

**SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA**  
Lower Level – Room 41, City Hall/Court House, 15 West Kellogg Boulevard  
**May 8, 2014**

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**Present:** Barbara Bezat, Richard Dana, Robert Ferguson, Michael Justin, Bill Lightner, Amy Meller, David Riehle, Steve Trimble

**Absent:** Matt Hill, Renee Hutter, Matt Mazanec, Diane Trout-Oertel, David Wagner

**Staff Present:** Amy Spong, Christine Boulware, Bill Dermody, John Beaty

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**BUSINESS MEETING**

**I. Call to Order 5:05 pm**

**II. Approval of the Agenda** Commissioner Trimble moved to approve the agenda with an additional committee item; Commissioner Riehle seconded the motion.

**III. Approval of the meeting minutes** Commissioner Riehle moved to approve the minutes. Chair Dana clarified a statement he made in the April 24<sup>th</sup> minutes on page five. Commissioner Bezat seconded the motion as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

**A.** April 10, 2014 Business Meeting

**B.** April 24, 2014 Public Hearing

**IV. Chair's Announcements**

Commissioner Meller stated a conflict of interest with Item VII. B and noted that she will recuse herself.

**V. Staff Announcements**

**A.** Staff announced the acceptance of a Certified Local Government grant for ordinance text amendments.

**B.** Staff discussed the Heritage Preservation Awards on May 20<sup>th</sup>.

**VI. Public Hearing/Permit Review**

**A. Western Avenue between Selby and Marshall Avenues, Hill Heritage Preservation District**, by Barbara Mundahl, City of Saint Paul Public Works - Street Engineering, for a Certificate of Approval for new street, curbs, bump-outs, sidewalks, boulevards, street lights, pedestrian ramps and trees. File #14-021 (Spong, 266-6714)

Staff read aloud the report recommending conditional approval of the application for a Certificate of Approval.

Staff presented photos and plans of the proposal.

Commissioner Trimble commented on the use of retail on the bottom floor of residential buildings.

Chair Dana clarified the locations of the recommendations.

Ms. Spong referenced sheet 15 showing the ADA ramps and noted the acceptable option.

Chair Dana inquired as to if Heritage Preservation Commission staff had discussed the proposal with Public Works staff prior to the application; Ms. Spong responded that she had and had addressed concerns with the installation of bump-outs.

Chair Dana requested clarification that the stance of the Minnesota Department of Transportation is that there is no negative impact reflects the guidelines within the National Register District boundaries, and not the local district; Ms. Spong confirmed that was correct.

Commissioner Trimble inquired as to if the discussions staff had with Public Works were useful or successful; Ms. Spong discussed the nature of these discussions and the current and past safety regulations.

Commissioner Lightner stated his support for bump-outs to increase safety at the intersection. Ms. Spong noted that the bump-outs may not be the only tool and that other options should be considered.

Commissioner Meller inquired as to if other safety options had been discussed; Ms. Spong responded that the question was asked, but Public Works determined bump-outs to be the solution.

Commissioner Ferguson requested clarification that the hex tiles are being recommended to not be installed in any bump-outs; Ms. Spong confirmed that was correct.

Barb Mundahl and Monica Beeman, from the City of Saint Paul Department of Public Works, were present to discuss the proposal.

Ms. Mundahl addressed each condition and discussed how public works could or could not accomplish them.

Commissioner Trimble addressed the use of hackberry trees and suggested that only one species be used; Ms. Mundahl agreed.

Ms. Beeman discussed the bump-outs and stated the intent and reasoning for proposing bump-outs noting the crash history of the intersection and the number of incidents that have occurred.

Commissioner Bezat inquired as to the number of people who cross at this intersection; Ms. Beeman did not have specific numbers, but noted that this is a high pedestrian traffic intersection.

Commissioner Ferguson referenced the guidelines and inquired as to if Public Works had explored all other road options; Ms. Beeman stated that there are few physical improvements that could solve the problem needing to be addressed.

