

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, February 16, 2017, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 214, 2nd Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE Liz Bavitz, Tim Francis, Melissa Dirr Gengler, Jim Hewitt, Jim Johnson, and Jim McKee, and Greg Munn; Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong Hageman, and Amy Huffman of the Planning Department.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Chair Greg Munn called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

The opportunity was given for persons with limited time or with an item not appearing on the agenda to address the Commission.

Munn requested a motion approving the minutes for the meeting of January 19, 2017. Motion for approval made by Bavitz, seconded by Hewitt and carried 7-0: Bavitz, Gengler, Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, McKee, and Munn voting 'yes'.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT 800 Q STREET, IN THE HAYMARKET LANDMARK DISTRICT (UD17002). **FEBRUARY 16, 2017**

Members present: Bavitz, Gengler, Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, McKee, and Munn.

Ryan Haffey, Nebraska Sign Company, stated the new bottom panel on the corner projecting sign will have the same treatments that were there before and will be illuminated by existing spotlights.

As for the sign on the canopy, the placement is still up in the air. A location at the leading edge of the canopy would be more visible than what is currently shown on the brick wall.

Kuhlman asked if the sign is only letters. Haffey said the sign has a background and is in the same placement as the former Twin Peaks sign. It is a straightforward sign.

Johnson asked whether the applicant would need to return once they decide on the exact location of the sign, either at the back or on the canopy. Zimmer said they would not if the intention of this body is to state that either location is acceptable. He also noted the presence

of the vinyl sign on the brick wall. McKee noted nothing was attached there before.

Regarding the canopy sign, Munn said it can be seen from the sidewalk. Haffey said that the view is almost blocked when entering the Haymarket. If it is brought out, the sign is visible while driving in. There are already mounting provisions for a sign that is already there.

Hewitt asked if the Oklahoma Joe's location runs all the way to the east. Haffey said that Oklahoma Joe's is in the middle of the building. They share an entrance with Yowie's. He is not sure how the interior will be split. It could be front to back. Zimmer said they share a vestibule but have separate entrances. Haffey agreed that it makes sense that Yowie's continues and the new franchise would be directly under the canopy.

Munn asked if the proposal meets sign regulations. Zimmer said it does and there is precedent for allowing this type of signage in the district.

Action:

Motion for approval of the signs, with the location of the canopy sign at either the front of the canopy or to the back, made by McKee, seconded by Johnson.

McKee noted this is an infill building so although it needs to maintain character, it is not as crucial to protect the building.

Motion carried 7-0: Bavitz, Gengler, Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, McKee, and Munn voting 'yes'.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT 247 N. 8TH IN THE H. P. LAU BUILDING IN THE HAYMARKET LANDMARK DISTRICT (UDR17009). **FEBRUARY 16, 2017**

Members present: Bavitz, Gengler, Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, McKee, and Munn.

Tony Persons, Nebraska Sign Company, said this sign proposal is for an arcade bar with an entrance located near the Starlight Lounge on 8th street, with similar signs. On the north, Q Street side, there is an additional stairwell entrance that the applicant would like to be more visually prominent. The consideration is for an illuminated wall sign that includes an arrow to indicate the door, with neon at the edges or surrounding each letter. The sign will project out 24 inches and meets City code. If the sign is built inset, then bulb or neon lights running up and down the sides would be considered.

McKee asked if this would be up- or down-lighting. Persons clarified that lighting would be added to extend out from the edges, but still within the 24 inches, similar to a marquee sign. He noted that some of the signs have been downsized from what was shown in the packet submitted for review. Both entrances will be used.

Randy Strobe, VS. Arcade Bar, said it is hoped that rather than going to Starlight, patrons will see their entrance.

Persons said Speedway Properties was waiting to hear the opinion of HPC first. Johnson asked for confirmation that the marquee sign size was down to 36 inches. Persons confirmed and noted the other sign is below street level.

Jamie Root, VS. Arcade Bar, said that one sign is not visible until a person is halfway down the stairs. Zimmer said a sign under the canopy would be allowed. The challenge is the number of signs.

Gengler asked about the differentiation for the illumination choices. Persons said only one sign will be illuminated. It will be neon regardless of the final design and will likely include either the lit edges, or flat letters outlined in neon. The other option was to have the bulbs along the outside. McKee asked if the bulbs were an option instead of the neon. Persons clarified that the bulbs would be in addition to the neon. They would not be visible from one angle.

