



Approved

MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
5:30 p.m.
Thursday, January 21, 2016
City Council Chamber, Historic Federal Building

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Christina Monk; Commissioners Emily Hilgendorf, David Klavitter, Bob McDonell, John McAndrews and Joseph Rapp.

Commissioners Excused: None.

Commissioners Unexcused: None.

Staff Members Present: Laura Carstens and David Johnson.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Monk at 5:33 p.m.

AFFIDAVIT OF COMPLIANCE: Staff presented an Affidavit of Compliance verifying the meeting was being held in compliance with the Iowa Open Meetings Law.

MINUTES: Motion by McDonell, seconded by Hilgendorf, to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2015 meeting as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – McDonell, Monk, McAndrews, Rapp and Hilgendorf; Nay – None; Abstain – Klavitter.

DESIGN REVIEW: Application of Chris Soeder/Dubuque County for a design review to install a freestanding sign located at 36 East 8th Street for a City Landmark.

Commissioners Monk and Hilgendorf explained their architectural firm is assisting with the project and they have a conflict of interest, and therefore, excused themselves from discussion and the table.

Staff presented the staff report. Staff Member Johnson explained Dubuque County is requesting to install one freestanding sign with an electronic message component. He explained the Old Jail building is a City Landmark and a National Historic Landmark. He reviewed the existing freestanding sign is located parallel to the road and will be removed and replaced with a new freestanding sign which will be installed perpendicular to the road. He stated the new freestanding sign will measure approximately nine feet wide and five feet high, and the electronic message component will be 4'3" wide by 1'5" high. He stated the sign will incorporate the jail door used in the existing sign and the remaining portions of the sign will be a random sized limestone veneer. He stated the sign lettering will be a bronzed metal.

He stated Veterans Affairs will be occupying the building. He reviewed Dubuque County's need for the electronic message component of the sign. He noted the electronic message component will announce changes to Veteran regulations and programs as well as announce upcoming events and activities specific to veterans and their families. He noted Dubuque County did consider a completely static sign however it would not adequately inform veterans of current changes in programming.

Staff Member Johnson reviewed the purpose of the architectural guidelines in the application and noted staff has provided a point-by-point analysis of all relevant guidelines for the project in the staff report for the Commission's consideration. He noted the guidelines do not recommend animated message board and internally illuminated signs. He stated the guidelines suggest external illumination and traditional and historic materials in character with the details of the building.

Staff Member Johnson said the Commission needs to consider the building and areas overall context and use as well as the degree of flexibility in order to accommodate adapting and improving the building. Staff Member Johnson in general the electronic message component of the sign may not be considered consistent with the City of Dubuque Architectural Guidelines however all other components of the sign can be considered consistent with the guidelines. Staff Member Johnson stated the role of the Commission in reviewing public projects is to serve as an advisory design review board to City Council. He stated the Commission is asked to review all considerations for the Dubuque County Veterans Affairs sign and make a recommendation to City Council. He explained the Commission's recommendation will be forwarded to Council for their consideration where City Council will review the recommendation and weight that against the County's need for the sign and its components in order to perform its governmental function.

Chris Soeder, Dubuque County Facility Supervisor, 720 Central Avenue, reviewed the project description. He discussed re-use of the Old Jail building for the veterans Affairs Department and the need for extensive information sharing for the public and veterans. He explained the sign will be used to not only promote the Veterans Affairs activities and programs, but also times for the public to access the historic jail. He noted Dubuque County still wants to allow the public an opportunity to enjoy the building's history.

Mr. Soeder reviewed re-use of the existing sign materials as well as new materials for the sign. He noted the building's limestone veneer will complement where the sign's limestone veneer will complement the building's limestone and the bronze lettering will also complement the building. Mr. Soeder stated the jail door used on the previous sign will be utilized as part of the new sign.

The Commission and Mr. Soeder discussed the compatibility of the proposed sign as well as the electronic message center component. Commissioners discussed removing the old jail door from the proposed sign to reduce the sign's visual impact and potential

distraction from the building. The Commission noted that the jail door does not visually obscure much and therefore would not have too great a visual impact in terms of the building or the sign's size and scale in relationship to the building.

The Commission discussed the electronic message center component. The applicant explained the electronic message component of the sign is the smallest possible size allowed.

The Commission discussed the illumination of the sign. Staff Member Johnson noted if the Commission is concerned about light pollution, the Commission has required in previous design reviews for digital signs that the background use darker colors, no flashing or animation, and maintain static messages whenever possible in order to minimize light pollution.

The Commission discussed alternative sign designs with different sizes and placement of lettering as well as the electronic message center configuration. The Commission discussed alternatives for the amount of limestone as well as removal of the old jail door and how the static lettering can be best illuminated.

The Commission reviewed the height of the sign as well as the placement of the sign in relationship to the building and street. Mr. Soeder clarified the freestanding sign is proposed as close to the street as possible so as to not detract from the historic building.

The Commission reviewed the location of the electronic message component. Staff Member Johnson stated the electronic message component is likely designed higher in the sign due to on-street parking frequently used along Central Avenue. The Commission noted if the sign is located close enough to the intersection, parking along Central Avenue should not have that great of an impact on visibility of the sign since Central Avenue is a one-way street.

The Commission discussed using a warm white background instead of vibrant colors such as red light sources. The Commission also noted the electronic message component should be subordinate to the lettering and also suggested illuminating the lettering from the ground.

