

## MEETING RECORD

**NAME OF GROUP:** HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Thursday, June 15, 2017, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 214, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE** Liz Bavitz, Jim Johnson, Jim McKee and Greg Munn; (Melissa Dirr-Gengler, Tim Francis and James Hewitt absent); Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong Hageman, Rachel Jones, Kellee Van Bruggen 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 April 20, 2017. Motion for approval made by Johnson, seconded by Bavitz and carried 4-0: Bavitz, Johnson, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Francis, Gengler and Hewitt absent.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT THE FORMER WESLEYAN HOSPITAL (MADISON FLATS), 2742 N. 48<sup>TH</sup> STREET, A DESIGNATED LANDMARK. (UDR17039)**

**JUNE 15, 2017**

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

Ryan Haffey, Nebraska Sign Company, said this building has been turned into apartments. The proposed plan is for a simple projecting sign. As it is shown currently, it is a flat cutout sign with a black background. The applicant would now like to illuminate the sign with channel LED strips at the sides.

McKee asked for confirmation that the request is for an illuminated version of the sign. The sign shown in the packet is not illuminated. Haffey said yes, but the applicant is willing to accept non-illuminated if that is the recommendation of this body. If the illumination were approved, the sign face would be lit from non-exposed strips at the sides to create a glowing effect.

McKee asked if the sign can be attached between the bricks. Haffey said the City requires penetration through all layers of brick. McKee wondered if the external parts will go through

the mortar. Haffey said on the top mount, unfortunately, there will be damage to the brick which is unavoidable with this type of projection sign; however, the damage will only be to a single brick and will be minimal.

McKee requested more information about the type of brick on the building. Zimmer said the construction was somewhat odd with concrete poured bucket by bucket for the basement. The first floor walls are tile inside brick, and above, there is brick veneer. At the level of the sign, it is probably brick veneer on top of frame construction.

Munn asked if the sign is on the front face and not on the corner. Haffey said it isn't perpendicular at a 45 degree angle. It is located all the way at the north end.

Munn asked for more information about the lettering. Haffey replied that the lettering is flush with the face, painted white. There is no gap so they are not floating letters.

**Action:**

Motion for approval made by Bavitz, seconded by Johnson.

Munn asked if the motion included the proposed illumination.

Commissioners agreed the proposed lighting is fine. McKee liked the idea that it will give the applicant some options. Haffey assured commissioners that any illuminated effect will be subdued.

Bavitz made a friendly amendment to her motion to include the proposed lighting, as described in the testimony; seconded by Johnson and carried 4-0: Bavitz, Johnson, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Francis, Gengler and Hewitt absent.

**Presentation and Discussion:**

Ryan Haffey, Nebraska Sign Company, was granted time to present a new lighting material to Commissioners. He explained that there are a few locations in the Haymarket with neon channeled lighting that gets damaged easily, at least once a month. There is a new material that can replace the tubing from glass to plastic. The material comes in various colors to mimic neon. Though it is not quite as vibrant, it is very similar when illuminated, and from a distance, it would be hard to tell the difference. The goal is to find solutions for people stuck with neon. The material is silicon and is very hard to breach. Haffey would like the thoughts of Commissioners to see if this is an avenue they should pursue.

Zimmer asked if the illumination method is still gas. Haffey said this style would use LED instead of gas. It is not neon, but it produces essentially the same effect.

Munn asked if there are any specific requests for this lighting being made today. Haffey said no, adding that he is unsure about how this type of lighting would be defined by the Lincoln Municipal Code. It comes down to whether or not this body would approve the lighting if it were presented as an alternative to neon.

McKee wondered if it was within the purview of HPC to make a definition or text change. Zimmer said that within the context of the Special Sign District, this new material might still fit with the overall intention of the regulations.

Johnson said the new material looks fine to him. He wondered if every sign that might change from traditional neon glass tubing to the new material would have to come before HPC. Zimmer said that would have to be discussed.

Haffey noted that the light is not as bright, but unless it were right next to neon, it would be hard to tell the difference. Munn and McKee agreed. Haffey said neon is still easier to work with, but this could be an option for people who cannot have neon. Zimmer said he will investigate further.

