

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION
CITY OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA
Lower Level – Room 41, City Hall/Court House, 15 West Kellogg Boulevard
December 19, 2013

Present: Richard Laffin, Richard Dana, Renee Hutter Barnes, Barbara Bezat, Robert Ferguson, Matt Hill, Michael Justin, Bill Lightner, David Riehle, Steve Trimble

Absent: Matt Mazanec (not excused), Diane Trout-Oertel (excused), David Wagner (excused)

Staff Present: Amy Spong, Christine Boulware, John Beaty

PUBLIC HEARING/DESIGN REVIEW

I. Call to Order 5:10pm

II. Approval of the Agenda Staff added item VIII. B. Commissioner Bezat motioned to approve the agenda; Commissioner Dana seconded the motion.

III. Conflicts of Interest None were stated.

IV. Chair's Announcements None were stated.

V. Staff Announcements

A. Staff announced that the owners of 25 Empire Drive have received a Legacy Grant to complete rehabilitation on the property and correct structural issues.

B. Staff discussed the Lowertown Ballpark design and suggested that the Commission discuss the design again at the January 16th meeting. Ms. Spong stated that there should be a draft resolution and input from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) available at the meeting.

Commissioner Trimble requested that a SHPO representative be present at the meeting; Ms. Spong responded that she will inquire to the SHPO.

C. Staff noted that this is the last meeting that Chair Laffin will serve as Chair and thanked him for his service. Chair Laffin will be present at the annual meeting where the new officers will be nominated.

VI. Old Business None was stated.

VII. Public Hearing/Permit Review

A. 464 Ashland Avenue, Hill Historic District, by Carlsen & Frank Architects, for a building permit to construct an addition to the side and rear of the house, including site grading and a patio. **File #14-009.** (Boulware, 266-6715)

Staff read aloud the report recommending conditional approval of the application for a building permit to construct an addition to the side and rear of the house, including site grading and a patio.

Staff presented images and submitted plans for the application and property.

Commissioner Dana inquired whether final drawings have been approved for the nearby Saint Paul Church home; Ms. Spong stated that they had based on a decision made by the Commission in April 2013.

Commissioner Riehle inquired as to what a tympanum is; Mr. Beaty pointed out a tympanum on the photos.

Commissioner Dana inquired as how much involvement staff has had with the project; Ms. Spong responded that she had one meeting with the architect before the application was submitted.

Commissioner Riehle inquired as to why this application is not a staff approval and why it has been brought to the Commission; Ms. Spong noted that although this is a small addition, it will be visible and require review from the Commission.

Renee Lane (the owner) and Peter Carlsen (the architect) were present to represent the application.

Chair Laffin noted the location of the addition in regard to solar access; Mr. Carlsen presented a drawing and described why the addition needed to be placed where it is proposed.

Chair Laffin inquired as to if the terrace is proposed to be masonry or stucco; Mr. Carlsen noted that it is proposed to be concrete slab based on mobility issues for the owners.

Chair Laffin noted that Mr. Carlsen will continue to consult with staff for project details; Ms. Boulware elaborated on this and Mr. Carlsen agreed.

Chair Laffin inquired as to if Mr. Carlsen considered putting four windows on the south wall as opposed to the three that are currently proposed; Mr. Carlsen described why there are four windows on the west side, and not on the south based on the preferences of the owners.

Commissioner Dana noted the distance between the new Church Home building and this property and inquired how much this distance is; Mr. Carlsen discussed the distance based on the plans for the Church Home.

Commissioner Dana inquired as to if Mr. Carlsen has issue with any conditions proposed by staff; Mr. Carlsen noted concern of the condition to have no raw metal if it applied to copper as the owners have not decided on a gutter material. Staff clarified that copper is acceptable.

Chair Laffin noted the four inch space between the windows and inquired whether that is accurate or is this would be a window unit; Mr. Carlsen noted that this is due to the drawing convention and will be installed as a whole unit without mullions.

No written testimony was received and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Dana moved to approve the application with the conditions from staff; Commissioner Hutter-Barnes seconded the motion.

Commissioner Riehle expressed support for the motion and the proposed design.

Commissioner Ferguson expressed support for the motion, and noted particular support for condition number four.

The motion passed 10-0.

VIII. New Business

A. Streetcar Feasibility Study Recommendations - adopt a resolution providing comment to the Planning Commission. (Boulware, 266-6715)

Michelle Beaulieu, St. Paul City Planner and Project Manager, was present to discuss the current status of the Streetcar Feasibility Study. Ms. Beaulieu noted that this is the beginning of the public participation portion of the study.

Ms. Beaulieu gave a presentation of the current status of the Streetcar Feasibility Study.

Commissioner Trimble inquired as to how the need for 1,700 new transit people was decided; Ms. Beaulieu described how this number was determined on various factors related to current transit, predicted development, and case studies in other cities.

Commissioner Trimble inquired as to if there is a predicted number of fewer riders on the bus lines and if the subsidies will increase; Ms. Beaulieu noted that the current statistics are predictions and are primarily for comparing one streetcar line to another, and not necessarily bus routes.

Commissioner Trimble discussed the possible changes associated with the fare of the streetcar compared to the current bus fare; Ms. Beaulieu noted that the streetcar fare would be the same as the local bus fare.

Commissioner Dana noted an outside study that predicted that each streetcar ride would be seven dollars and asked Ms. Beaulieu to respond to this; Ms. Beaulieu noted that the numbers available are preliminary and are dependent on multiple variables and will continue to vary.

