

Heritage Preservation Commission  
May 8, 2018 Meeting Minutes  
Council Chambers – Duluth City Hall

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Michael Poupore called to order the meeting of the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) at 3:01 p.m. on Tuesday, May 8, 2018.

Attending: Jessica Fortney, Michael Poupore, and Zandy Zwiebel

Absent: Ken Buehler, Stacey DeRoche, and Mike Malone

Staff Present: Jenn Moses and Cindy Stafford

2. New Business

A. Temple Opera Building (TOB) Proposal – Todd Torvinen, ZMC Hotels

**Applicant:** Todd Torvinen addresses the commission. They are interested in taking on this project. It was built in 1889 as a theater and an office complex. The theater was destroyed by fire in 1896. The upper three stories were removed in 1942. About one quarter of original structure remains. The building systems are not up to code and the building lacks a/c, air exchange, acceptable plumbing and reliable heat. The building is listed as building #39 on St. Louis County National Register of Historic Places. The TOB is considered non-contributing which makes it difficult to receive tax credits. There are challenges to save the Temple Opera Building including cost to demo or cost to renovate. Workforce housing did not seem viable. A hotel is feasible. Their goals include creating a signature piece for the area to ignite success. They want to add a 2-story upper addition that stands out to draw visitors without destroying the building's spirit or history. They will include an old-to-new architecture style. They are proposing a 40-room boutique hotel designed to capture the essence of the TOB heritage, Duluth's industrial culture, and an iconic look that is its own draw. They want to reuse as much wood, original material and historical pictures as possible. They want to create a wine and craft beer bar and lounge primarily for guests so as not to compete with neighboring taverns. They are proposing a unique basement grotto with a natural terrarium. They have met with the casino and the Norshor and both are in support. He asks the HPC for their verbal support. They would like to receive DEDA approval at their 5/23/18 meeting. He shows a rendering of what the hotel would look like. Aluminum windows, but historical colors to match. They hope to use cantilevering to gain extra footage per square room. They will add glass sidewalk panels which will become its own attraction and functions both during the day and night. Torvinen shares other examples of old-to-new architecture. He thinks it could become the most photographed hotel in the Midwest. He believes they have met HPC objectives and appreciates comments and support.

**Public:** No speakers.

**Commissioners:** Zandy Zwiebel asks about it being non-contributing. What does it mean? Torvinen responds that contributing would mean they would be eligible for tax credits. It is a designated local landmark. She asks if they've talked to the Sheraton. He has not, but notes it might increase their bottom line. Zwiebel doesn't like the look of the old to new architecture in this specific design. She notes the beauty of Greysolon Plaza. This new building would be a half a block away, and she doesn't feel it's visually appealing. Why all glass? Torvinen states they have looked at multiple designs and this is one of several they selected. Chair Poupore states cantilevering is unprecedented. Most old to new architecture recedes from the original building. Chair Poupore asks

about the skywalk. Torvinen states funding is an issue. Chair Poupore feels the building is architecturally significant--visitors come for Duluth's historic fabric and the lake. Jessica Fortney doesn't feel this would fit in the surrounding building patterns. She feels it would take away from the components of the original building. Torvinen appreciates the HPC's comments. He feels this is a neglected building that needs attention. They would like move forward with the project, but they don't have to move forward. He thanks the HPC for their comments.

#### Old Business

- A. Historic Nomination of Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad (LSMRR) – Coming back for consideration in July. Chair Poupore is waiting to hear back regarding the legal description.
- B. Lincoln Park Pavilion – Preservation Plan – Moses states DeRoche completed a draft and is circulating among staff for review.
- C. Enger Tower – Grant Application – Possibly work with indigenous groups on this. Zwiebel would like to have an outline of what we are trying to achieve with an archaeological grant application. Chair Poupore would like to have a list of possible grant applications. Moses agrees that more homework is needed about possible sites and rationale behind them.
- D. Pilot Program for Rehabilitation of Historic Homes – Per Moses, Kate Van Deale may bring more information on this at a future meeting.

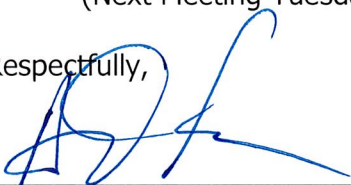
#### 3. Communications and Other Business

- A. Duluth Public Arts Commission Meeting – Monday, May 21st
- B. Planning Commission Update – Zwiebel shares the planning commission is still working on text amendments and zoning changes. They had a tax forfeit meeting. Chair Poupore is interested in anything that might be up for demo. He would like to see a solution of having them be re-used/marketable versus demoing them. Per Moses, there is protection in the system for taking demolition permits out for historic buildings.
- C. Imagine Duluth 2035 (Comprehensive Plan) – It's at the stage of document layout, but the content is the same. It is slated for council at the end of May.
- D. Consideration of Minutes – April 10, 2018  
**MOTION/Second:** Zwiebel/Poupore approve the April 10, 2018 minutes.

**VOTE: (3-0)**

4. Adjournment at 4:17 p.m.  
(Next Meeting Tuesday, June 12, 2018 – canceled if no applications are received.)

Respectfully,



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Adam Fulton - Manager  
Community Planning