Chair Dana referenced the intersection of Grand Avenue and Victoria Avenue, where there are no bump-outs, and inquired as to if there are pedestrian issues there; Ms. Beeman stated that she is unfamiliar with the history of this intersection.

Commissioner Lightner requested that Ms. Beeman discuss the results of the bump-outs in other parts of Selby Avenue; Ms. Beeman did not have supporting documents, but discussed the neighborhoods positive response.

Chair Dana inquired as to if there are any conditions that Public Works cannot comply with; Ms. Beeman stated that half-size bump-outs would not be acceptable.

Commissioner Trimble described the first pedestrian death on Selby Avenue by an automobile and inquired as to if there has been a decrease in deaths since the installation of other bump-outs; Ms. Beeman noted that there are not numbers for Saint Paul and discussed the national recommendation where the application for

the bump-outs came from.

Commissioner Justin noted the memorial tree planted at the intersection and inquired whether it will be retained; Ms. Mundahl was not aware and noted that she will speak to forestry.

Chair Dana inquired as to the use of signage at the intersections; Ms. Beeman noted that the issue is not signage, but being able to enforce the regulation.

Commissioner Bezat inquired as to if any original brick will be retained; Ms. Mundahl noted that they have not found any brick, but that if any is found an attempt will be made to salvage them.

**Ms. Spong read aloud an e-mail from T. Weber in support of the application for bump-outs.**

**The public hearing was closed.**

**Commissioner Trimble moved to adopt the staff recommendation for conditional approval; Commissioner Bezat seconded the motion.**

Commissioner Riehle stated belief that the Commission should take the advice of the engineer for the intersection and that safety should be considered before aesthetics.

Commissioner Bezat noted the number of pedestrian incidents and stated support of the motion.

Commissioner Lightner discussed the proposal and noted that the safety of the intersection is more important than the aesthetics of the intersection. He also noted that the adoption of staff recommendation may set an undesirable precedent.

Ms. Spong responded to the use of the word "aesthetics" and noted that this is a separate issue than preserving the historic street pattern and that the guidelines do not address aesthetics, but rather character and preserving character.

Commissioner Ferguson noted agreement with the engineer regarding the use of bump-outs and reiterated the statement by staff that aesthetics are not a part of the guidelines.

Commissioner Meller discussed other traffic strategies that have been used and noted the preference for the alternatives that were discussed. She also noted that there is a lack of visual connection to the original streetscape.

Commissioner Riehle retracted the use of the word "aesthetics" and noted that the installation of the bump-outs will not remove any historic fabric and can potentially be reversed.

Chair Dana noted where the installation of the bump-outs may impact buildings within the historic districts.

Commissioner Trimble noted that there has not been proof that the bump-outs have an effect on the intersection.

Commissioner Lightner noted that if this motion passes that it will have an impact on future traffic decisions.

Commissioner Ferguson addressed the hex tiles and inquired as to where they historically were placed; Ms. Boulware noted that they were in several neighborhoods and that staff is working with Public Works staff to preserve and re-interpret them. A discussion was had regarding hex tiles.

**The motion passed 4-3 (Riehle, Lightner, Ferguson).**

## **VII. Pre-Application Review**

**A. 740 Seventh Street East, Dayton's Bluff Heritage Preservation District**, by Gail A. Graham, Mississippi Market Co-op, for a follow-up discussion to the preliminary review held on February 13, 2014 regarding the proposed construction of a two-and-one-half story building at the southwest corner of East Seventh and Maple Streets. The building footprint will be approximately 15,000 sq. ft. with a 56 stall parking lot to the south (rear) of the store. (Dermody, 266-6617)

Staff summarized the changes that had been made since the last application.

Gail Graham from Mississippi Market and R.B. Cornwall from LHB Architects were present to represent the application.

Mr. Cornwall discussed the aspects that were discussed at the last meeting and the changes that have been made since then.

Ms. Boulware clarified the importance of the placement of the solar panels.

Chair Dana inquired as to the size of the parapet; Mr. Cornwall replied that the intention is to have them be as minimal as possible and on the rear side of the building.