**SPECIAL PERMIT FOR EXPANSION OF NON-STANDARD/NON-CONFORMING USE AT 2554  
WOODSDALE (UDR17040)**

**June 15, 2017**

Zimmer stated this item is under the "Discuss and Advise" portion of the agenda seeking a recommendation. The home is within a National Register District, but not a Local Landmark District. The applicant requests expansion of a non-conforming use, which uses part of the front yard in the original construction of the house.

McKee observed that the proposed change is more compatible with the neighborhood in its own way, despite the expansion of the non-conforming use.

Zimmer said the special permit process provides opportunity for homeowners to bring in proposals for precisely this type of situation. Because it is within a National Register District, the Planning Commission seeks the advice of this body on the appropriateness of the proposal within the district.

Mark Watermeier came forward as the homeowner/applicant. His intention is to oversee and do some of the work on this expansion himself; his background is in construction management. The home is around 650 square feet on the main floor with a bedroom, the main entry to the living room, and a small 1-stall garage at the front. At the back, there is a very small bathroom and kitchen. The idea is to expand it out seven feet in the back to provide more space for the bathroom and kitchen and for an enclosed patio for a formal dining room. This amounts to only approximately 10-feet by 14-feet of additional floor area.

The bedroom on the main floor will be an “owner’s suite” with a walk-in shower, sink, and walk-in closet. Laundry will be moved from the lower level to the main floor. The upper level is a loft that extends across the entire house where a bathroom will be added for 18-year old twin sons. The garage will be widened to 14 feet to accommodate a work truck.

On the exterior, the bedroom addition will not come out as far as the main part of the house so there will be some relief on the facade. That is the reason for the request of encroachment into the existing setback. The addition will be kept as close to a Cape Cod in style as possible. A trellis will go over new carriage garage doors. The proposal also shows an increase in the size of the front stoop for a seating area to look out onto Woodsdale and the park area. The back is a very quaint and intimate landscaped area; the front is more where the yard is.

McKee asked what is meant by “owner’s suite.” Watermeier said it is a master suite. McKee confirmed that it does not mean any part of the home will be rented. Watermeier explained he prefers that terminology.

Zimmer said there was discussion prior to the design reaching this body, particularly about a front porch feature. It was a nice front porch, but this is a Cape Cod which doesn’t offer much opportunity for a porch. Within the design confines of the house, that would be more appropriate for the back. Mr. Watermeier was very open to changing that to respect the modest character of the original house.

McKee asked if that makes a difference on the way it impinges on the property line. Zimmer said porches can go into the front yard. Visually, a covered porch added more house to the front and was too different in style. Elsewhere, this kind of house often starts out very tiny and grows in accretions and that is the look being achieved here. It fits nicely with this smaller house. Woods Brothers were being creative with the winding streets and platted this difficult wedge-shaped lot here. The house is also prominently placed on the lot, which also reduced that front yard space significantly.

Bavitz asked if brick is planned all the way around on the addition. Watermeier confirmed the brick will continue, even along the back. The only addition of siding will be on the gables. He is inclined to take the vinyl and aluminum cladding off. Bavitz said she is glad the brick is being extended and removal of the cladding would be encouraged. Watermeier added he will extend the chimney slightly because he discovered it needs a higher draft.

Zimmer said there is also some clean-up being done along the garage window that has the same shutters, but not the same window, so the same kind of panel will be placed under it.

Watermeier joked he was told by the previous owner that the house is haunted and he should not paint the door, which he plans to make a brighter yellow.

Munn commented this proposal is thoughtful and very well done. Commissioners agreed. Munn added that often additions like this overpower the original design. This creates an even more balanced front.

Zimmer said the appropriate action is to communicate these views to the Planning Commission.

**Action:**

Motion to recommend approval made by Johnson, seconded by Bavitz and carried 4-0: Bavitz, Johnson, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Dirr-Gengler, Francis and Hewitt absent.

**Staff Report and Misc.**

- Bicycle Parking in the Haymarket Vicinity: Zimmer said there are a few intersections where Public Works has decided parking stalls are too close to corners to meet safety standards. One example is the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and S Streets. In this location and others like it, bike parking can be safely provided. Public Works is working with Kellee VanBruggen and Mike Brienzo in the Planning Department to create bike share locations with hoops for bike parking. Some locations could be more centrally located in the Haymarket.