Gengler asked which option was preferred. Root said that depends on pricing. Neon is preferred, but costs more. That is one reason Nebraska Sign Co. suggested doing neon on only the sides since the sign colors are light and would be illuminated well. The bulbs on the side would add a nostalgic, throwback look. If the bulbs were there, then neon strips would be sufficient. There could be a sign on the building, in addition to on the railing. There are people who can't find Starlight Lounge, so being a new business, the goal is to make the entrances as prominent and tasteful as possible.

Gengler asked if there is guidance regarding combined neon/bulb signs in the Haymarket. Zimmer said there are examples of exposed bulbs, neon, and incandescent LEDs or others similar in appearance. The idea of mixing the elements is not specifically expressed in the guidelines. Root noted the bulbs at the Haymarket Theater. Gengler noted the similar signage in the Old Market in Omaha. Root said they would like the bulbs to extend out even farther, but that is not allowed. Johnson indicated that the option cannot be taken into consideration if not allowed.

Munn said the bulbs do not appear random in the design since they are part of the signage design; they tie together.

Action:

Gengler moved approval for the proposal made today, with the smaller dimensions and the owners' choice in lighting; seconded by Johnson.

Gengler commented on the number of signs. Zimmer said it is up to Commissioners to ask where this might be appropriate and if other locations could potentially be treated similarly. The Starlight only has two signs. Gengler noted they only have one entrance.

Johnson pointed out the railing signs might be the most important for finding the location. Root said that is true for people walking past. There are two railing signs, the wall sign, a hanging sign, and one flat sign. One is nearly underground and only visible as you come down the stairs and turn the corner. Johnson said that could also be important for distinguishing the entrance once down the stairs. He does not have a problem with the railing signs or the underground sign. Root said it is possible only one entrance will be open at a time on slower nights. The illuminated sign is to add visibility on the Q Street side.

Munn wondered if the upper sign would work if it were on the door itself. McKee noted the presence of three signs on the 8th Street side. Bavitz acknowledged the importance of being able to draw people in, but it is a lot of signs for her, especially on the 8th Street side. Root reiterated that only two are visible. She would like the railing sign. There is a poor-quality sign for Starlight on that railing. The goal is simply to make people aware that the arcade is also down the stairs. Persons said that technically, Starlight has an additional sign in their window. Hewitt said he is also of the opinion that this proposal includes too many signs.

Strope said their hope is to comply and blend in. At the same time, other businesses in the district have big signs. It is not his intention to complain about the regulations, but hopes the signs will be approved because that would greatly help the business. Root added that while it is technically five signs, she thinks of it as four, since one is mostly below ground. Munn said that is true in this context. Johnson thought it was similar to the Starlight signs on that side.

Root said they drove around the block to check which angles work best for visibility. There are different needs to draw different types of traffic, pedestrian or vehicle. Gengler asked if there is guidance on the number of signs. Zimmer said there is precedent but no articulated rules.

Root said they would be willing to make the railing sign smaller. Bavitz made comparisons with other signs in the area. She works across the street and sees the area everyday. She is particularly unsatisfied with the railing signs and it is unlikely they would be visible to passing cars. Root suggested there is a spot on the building of the Q Street sign where a smaller sign could be affixed. Persons agreed that would have a good look and would be more visible being up higher. Bavitz said that would be better. Root said that without a sign, it looks like a service door. Bavitz wondered if there were also issues with the larger sign. Zimmer said it is a projecting sign.

Gengler agreed that it is quite a few signs for one business and wondered if the placement of them could be adjusted to be more sensitive to the area. On the other hand, this business has a locational disadvantage. There are not many others where people do not enter at street level. There is no expectation that one would have to go down the stairs so this would not be setting

a precedent, given the specifics of this case. She reiterated that the placement could be more sensitive.

Root agreed that is why they wanted the opinion of the HPC. In the Old Market, the street level businesses have typical signs, but for those underground, there might be 3-5 businesses listed on the same sign. Having the double entrance and being underground could both be disadvantages and the desire is to make sure that people don't just walk right by.