Mr. Soeder reviewed the existing signage as well as the proposed location for the new sign. He clarified the existing sign has been removed, and the previously used jail door will be relocated and incorporated into the new sign. He reviewed photos as well as the site plan provided by Dubuque County. He clarified the electronic message center component will be two-sided for pedestrian traffic as well as vehicular traffic, will be full color, and medium density lighting.

The Commission stated electronic message signs are not in keeping with historic districts or national historic landmarks, but they understood what the Veterans Affairs

Department is attempting to accomplish in conveying information to veterans. The Commission discussed re-using or removing the old jail door. The Commission stated they were in support of the materials and scale of the sign; however, their preference is that the sign not have an electronic message center component. The Commission stated if City Council feels the electronic message center component is necessary, they would recommend a monochrome, soft white light and that the electronic message center component be located beneath the static letter of the sign.

Motion by Klavitter, seconded by McDonell, to recommend City Council approve the materials of the monument sign as presented to be in accordance with the City of Dubuque Architectural Guidelines without an electronic message center component. However, if City Council feels the electronic message center component is needed, the Commission recommends the electronic message center component not be animated or flash, have a monochrome, warm white illumination, be subordinate and below the static lettering for the sign and the static lettering be illuminated externally also using a warm white light.

Motion carried by the following vote: Aye: Klavitter, McDonell, McAndrews and Rapp; Nay - None; Abstain – Monk and Hilgendorf.

ITEMS FROM PUBLIC: None.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSION:

Work Plan Update: Staff Member Johnson reviewed the updated format and progress on the work plan. He discussed the economic impact study, noting a new work plan sheet has been prepared aligning the process and anticipated steps. He referred the Commission to the media release for the National Register of Historic Places Districts that was created. He noted he was interviewed by KATH locally as well as NPR out of the Quad Cities in response to the story.

National Register Listings: The Commission questioned the status of the identification signs for the National Register Districts. Staff Member Carstens report that the Commission's request has been submitted as a budget improvement request for Council's consideration. She stated more information should be available in February.

The Commission reviewed the importance of property owners being aware of the financial incentives of being located in National Register districts and discussed correspondence with recently listed property owners. Staff Member Johnson noted property owners are not provided individual notification after the nomination process is complete. However, every property owner within a proposed district is provided notice and an opportunity to comment during the process. The Commission discussed sending property owners' post cards notifying them of the formal listing on the National Register as well as a link to information outlining the financial benefits of the National Register.

Staff Member Johnson noted a number of residential property owners in National Register districts will never benefit from state or federal tax credits. However, there are a number of other financial incentives related to historic preservation that may be of interest to them. Staff Member Johnson recommended the Commission broaden their outreach to include information about additional financial incentives that might be more practical for residential property owners as well.

The Commission and staff discussed hosting a financial incentives workshop in recognition of Historic Preservation Month in May. The Commission noted the workshop could be a discussion of local, state and federal financial incentives, which can raise awareness of resources available to historic property owners.

The Commission questioned whether City Channel 8 would be interested in running Aps on the National Register Districts. Staff Member Carstens noted they are made aware of the efforts; however, she is unsure whether the City Cable Department has the time or interest in such a program. The Commission requested Planning Services staff contact the State Historic Preservation Office to inquire about their interest in participating in a financial incentives workshop in May.

Eagle Point Park: The Commission inquired on the status of the National Register nomination for Eagle Point Park. Staff Member Carstens explained Dr. Julie Schlarman is making great progress on the nomination. She noted the first draft has been submitted and the State Historic Preservation Office found few edits for the documents. She explained those revisions are currently being made. Staff Member Johnson stated Dr. Julie Schlarman is on track to present the revised nomination to the State Nominations Review Committee at their June 10, 2016 meeting.

The Commission discussed considering National Register Nominations for Linwood and Mt. Calvary Cemeteries as well as St. John's Lutheran Cemetery, noting their historical significance. Staff Member Carstens stated the city does not have a budget to undertake those registration projects and encouraged the Commission to pursue those nominations independently.

Unified Development Code Amendments: The Commission reviewed previous discussion between staff and the Commission regarding staff support for proposed amendments to the Unified Development Code with regard to the Commission's authority and review of site development for new construction in historic districts. Commissioner McDonell stated he recalled recently seeing City staff support in the form of a task force for a zoning issue. Staff Member Carstens noted Planning Services staff hasn't made any recent text amendments to the Ordinance and is not aware of any task force having been formed. She reiterated the City Attorney's position that the Historic Preservation Commission may independently research their concerns and present findings and recommendations to City Council regarding that issue. Commissioner McDonell stated he would do further research to learn what issue he recalled City Council allocating staff support to.

ITEMS FROM STAFF:

Building Services Historic Preservation Enforcement Report: Staff Member Johnson reviewed updates to the Historic Preservation Enforcement Report, welcoming questions.

Staff Member Johnson confirmed the estate has been settled at 1921 Madison Street and enforcement will continue as planned.

Staff Member Johnson stated he is unaware of the results of the hearing that was scheduled for January 20th, but will inquire further with the Legal Services Department.

Staff Approvals: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Rapp, seconded by Klavitter to adjourn the January 21, 2016 Commission meeting. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Klavitter, McDonell, Monk, McAndrews, Rapp, and Hilgendorf; Nay – None.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Carstens, Planning Services Manager

Adopted