MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, May 17, 2018, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 214, 2nd Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Liz Bavitz, Melissa Dirr-Gengler, Jim Johnson, Greg McCown, Jim McKee, and Greg Munn; (Jim Hewitt absent).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong Hageman, and Amy Huffman of the Planning Department; Chad Johnson, Big Tree Woodworking; Josh Barber, homeowner 1744 S. 24th Street; Sharon Grossman, Cultiva Coffee; and Matt Olberding from the Lincoln Journal Star.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

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

Munn requested a motion approving the minutes for the meeting of April 19, 2018. Motion for approval made by Johnson, seconded by McCown and carried, 6-0: Bavitz, Gengler, Johnson, McCown, McKee, and Munn voting ‘yes’; Hewitt absent.

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

APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AT 727 S. 11TH STREET.

PUBLIC HEARING: MAY 17, 2018

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

Zimmer stated this application is for a small sidewalk café. There are already chairs in front of the coffee shop; this will formalize its relationship with the space.

Sharon Grossman, 727 S. 11th Street, said that there are wooden chairs outside of Cultiva now. There are people who loiter and panhandle in front of their business, so having a formal outdoor area will allow them to ask people to move on if they are causing a disruption. They would have loved to have commissioned a custom metal fence, but it is not within their budget. Off-the-shelf fencing lacks character. That is how the proposal for the fence with the planters
on top came about. She feels it will blend with the neighborhood. Staff asked that it not be completely enclosed so that it will continue to feel like a welcoming part of the neighborhood. Though this proposed fence will cost a little more than pre-built, it will give a unique look.

McKee asked if the chairs and tables will be taken indoors after hours. Grossman said they may be left out and secured during nice weather.

Zimmer noted that the fence should not be solid. Grossman agreed that there is light under the awning, and it makes sense to ensure there is not a place where someone could hide.

McCown asked about the 45 degree angle shown in the design. He wondered why the fence did not go straight across. Grossman said it is intended to channel pedestrian traffic and it also allows more room for an extra table. McCown said he asked because he was surprised it did not continue farther. Grossman said another factor is simply the design construction. Using standard 6-foot lengths will keep construction simple.

Zimmer noted that another advantage is that it makes the business more visible. Johnson agreed that it does bring more prominence to the business.

**ACTION:**

Bavitz moved for approval, seconded by Johnson.

Gengler thanked the applicant for working with staff. It is clear that some good compromises were worked out before this hearing. Grossman said she feels that the design is better for it.

Motion carried, 6-0: Bavitz, Gengler, Johnson, McCown, McKee, and Munn voting ‘yes’; Hewitt absent.

**APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AT 1744 S. 24th STREET.**

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

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

Zimmer said this is for construction on this home, built in 1915. This was the parsonage for Trinity Methodist. It is not a typical Foursquare, with the generous portico in place of a porch. Repairs are needed on the porch.

Chad Johnson, Big Tree Woodworking, stated he is working with owner, Josh Barber. They would like to enlarge the porch area. The current area has structural issues. The slab is buckled and almost slips under the house. The columns have holes and are starting to deteriorate. Since
the repairs are needed, the Barbers would like to expand the area at the same time. The proposal is to try to keep the same look of the current molding and brick. It will have a flat roof with hidden gutters to provide drainage to the north and south. The depth will remain the same. The biggest change would be the columns.

McKee asked if the new roof will go under the terracotta panels. C. Johnson said that it would cover about half. Zimmer said it is brick. The entire house is brick interior with stucco exteriors.

McCown said it looks like the brick will not be visible from the street. C. Johnson agreed not much will be visible. Gengler asked for confirmation that the brick will not be removed. C. Johnson said that is correct. With the slope of the roof, there will only be a small amount of impact to the brick. Bavitz asked if it wraps upwards. C. Johnson said it does, but that will not be visible from the street. McKee asked if the membrane covers the brick. C. Johnson said they will not be visible except for what sticks up above the roof line. Gengler asked how they are attached, wondering if it will permanently damage the brick. C. Johnson said his priority is to get the best seal. The idea was to cut into the stucco to seal it with a rubber membrane.

Gengler asked for more information about the columns. C. Johnson said they are steel. The two against the house are square, cut in half. Gengler asked if the current columns are round. C. Johnson said they are. The new columns will be rectangular at the top and bottom with the steel nestled between and decoratively covered. The steel is what is actually carrying all of the load. Gengler wondered if it is possible to make them appear round. C. Johnson said that is an option. It would be easy to surround the steel post with a column around it. Munn agreed that there are companies that sell such a product. C. Johnson said he prefers to do it independent for serviceability and maintenance. He could give it a round appearance.