Commissioner Lightner referenced the West 7th line and noted a duplicate number in the report; Ms. Beaulieu noted that this is a typo and discussed the predicted ridership. Chair Laffin inquired as to if Ms. Beaulieu knew the correct number; Ms. Beaulieu noted that it should be 1,800. Ms. Boulware noted additional development in the West 7th area that may increase predicted ridership.

Commissioner Dana inquired as to the variable of getting from Randolph to the Ford Site area; Ms. Beaulieu noted that trips of this length will be explored in an upcoming phase of the study.

Commissioner Hill inquired to staff as to what the Commissioners should be considering regarding the resolution; Ms. Spong noted that staff will provide a draft resolution at the January 16th and asked the Commission to provide suggestions of what should be included in the resolution.

Commissioner Bezat noted that the biggest impact may be in Downtown and suggested that the Commission will continue to discuss the study as more information develops; staff agreed.

Commissioner Bezat inquired as to how the word “legibility” translates to transportation issues; Ms. Beaulieu noted that is in reference to the clearly labeled cars and direction of the tracts.

Commissioner Dana noted that there is a video available online for the Streetcar Feasibility Study and suggested the Commission view it.

Ms. Beaulieu discussed the development potential explored as a part of the study including capital costs and other logistic concerns. Ms. Beaulieu noted upcoming public meetings in neighborhoods where initial lines are proposed to be installed. Ms. Beaulieu noted that the recommendation that will come out of this study will be to continue additional phases of study.

Ms. Boulware shared a map overlapping the proposed streetcar lines and the historic districts maps. Ms. Boulware summarized potential impacted features of the districts.

Commissioner Trimble suggested an alternative route for one of the proposed lines and suggested that it may increase ridership; Ms. Beaulieu noted that these alternative routes had been studied, but did not score as high as the currently proposed line and noted other factors that make the currently proposed line ideal.

Commissioner Hill referenced the memo provided and requested confirmation that the final recommendation will be to advance the study to the next stage of further analysis; staff confirmed. Commissioner Hill requested an estimate on how many individual sites will be potentially impacted; Staff listed several properties and discussed other sites of potential impact. Ms. Boulware noted that there will be a more comprehensive list compiled during future phases.

Chair Laffin inquired as to the aspects of streetcar design that inspire ridership; Ms. Beaulieu referenced legibility, comfort of the ride, the assumed stigma of the bus, and the permanence of the tracks.

A short discussion was had regarding the stigma of taking the bus.

Commissioner Trimble referenced the money allotted for transit and inquired as to what it will be used for; Ms. Beaulieu noted that this is partially designated for the study.

Commissioner Lightner referenced the assumed operating subsidy for the streetcar and inquired as to if this subsidy would come from the City, if it would be incorporated into the existing transportation budget, or if it would be an additional cost; Ms. Beaulieu discussed the current regional discussions regarding financing of future public transportation and how the streetcar would be included in this conversation.

Commissioner Hill expressed support of transportation and hope that the upcoming studies will include more specific financial details. Commissioner Hill inquired as to how the Commission would benefit from the resolution and suggested that the HPC be included in all future planning of the project. Commissioner Hill referenced the financial studies in other cities and suggested that the Commission continue to study potential financial incentives.

Commissioner Riehle requested clarification that the streetcar would be operated by Metro Transit; Ms. Beaulieu responded that this has not yet been determined, but that it would be ideal for the streetcar system to be incorporated into existing transit.

Commissioner Riehle inquired as to if City Council is going ahead with the study and resolution without support from Metro Transit; Ms. Beaulieu noted that discussions have been had with both parties, but no final decisions have been made.

Commissioner Ferguson noted that there are other transit studies currently being done.

Commissioner Lightner requested clarification of the preservation impacts of the installation of a streetcar and noted belief that it would be a positive impact; Ms. Spong discussed the considerations regarding infrastructure and construction regarding the preservation impacts. Ms. Spong noted the Section 106 process to determine preservation impacts and mitigation techniques.

Commissioner Hill noted that special districts could be created to look more broadly at supporting preservation in the city.

Commissioner Ferguson suggested that the preservation impacts be discussed in consideration with the history of the original streetcar routes and related development. Commissioner Ferguson discussed positive aspects of the streetcar in context of pedestrian friendly neighborhoods and a recovery of the historic urban fabric. Staff discussed the potential historic infrastructure impacts of the streetcar installation.

Commissioner Riehle noted that original streetcars were installed on rails due to the road material available at the time and suggested the removal of the original streetcar was due to the lack of connection with the post-war suburbs. Commissioner Riehle discussed potential impacts and made suggestions for the City Council to incorporate more historic details into the design of the streetcar system.

Commissioner Bezat inquired as to if the intention of the streetcar is to encourage historic development patterns.

Commissioner Trimble noted that the impact of individual buildings should also be considered; Ms. Spong discussed how this can be done. Ms. Boulware noted that potential sites identified in previous historic resource studies will also be considered.

Commissioner Hill inquired as to how far along the funding conversations are; Ms. Beaulieu noted that conversations have been had at the regional level and referenced discussions with Minneapolis and case studies of funding conversations happening in other cities.

B. Motion to hold the HPC Annual Meeting on the Thursday, January 16th.

Ms. Spong summarized Article IV in the bylaws regarding the HPC annual meeting and requested a motion to hold the annual meeting on January 16th after the conclusion of the regular meeting.

Commissioner Riehle motioned to hold the Annual Meeting following the regular meeting on January 16th; Commissioner Dana seconded the motion. The motion passed 10-0.

IX. Committee Reports None were stated.

X. Motion to Adjourn 6:50pm

Submitted by R.Cohn