

REPORT OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION / DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

September 2, 2020 – 2:00 PM
Zoom Conference Call Meeting

PRESENT: Alderperson Jennings, Commissioner Scripps, Commissioner Debauche, and Commissioner McFarland, and Commissioner McComb.

ALSO PRESENT: Director Kernosky, Associate Planner/Zoning Administrator Kuhn and Angie Nowak.

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1. Roll Call

Discussion and Possible Action on the Following:

2. Report of the September 2, 2020 meeting of the Historic Preservation / Design Review Commission
3. Request from Angie Novak, on behalf of Sentry Insurance, for a design review to perform exterior improvements at 1105 Main Street (Parcel ID 281240832202653)
4. Request from Gregg Gokey for a design review to perform exterior improvements at 1124 Main Street (Parcel ID 281240832202929)
5. Discussion Only: Demolition by Neglect Ordinance
6. Staff Update
7. Adjourn

1. Roll Call

Present:, Jennings, Scripps, Debauche, McFarland

Absent: Beveridge, McComb, Siebert

Motion by Commissioner Scripps to assign Alderperson Jennings as temporary Chairperson; seconded by Commissioner Debauche.

Motion carried 4-0.

2. Report of the September 2, 2020 meeting of the Historic Preservation / Design Review Commission
Commissioner McComb arrived at 2:05 PM.

Motion by Commissioner Scripps to approve the report of the September 2, 2020 meeting of the Historic Preservation / Design Review Commission; seconded by Commissioner Debauche.

Motion carried 5-0.

3. Request from Angie Novak, on behalf of Sentry Insurance, for a design review to perform exterior improvements at 1105 Main Street (Parcel ID 281240832202653)

Associate Planner/Zoning Administrator Kuhn provided a summary of the request:

1. Applicant had received prior approval for Design Review for improvements at 1105 Main Street, but they were now looking to install a shaft entrance for roof access at the rear of building not previously included.
2. The shaft entrance would be used for maintenance of the roof service air handling units.
3. By seeking to install a ladder on the exterior southeast portion of the building, staff felt it was significant to trigger a review by the commission.
4. Reviewed specifics of shaft ladder and installation location.
5. Staff recommended approval with conditions outlined in the staff report.

Angie Nowak, applicant, made themselves available for questioning and clarified that the intent would be to have something along the bottom of the ladder to secure and restrict access to the roof per prior noted concern from Alderperson Jennings.

Chairperson Jennings thanked the applicant to addressing their prior concerns, and further added that the Downtown businesses have long had issues with individuals climbing onto the roofs of businesses through unsecured apartments and exterior fire escapes, and unkept brick work. The Chairperson noted that while it was outside the purview of the current agenda, security Downtown should be discussed by the commission in the future.

Associate Planner/Zoning Administrator Kuhn stated that they could discuss the item outside of the meeting to get more acquainted with the situation, so they could pursue future steps in addressing the matter.

There was a brief conversation between the commission and applicant regarding the security of the ladder, and what measures or features were being included to secure the ladder's access to the roof. Staff added and confirmed that the applicant would need to submit a final proposal of the ladder to be reviewed and approved by staff.

Commissioner McComb noted the intent to approve the request with an additional condition that the applicant include a ladder guard on the ladder that remained locked when not in use.

Motion by Commissioner McComb to approve the request from Angie Novak, on behalf of Sentry Insurance, for a design review to perform exterior improvements at 1105 Main Street (Parcel ID 281240832202653) with the following condition of approval:

1. **Powerwashing or sandblasting shall be prohibited on any building components.**
2. **The applicant shall submit the proposed color of the ladder, to be reviewed and approved by staff.**
3. **The ladder shall be fastened to the façade within the mortar and not within the masonry.**
4. **Staff shall have the authority to review and/or approve minor amendments to the project.**
5. **Applicable building permits shall be obtained.**
6. **All work shall be completed within one year.**
7. **The applicant shall include a ladder guard on the ladder that remains locked when not in use.**

seconded by Commissioner Debauche

Motion carried 5-0.

4. Request from Gregg Gokey for a design review to perform exterior improvements at 1124 Main Street (Parcel ID 281240832202929)

Associate Planner/Zoning Administrator Kuhn provided a summary of the request:

1. City had entered into Development Agreement with Opera House, LLC, who had proposed to renovate the former Fox Theatre with an event space and beer garden.
2. Proposed interior and exterior space would be used for public and private events.
3. Proposal included buffering techniques such as landscaping and fencing.
4. Exterior improvements include installing new brick on the front and rear facades, roof repair, masonry work, window and door installations, and general maintenance. The south façade facing Main Street was proposed to be restored to its original state, with removal of the Fox Marquee sign.
5. Review of historic photos that were referenced for proposed improvements, and exterior renderings of the north portion of the property.
6. Staff recommended approval with conditions outlined in the staff report.

