

MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2016
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ROOM

Members Present: Chairman Smunt, Pretz, Bobowiec, Norris, Withey

Members Absent: Gibson, Malay

Also Present: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager
Ellen Johnson, Planner

1. Call to order

Chairman Smunt called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll call

Chairman Smunt called roll with five members present. There was a quorum.

3. Approval of agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

4. Presentation of minutes of the January 6, 2016 meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Bobowiec and seconded by Mr. Norris with a unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes.

5. PUD Preliminary Plan: First Street Redevelopment Phase 3 – Building #2

Mr. Colby displayed a diagram showing where Building #2 is to be located.

Bob Rasmussen, applicant, explained they are switching from a plan that included apartment units with balconies to a plan that includes a hotel. He noted Dan Marshall, architect, gave the building a more historical look. He said they eliminated the balconies, increased the number of windows, and changed the general look of the building.

Mr. Rasmussen said the footprint and the façade stayed fairly similar, as did the materials and texture. However, the big difference on this building is on the north elevation. There is now a T-shaped section coming out of the back, which is set back 35 ft. from the north elevation of the

main portion of the building and covers most of the north end of the parking garage. This addition to the building will be used for a pool. Their intent is to have a family-oriented hotel, and a franchise hotel would require they have a pool. He said they would still have approximately half of the outdoor dining area they originally had, along with a restaurant on the first floor at the north end of the building.

Chairman Smunt asked if there would be any interest in adding balconies to the river side of the hotel. Mr. Rasmussen said they could do it, but noted he has not seen many hotels with balconies in recent years.

Chairman Smunt asked about their color selection. Mr. Marshall said it was very preliminary. Mr. Rasmussen noted it would most likely be very similar to the previous rendering.

Mr. Pretz asked what category of hotel this would fall into. Mr. Rasmussen said it would be considered upper mid-scale. He mentioned some of the local competition will be the Marriott Courtyard, Hampton Inn, and Hilton Garden Inn.

Mr. Bobowiec asked if it would be difficult to retrofit the building to condos if the hotel was not successful. Mr. Rasmussen confirmed it would be difficult to do and would require a gut rehab, but based on market studies he does not foresee any issues with the hotel being successful.

Mr. Pretz asked for clarification as to what will be located on the first floor. Mr. Rasmussen said the first floor will include the restaurant, lobby, pool and meeting room. The restaurant will be independent of the hotel.

Mr. Colby noted the Commission should hold off on a recommendation until they have the information on all four elevations. At this time, the Commission should provide preliminary feedback on the design that has been presented thus far. He said this item will be brought before the Plan Commission as early as February 2nd.

Mr. Pretz asked when construction would begin. Mr. Rasmussen said they expect to start at some point during the summer.

A motion was made by Mr. Pretz and seconded by Mr. Norris with a unanimous voice vote to table the item.

6. Additional Business from Commissioners or Staff

a. Follow-up discussion with St. Charles History Museum

Mr. Colby said he and Ms. Johnson met with Alison Costanzo, Executive Director of the St. Charles History Museum, to discuss potential collaboration opportunities between the Historic Preservation Commission and the Museum. He said Ms. Costanzo suggested having a representative from the Commission serve on their Education Committee. Ms. Johnson noted this is their most active committee and they meet once per month, as needed. Mr. Colby said they also discussed collaborating on an educational event at the museum about researching and landmarking houses.

Mr. Bobowiec suggested having some kind of material available in the museum's lobby that promotes the Historic Preservation Commission's web presence on the City's website. Mr. Colby said Ms. Costanzo would like some kind of pamphlet that provides basic information about what landmarking is and how to pursue it.

The Commissioners suggested they check with Mr. Gibson or Ms. Malay to see if either one would be interested in serving on the Education Committee.

Chairman Smunt referred to their previous discussion regarding the historic walking tour app. He felt the Downtown St. Charles Partnership would be the appropriate organization to coordinate a downtown St. Charles app. He noted the Partnership is involved with many local entities which also serve on their Board. Mr. Bobowiec said the City would eventually be the one to manage the app. He said the Partnership could develop it, but the City has the in-house technical support to manage it. Mr. Colby felt the role of the City would be through the Economic Development Division in collaboration with a group such as the Downtown Partnership.

Mr. Bobowiec said promotion/marketing is key in getting the word out about the app.

b. Discussion Regarding COA process

Mr. Colby expressed concern over the administration of the Terms & Conditions checklist, which is proposed to be attached to the COA form. He said something may get overlooked by having the applicant initial every item and then sign it. He felt there might be situations where they sign the COA form, but miss the Terms & Conditions. Mr. Colby said his preference would be to continue to have the applicant sign the COA form and acknowledge they agree to the Terms & Conditions, and then use the Terms & Conditions form as a handout attached to the COA form that can be distributed by the Building Division. He said it could create confusion if the person has to sign their name in multiple spots. Mr. Colby noted the sheet will be handed to people when they apply for a permit. It will be in a different color so it will get noticed.

Mr. Norris suggested having all the required signatures at the end of the document, similar to the way contracts are signed.

Mr. Colby also suggested highlighting the Terms & Conditions at the Historic Preservation Commission meeting and asking if the representative understands it. This gives the representative an opportunity to ask questions. He said the person attending the meeting is the person who represents the application and understands what the Commission's decision was. They should be the one responsible for acknowledging the conditions, not the person picking up the permit.

Mr. Colby said the process would be as follows:

- Applicant receives the Historic Preservation COA Terms & Conditions form when they come in to apply for a permit.
- Applicant is given an opportunity to ask questions at the meeting and is expected to sign off on the terms when they are granted the COA.
- Applicant is given a copy of the signed form when they pick up the permit.

Mr. Bobowiec said by creating this process, it will make it difficult for someone to say they were not aware of their responsibilities.

Mr. Colby said they will start using this form/process beginning with the next meeting.

c. Landmarks research

Mr. Colby provided updated Historic Districts and Landmarks maps. The Commission suggested displaying a poster of the map at the St. Charles History Museum.

d. Mail Order Homes

Mr. Colby presented an updated map that shows a shorter list consisting of 20 verified catalog homes. He noted the map and other materials now posted on the City's website refer to these homes as catalog homes instead of mail-order/kit homes, as requested by Chairman Smunt.

Chairman Smunt suggested they conduct an architectural review of each home to determine its level of significance.

Commissioners asked if showing a picture of the actual catalog model would infringe upon copyright laws. Mr. Colby said he would look into this further.

Mr. Colby noted they still have the list of the "possible" catalog homes to work with. He said they might be able to eliminate some by going out to look at the houses and compare them to the catalog floor plan. He asked if the Commission was interested in splitting up the list and doing some on-site comparisons. Mr. Pretz mentioned he has come across some houses that clearly do not match.

Chairman Smunt and Mr. Pretz both indicated having a picture online to compare the home with the catalogue image would be more meaningful than having just a list of the designated homes.

Chairman Smunt suggested they review the verified catalog home list at the next meeting to determine the level of significance of each home.

7. Meeting Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, February 3, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. in the Committee Room.

8. Public Comment

9. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.