Commissioner Riehle inquired as to the grade of the hill; Mr. Cornwall replied that it is approximately six or seven percent. Commissioner Riehle commented on the favorable position of the building for solar panels.

Commissioner Riehle commented on the "renewables" and inquired as to a possible setback; Mr. Cornwall discussed possible options and cost concerns.

Chair Dana referred to a square piece of land on the drawings and inquired as to its purpose; Mr. Cornwall discussed possible uses for this piece of land. Ms. Graham noted the ownership status of the piece of land.

Chair Dana noted the cast stone wall base and suggested that it be utilized around the entire building; Mr. Cornwall discussed why it is only proposed on certain elevations. A discussion was had regarding the potential heights of the wall around the building.

Ms. Spong noted that she does not feel that the brick base needs to extend all the way across, but suggested different placement for some of the existing sections. The discussion continued regarding the base of the wall.

Commissioner Lightner suggested that the brick wall begin to step after the large window.

Chair Dana inquired as to the proposed material type; Mr. Cornwall discussed possible options.

Commissioner Meller discussed the rhythm and massing of the base and brickwork.

Commissioner Ferguson referenced the building across the street from the proposal and discussed possible comparisons for stepping down.

Chair Dana referenced the glass block and suggested that is it not normally allowed; Mr. Cornwall discussed the reasons for proposing the glass block.

Commissioner Ferguson requested confirmation that Mr. Cornwall would be willing to explore alternatives to the glass block; Mr. Cornwall confirmed.

Chair Dana and Mr. Cornwall discussed various design details and material specifications of the current proposal.

Commissioner Lighter referenced the fiber cement panels and inquired as to the meaning of “closed joints”; Mr. Cornwall described what this means and noted that there will be further details. A discussion was had regarding the design of the window details and mechanics.

Mr. Beaty referenced a design detail of the cast stone wall; Mr. Cornwall noted that this is a drawing error.

Commissioner Ferguson thanked the applicants for re-thinking the panels.

Commissioner Riehle inquired as to the objection to glass block; Chair Dana explained how glass block does not conform to the guidelines.

**B. Southeast corner of Seventh Street East and Bates Avenue, Dayton’s Bluff Historic District**, by Owen Metz, Dominium, for a preliminary review to construct a new, 109-unit, four-story apartment building with a 32,000 sq. ft. footprint. Parking includes 90 interior stalls and a 33 stall surface parking lot to the south. (Boulevard, 266-6715)

Staff read aloud the report and presented images and visual materials of the proposal.

Commissioner Lightner requested clarification on the finding for the metal materials; Ms. Boulware clarified in what area the metal is proposed and where it is appropriate to use on the building.

Commissioner Lightner requested clarification regarding the use of the decks on the proposal; Ms. Boulware discussed the deck placement and design in context with the district and the design of historic porches and decks.

Commissioner Ferguson requested that Ms. Boulware identify the location of the hard-board siding; Ms. Boulware noted where the hard-board siding is proposed. A discussion was had regarding the various siding materials proposed in multiple areas of the building.

Ms. Boulware noted the suggestion to the applicant to minimize siding materials and/or to utilize a cohesive color palette. The discussion continued regarding the siding materials.

Commissioner Bezat requested confirmation on the reason for the placement of the parking area; Ms. Boulware confirmed and noted circulation and traffic concerns.

Commissioner Riehle inquired as to the size of the building in comparison to other buildings; Ms. Boulware replied that the proposed building footprint is comparably larger than other buildings in the immediate area.

Jake Reilly, a Senior Planner with PED Zoning Staff, was present to discuss the proposal.

Mr. Reilly stated that there are currently no issues regarding setback or height with the proposal.

Chair Dana requested confirmation that no additional variances will be required; Mr. Reilly confirmed.

A discussion was had regarding potential setbacks that would be allowed or required with this building.

Commissioner Trimble inquired as to the purpose of the amendment to the Zoning Code to allow for a 45-foot high building with a Conditional Use Permit; Mr. Reilly discussed why this amendment was proposed and clarified that it was not to specifically address this proposal.