Gregg Gokey, applicant with Wildcard Corp., made himself available on behalf of Opera House, LLC.

Commissioner Scripps inquired on whether there were any plans for the marquee sign as it held a large amount of significance for the local community and encouraged the applicant to be as transparent as possible with its plans for it.

Gregg Gokey stated that they were inquiring with historic organizations on what to do with the sign but had no existing plans for it.

Commissioner McComb asked for clarification for the conclusion section of the staff report where it noted the overall project would restore the storefront to a more contemporary design while restoring historical elements. She stressed the need to bring the project details forward correctly to the public.

Associate Planner/Zoning Administrator Kuhn explained that the intent was two-fold, to highlight the historical elements of the opera house building while bringing more contemporary elements. Director Kernosky noted that it was perhaps a poor phrase, but the contemporary nature was in bringing the property up to current ADA standards for the structure while recognizing that the intricate details of the opera house would be exposed and reconstructed as part of the project.

Commissioner Scripps inquired on whether the state's Historical Society had weighed in on the project, to which staff noted that items on the state level would fall on the applicant.

Gregg Gokey confirmed that they were working with the state and national agencies in maintaining the historical nature of the property while bringing it up to ADA compliance.

Chairperson Jennings commended the efforts of restoring the building back to the opera house style.

There was a brief discussion on making efforts to save the marquee in some form, with it ending with the intent to add an additional condition of approval.

Motion by Commissioner Debauche to approve the request Gregg Gokey for a design review to perform exterior improvements at 1124 Main Street (Parcel ID 281240832202929) with the following:

1. Window and door openings shall not be expanded beyond what is stated in this design review request.
2. Window and door trim color shall match.
3. Gentle means shall be used when cleaning masonry prior to tuckpointing and other general maintenance done during project construction. Only organic non-toxic chemicals shall be used to clean.
4. Powerwashing or sandblasting shall be prohibited on any building component.
5. The applicant shall submit final details regarding the window grids (e.g., design, color, etc.) to be reviewed and approved by staff.
6. Transom windows installed on the first and second floor shall match original openings and design.
7. The chairperson and designated agent shall have the authority to review and/or approve minor amendments to the project.
8. Applicable building permits shall be obtained.
9. All work shall be completed within one year.
10. The applicant shall make their best effort to salvage the Fox marquee sign when it is dismantled in one piece.

seconded by Commissioner McComb

Motion carried 5-0.

5. Discussion Only: Demolition by Neglect Ordinance

Chairperson Jennings stressed the importance of having a Demolition by Neglect Ordinance, referencing the Fox Theater and deteriorating buildings by landlords. The intent of the ordinance would be to prevent the demolition of buildings or structures via neglect,

Associate Planner/Zoning Administrator Kuhn reiterated that the purpose of the ordinance would not be to target buildings already in a state of repair for a raze order, but rather buildings where there were tell-tale signs of there being structural insufficiencies. He referred to the extensive staff memo for additional information on standards and criteria, and the process needed to undertake such an ordinance. The information had been provided to the commission for comments, feedback, or concerns.

Commissioners made the following comments:

1. Clarification requested for Affirmative Maintenance, to which staff briefly explained that it focused on restoration that was build-period appropriate structurally and aesthetically.
2. Inquiry on whether the ordinance would affect historically significant properties even if they were not on the local or national register, to which Chairperson Jennings stated that initial conversations were focused on properties within the core area, not just those historically designated. Director Kernosky added that the historical properties were already generally protected with existing ordinances, but there were additional properties where a Demolition by Neglect Ordinance would be helpful.
3. General excitement of seeing the ordinance drafted further, but concern about reviewing items outside of the historic districts. She suggested public input.

4. Comment that it was a good idea to pursue, noting the situation with the Fox Theater as an example.

There was consensus to direct staff to continue drafting a Demolition by Neglect Ordinance.

6. Staff Update

Director Kernosky stated that the convent property, while not under the purview of the commission, was under contract for redevelopment and repurposing. The entire convent was expected to remain, noting the historical significance of the property to the community.

7. Adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.

A recording of this meeting can be viewed/heard at: <https://stevenspoint.com/365/AgendasMinutesVideos>