McCown asked if there was any taper to the steel. C. Johnson said they are straight columns. McCown commented that his concern is that the original architect clearly went to great lengths to separate the character of this home from other Foursquares. He wondered if the characteristics that currently exist could be emulated more.

Munn said his thoughts are to either reproduce as closely as possible what exists, or to do something totally different. In some ways, he would prefer a total departure. Having said that, the proportion of the porch and columns is part of the original intent.

C. Johnson said that the main reason to expand the porch is to allow the homeowners to sit outside. There is another concrete porch in the neighborhood. His thought was that it made more sense to keep the look consistent with the columns on the car port, since those are so prominent.
Munn commented that the existing porch is so perfectly proportioned. Bavitz agreed. McCown said he understands the desire to have a usable porch, it is just hard to accept a change when this design is so nice and well-proportioned. If it could be replicated a bit wider, but with the double columns, he would be happier with it. C. Johnson said they did discuss extending the sides of the porch but leaving the roof open so the front façade would remain relatively unchanged. They have been working for over a year to come up with some design that suits all parties. They decided it was time to get additional feedback. Another option might be to make the porch deeper and only widen it by around a foot. Then there would still be enough room for a covered area with a porch swing.

Zimmer added that this is a wide front yard, so there are not many setback constraints to worry about. He said another concept that might be considered is to extend the deck across, keeping the portico intact, and having some type of roll-out awning. Gengler said that even if the porch is deeper out to the street, the scale and massing would still be retained.

Gengler went on to say that her preference is for the projecting porch. If they still wanted more width, they might consider a seasonal awning. It would respect the historic design. She wondered if a railing would be needed if the platform extended out. C. Johnson said no railing is needed as long as the platform is under 30 inches in height.

Munn said that when you add new to historic, sometimes the goal is for it to read as distinct. In this case, it might be better to make it blend so it speaks more to the intent of the design.

**ACTION:**

Gengler suggested that this item be tabled for a month to see other options. Zimmer added that action should be taken today or next month. C. Johnson said they could submit a new proposal that incorporates the Commissions suggestions. Zimmer said an option is to move for approval, with incorporated suggestions, with approval at the discretion of the historic preservation planner. Gengler said she has no problem with that since Mr. Zimmer has had so much experience with these types of redesigns. Zimmer said he approaches the concept as a historian and not a designer.

Gengler moved for approval based on the consultation with the Historic Preservation Planner to come up with designs that incorporate comments from today’s discussion. Seconded by Johnson and carried, 6-0: Bavitz, Gengler, Johnson, McCown, McKee, and Munn voting ‘yes’; Hewitt absent.

Zimmer said no action is needed on agenda Item 5 since there is no design to show. He had a visit from tenants at the Woods Bros. Company Building regarding a sign installation to include individual metal lettering and the idea of a moose projecting forward. Zimmer explained the
rules regarding signage on a nationally registered building and the potential applicants said they
would call back after discussion. He has not heard back from them. The bookstore on the first
floor has a nice, small sign. Gengler asked if a sign request for a historic property is flagged
when it comes in. She wondered how some signs get built despite not going through the proper
process. Zimmer said many of the signs go up without a permit. They should come in to Building
and Safety and be routed through him, when appropriate.

DISCUSS AND ADVISE:

- Zimmer said County Board liked the landmark process that was done for Trabert Hall.
  They would now like to establish a parallel process at the County level. In order to do so,
  they need to have a review board. Historic Preservation Commission could do the
  reviews. He suggested to them that one member could be appointed by the County
  Board. This would apply to any area in Lancaster County outside of the City 3-mile
  jurisdiction, and outside any 1 or 2 mile jurisdiction of the smaller communities. There
  are some interesting properties and he stressed that designation could be an
  opportunity to use State tax credits and incentives.

- The telephone museum has taken steps to offer their collection for sale, hopefully as a
  whole. McCown asked the timetable of the sale. Zimmer said he does not know if it has
  been announced. Zimmer added that before 2008, the collection had an appraisal value
  of a half million dollars.

Gengler asked if there are any default guidelines for reviewing residential properties. At times,
she has struggled with her opinions for how a project should look, versus the opportunity to use
tax credits. She wondered if there are particular design guidelines that this body should
consider or prioritize when applying them to properties. Zimmer said there have been general
discussions about this topic in the past. This body cannot operate mindlessly and tell a property
owner ‘no’ without any basis. Generally, the point is that any discussion from this diverse body
gives applicants insights to move towards a better project. Lincoln’s ordinance has been
remarkably successful, though it is not the strictest in the books.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:41 p.m.