Ms. Boulware inquired as to the material proposed for the columns; Mr. Palkowitsch replied that the drawing was intended to show the form design, and not the material.

Patrick Ostrom from Dominion and Chris Palkowitsch and Gary Vogel from BKV Group were present to discuss the proposal.

Mr. Ostrom discussed the current status of the project and the projected start date.

Commissioner Trimble inquired as to the use of affordable housing; Mr. Ostrom stated that the project will fall under the guidelines for affordable housing.

Chair Dana inquired as to if there is visual information available to show what one might see east of the site; Mr. Ostrom noted that this is not currently available.

Mr. Vogel discussed the sloping of the site in relation to the proposed height of the building.

Chair Dana inquired as to why this building is proposed to be the large size; Mr. Vogel and Mr. Palkowitsch discussed the size of the building in order to accommodate as many units as possible.

A discussion was had regarding potential square-footage of the building in relation to the Zoning Code and the surrounding area. Potential conflicts were discussed between the Zoning Code and the Dayton's Bluff Historic District Guidelines.

Mr. Ostrom noted that Dominion would prefer to have the setback shown in the current plan to allow for additional amenities and security.

Commissioner Trimble discussed the setback and inquired as to why the applicant is proposing balconies on the building. A discussion was had regarding the balcony placement and purpose.

Commissioner Bezat suggested that the Commission discuss the massing, the flat roof dormers and inquired as to what other recommendations the applicants have received; Mr. Palkowitsch discussed the design details of these aspects and how they were influenced by or introduced in the project.

Chair Dana inquired as to what the area on each porch indicates on the drawings; it was noted that these represent closets to house the mechanical units.

Commissioner Lightner noted the aspects of the design that he approved of and; inquired as to why the mansard roof is flat, not pitched, and if it can be another material; noted the ground level underneath the balconies and potential security issues; and commended the staff report on the findings for the entrances.

Mr. Vogel discussed potential options for the area underneath the balconies.

Mr. Palkowitsch discussed the entry and noted that there will likely be more revisions and discussed possible roof options for the west entrance; Ms. Spong suggested that a shed roof could be used. A discussion was had regarding the roof and entrance design.

Chair Dana and Mr. Vogel discussed the follow-up of this meeting and the proposal. Ms. Spong noted that the purpose of the HPC process is to also allow for public comment and noted that there should not be excessive pre-application reviews. A discussion was had regarding the public process.

Commissioner Trimble inquired as to the purpose of the “public plaza”; Mr. Vogel replied that the intention is to have this available to the general public.

Commissioner Trimble expressed personal concerns with the proposal.

Commissioner Lightner inquired as to if Commissioner Trimble would prefer to see a style of building that looks more separated; Commissioner Trimble replied that this is not his concern.

Chair Dana began to summarize the discussion.

Ms. Spong noted that the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions is hosting a session on using details and design to address massing as part of the 2013 Forum and suggested that this is reflective of a national problem.

Mr. Vogel noted that a portion of the building is outside of the district; Ms. Boulware replied that an HPC Resolution (1-12-06) was adopted stating that Council President Lantry requested that HPC review construction for the entire site.

Mr. Vogel inquired as to if there was a stand-alone building on the portion not in the district if it would be reviewed by the HPC; Ms. Spong replied that the proposal may fall under review for view sheds from the district.

Ms. Boulware requested that the spandrel design be addressed.

Commissioner Ferguson discussed the design details in relation to the district, staff findings, and historically appropriate design details. A discussion was had regarding appropriate design details.

Chair Dana continued to summarize the discussion and noted that little was brought up outside of the staff findings.

Ms. Boulware requested clear direction from the Commission for the eastern entrance.

Chair Dana noted that the building lacks a distinct entry.

Commissioner Lightner noted that the public plaza hides the entrance and suggested that it could highlight the entrance. Mr. Vogel noted that the public plaza leads into an interior private space for the residents.

## **VIII. Committee Reports**

Ms. Spong presented background information for the Western Avenue proposal and discussion and discussed the potential future process for the current proposal.

## **IX. Adjourn 8:49pm**

Submitted by R.Cohn