waich stated that he did know, but was instructed by the SuperAmerica corporate office to install the signs, and then he applied for the permit after-the-fact. He noted that the other graphics in the doors and windows were not installed by Lawrence Sign.

Commissioner Riehle motioned to adopt the findings and approve the application with staff recommendations. Commissioner Dana seconded the motion. Commissioner Dana offered an amendment to note the other signage in the windows and doors are inconsistent with the guidelines and should be brought to the owner's attention. Commissioner Trimble added that a letter should be sent to the corporate office. The motion passed 8-0

B. 401 Sibley Street, Lowertown Historic District, by Bigo's Management, for an after-the-fact building permit to construct exterior screening for the mechanical systems at the patio. The screening was installed without a building permit or HPC review and approval. **File #13-014** (Dermody, 266-6617)

Mr. Dermody read the report recommending approval of the application subject to two conditions. Commissioner Dana asked about the wood that was there previously and if it was just badly weathered. Mr. Dermody clarified that what is out there now goes beyond a repair of what was there previously. Commissioner Trout-Oertel asked about the intent for the condition requiring a paint/stain applied to the wood, and raised a concern about whether that would make the wood look worse. Mr. Dermody replied that the intent is to make the wood not stand out as much. Commissioner Ferguson raised the concept of wood that naturally weathers to look darker over time. Holly Engrav of Bigo's Management and Lee Lawrence, contractor, were present to discuss the application. Chair Laffin asked about the existing stain. Mr. Lawrence responded that it is a natural stain, not polyurethane, so as to allow for natural weathering to help it blend in and go gray. Ms. Engrav added that the landscaping will mature along the street. Mr. Lawrence added that the old wood was plywood-style. Commissioner Trout-Oertel offered that there are products that allow the wood to be protected while allowing for some weathering. Ms. Spong added that raw wood is not generally allowed; rather, it is painted or finished. The question is whether it is appropriate in the historic district on this building. There are stains with pigment that do allow the natural wood to show through. We often do test areas for stains and paints to see what they will look like in reality. Chair Laffin expressed hope that the weathered "Nantucket" look would not be pursued – either keep the current look, or go with a darker stain. Mr. Lawrence expressed concern that once you start with the staining, there's no going

back, especially if it's darker. Ms. Engrav would favor maintaining the existing color. Commissioner Dana offered that there is a shingle color "weathered wood" that may dull down the wood color. Chair Laffin said he likes the varied look of the "finger-pointed" pattern on the wood, which harkens the brick pattern. Responding to Commissioner Trimble, Mr. Lawrence clarified that this is not the main entrance and that it faces Jackson, but is away from the corner. Responding to Commissioner Riehle, Mr. Lawrence responded that the life span of this wood is 20 to 30 years, and stains last 10 to 12 years.

Commissioner Trout-Oertel moved approval of the application striking the second condition. Commissioner Dana seconded. Discussion took place regarding which of the three concepts (stain/paint the wood darker, maintain the current look, or cultivate a weathered look) is most appropriate and how to leave those options open for the applicant. Mr. Lawrence stated his preference to maintain the current appearance and Ms. Engrav agreed. Upon Ms. Spong's suggestion about appropriate language to leave options open, Commissioner Trout-Oertel amended the motion to include a reworded second condition: "The applicant may propose that the wood have paint or stain applied that would reduce its visual impact. Final details shall be submitted to the HPC/staff for final review and approval." Commissioner Trimble noted that the applicant already stated they don't wish to make any changes, and he has no problem requiring them to work with staff on a solution. The motion passed 5-3 (Hill, Mazanec, Trimble).

VIII. Old Business:

A. 727 Fifth Street East, Dayton's Bluff Historic District, Cha Thao, owner requested that the HPC reconsider the motion from File #13-006 and extend the timeline for completion of the work at his home. Half of the work has been completed, but the weather has made it too dangerous to install the storm windows at the second floor. Staff recommended that the commission grant a 90 day extension. **Commissioner Dana motioned to extend the timeline 90 days (June 4, 2013) and stated that the owner has made a good faith effort. Commissioner Mazanec seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.**

IX. New Business:

X. Motion to Adjourn: 6:24 p.m.

Submitted by: C. Boulware