Kellee VanBruggen, Planning Department, stated the goal is to balance parking needs with pedestrian safety. Parking Services has had to issue a lot of tickets in the area mentioned by Zimmer because a portion of the street is not intended for vehicle parking. Providing bike parking in that same location would remedy that problem. That opens opportunities to add other locations. "Complete Streets" program has funded a portion of the purchase of bicycle racks. Parking Services has also agreed to purchase bollards that look nicer and adhere better to design standards in the area. They are a simple black, powder-coated, inverted U-shape design, drilled into the ground.

McKee asked if the parking area was in the street or on the sidewalk. Zimmer said in the street. McKee noted that is why the bollards are important. This seems like a win-win proposal. Munn said his office is nearby the proposed location and it will be nice to have a designated spot for bicycles.

- Zimmer said there has been a lot of discussion about installing new streetlight poles in the downtown area that are designed to carry an antenna. The antennae themselves are not conspicuous, but on the poles, there are radio units that link the antennae to the fiber optics underground that are more visually disruptive. There is thought going into shielding those behind simple, attractive, durable semi-permanent banners. That solution would likely not be suitable for the Haymarket. The idea is to come up with places downtown where the new poles are appropriate while excluding or examining more carefully "special" areas such as Centennial Mall and P Street Corridor. If they were to be located in the Haymarket, they would have to be simple and industrial in

design.

McKee asked if there was a chance of utilizing the huge poles along 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Zimmer said the new poles are much smaller and deliver more capacity by delivering more information per unit, meaning smaller units that hand off quickly to the next unit. McKee asked if the new lights will be LED as well. Zimmer said LES is looking at them so they will have to meet lighting standards. Mostly, they will look like the current poles. McKee said it sounds like no material effect. Zimmer said it has to go through the City for licensing and use of the right-of-way. Munn asked what it means for the Haymarket fixtures. Zimmer said those are going to be renewed in the streetscape enhancement work being done. They will be painted and will have fresh globes. Munn said they are looking dated.

**DESIGNATION OF THE THETA XI FRATERNITY HOUSE AT 1535 R STREET  
AS A LANDMARK.**

**JUNE 15, 2017**

Zimmer said that this is already a contributing house in a National Register District, but the University Foundation prefers that if they are going to establish a preservation fund, that they are meeting Secretary of Interior preservation standards. It is a protective measure for the Foundation and allows an avenue for the house to raise its deductible funds under a review process. Zimmer inspects for interior character features that ought not to be altered as work is done. It is a simple building, immediately post-WWII, built in 1946, and is characteristic in its place, linking together the Deco, limestone building on the corner and the brick, Federal style building to the west. Wesley M. Matthews was the architect. He served in the Army Air Corps in WWII and shows up in AIA directories in the 1970s. He was an alumnus of this fraternity. There were two designs for it; the first did not get built. The house was built by Kingery and has radiant heat floors and some interior character, with the original limestone fireplace and a nice terrazzo stair with steel railing and another limestone fireplace on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, looking out onto the added deck. It would not be stretching the ordinance to extend the courtesy of a landmark designation to this building. They would like to do work this summer. This item would also go to Planning Commission and City Council. The fraternity also has to have sprinklers installed before the end of the summer. McKee asked if all of the work is internal. Zimmer said yes, other than the roof. They have agreed to a composition shingle with a sawtooth edge.

**Action:**

Motion to recommend approval made by Johnson, seconded by Bavitz.

Munn asked if the building had steel windows originally. He would love to see those return. Zimmer said it did. The plan is to look at the windows and move closer to the original design.

Motion carried 4-0: Bavitz, Johnson, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Dirr-Gengler, Francis and Hewitt absent.

**Announcements:**

Zimmer said there was a favorable response by the State Historic Preservation Board to the Eastridge Neighborhood nomination. The annual grant application was approved. He announced that a new member, Greg McCown, will be joining HPC beginning next month, taking the place of Tim Francis. Greg has been active in real estate circles and active on Near South Neighborhood Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:16 p.m.

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