Munn said he likes the idea of the sign on the wall. Johnson said the wall is farther back. Bavitz asked if the wall sign would be placed to be visible to those going down the stairs. Root said the goal is to be visible from across the street.

Gengler suggested that a sign on the 8th Street side might be placed perpendicular on the dock railing, facing people coming down the stairs. Root said that with parked cars and patio seating, a sign at that location would not be visible. She added that the signs look colorful, but once the flowers and umbrellas are out for spring and summer, they will blend with everything going on.

Gengler said the number of signs is not specified in the local design standards and in this case, the location of this business should be taken into consideration. It is underground and has unexpected entrances. The location of the sign on the railing would probably be preferred under federal guidelines, if those were to be applied, since it is so easily reversible.

Gengler went on to say she stands with her original motion, adding that any sign on the building should be applied as sensitively as possible, avoiding the terra cotta. McKee added that it must be cleared with Speedway.

Motion carried 5-2: Bavitz, Gengler, Francis, Johnson, and Munn voting 'yes'; Hewitt and McKee dissenting.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT 2546 S STREET IN THE HAWLEY LANDMARK DISTRICT (UDR17008). **FEBRUARY 16, 2017**

Members present: Bavitz, Gengler, Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, McKee, and Munn.

Francis stated this is a neighbor of his. The owner renovated this home, converting it from a 5-plex, back to a single-family home. They did a great job. A 2nd floor sunroom was torn off and vinyl and cedar siding were replaced. He is over-invested, but that is commendable. Zimmer said this will be one of the nicer garages he can imagine.

Johnson drove by the property and agrees with the staff report comment about less emphasis on the rear yard. The change would probably go unnoticed.

Zimmer said an option that could be suggested to the owner is that the original garage roof has a steep hipped roof, but that looks less appropriate when attached to the main building. The owner might save cost, and it might look more appropriate with a simple gable roof that would feel more like an addition to the existing back roof. There is nothing wrong with what is proposed, but that would offer another appropriate option. McKee asked if there were plans to use the space above for anything. Zimmer said that according to plans, there is no storage or apartment shown. The hip roof costs more than the gable.

Action:

Motion for approval with the option of a different roof style, made by McKee, seconded by Bavitz.

Gengler asked if it would need to come forward again if the plans for the roof change. Zimmer said it would not. It is just a nice gesture to offer the alternative.

Motion carried 7-0: Bavitz, Gengler, Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, McKee, and Munn voting 'yes'.

APPROVAL OF THE 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

FEBRUARY 16, 2017

Zimmer said the Annual Report was presented at the last meeting to offer time for due consideration. He came across an improved postcard view of the old Commercial Club building. It confirms that the rendering it is from the hand of F. W. Fitzpatrick, who did extravagant watercolor renderings of Lincoln buildings. The watercolors were large and glorious. The developers are talking seriously about reopening the remaining closed windows and putting a cornice back on it, maybe not with all the balustrade. There would not be a balcony on the P Street side. After they looked at cost, there was no return for them since those will be leased offices. There are plans to further improve the ballroom space and it would be attached, through to the Kindler Hotel to the north. It would not be owned by the hotel, but would be available for cross-leasing for events.

McKee it seems that expense is not the overriding factor. Zimmer agreed that it seems to be a project of drawing upon the passions of three different owner sets. Hewitt said the proposed proprietor of the hotel said it is going to be absolutely the fanciest hotel in Lincoln.

The annual report is submitted to this body for approval and is then sent on to others and becomes part of the Planning Department's annual report.

Action:

Motion for approval made by McKee, seconded by Gengler and carried 7-0: Bavitz, Gengler, Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, McKee, and Munn voting 'yes'.

Staff Report and Misc.

Next month there will be a proposal for the grant cycle for next year that requires approval. It is due April 1st. Most of it is helping to offset part of the expense of carrying staff forward into the future. There will also be a first draft of the National Register nomination for Eastridge. There is an overwhelming amount of information because the Strauss Brothers built so many homes during that time period. Eastridge is the culmination of their projects.

There is progress on the Standing Bear sculpture. The artist in Boise is crafting what will become a 9-foot tall statue to stand on Centennial Mall, opposite the Children's Museum.

Both Zimmer and McKee contributed to the *Lincoln Journal Star's* list of 150 most notable Nebraskans.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:31 p.m.

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