

Heritage Preservation Commission  
March 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes  
Web-Ex Meeting Format

*Due to the COVID-19 emergency, the HPC members participated through video conference from home. The meeting was held as a Special Meeting pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13D.021 in response to the Covid-19 emergency.*

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

President Jessica Fortney called to order the meeting of the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) at 12:11 p.m. on Monday, March 8, 2021.

**Attendance:** (Via WebEx video conferencing – all votes conducted via roll call)

Attending: Ken Buehler, Stacey DeRoche, Jessica Fortney, Brandon Hartung, and Sarah Wisdorf

Absent: Mike Poupore

Staff Present: Steven Robertson and Cindy Stafford

2. Public Hearings

PL 21-013 Historic Construction Permit and Certificate of Appropriateness for the Redevelopment of Historic Old Central High School (with SPHO Comments as of 2/11/21); President Fortney gave an overview. Steven Robertson noted the applicants are in attendance, and will make a presentation and welcome questions. Mike Gordon of AWH Architects addressed the commission. They are very familiar with historic tax credit projects, which consists of 70% of their business. They will be converting the building to housing, and will not be altering the exterior. The building's loading dock is slated for removal, but it is non-historic, and was built in 1973. They are retaining as much of the interior historic fabric as possible. New elevators will be installed. They are passionate about working with old buildings and welcome questions. Stacey DeRoche asked how State Historic Preservation Office's (SHPO) concerns are being addressed regarding the elevators and the auditorium. Gordon noted they are providing SHPO with more information. The building needs to be code compliant. They plan to retain the main auditorium. Revised plans will be forwarded to SHPO by this Friday. Robertson noted page 41 of the staff packet. The items in red (including the stairs) will be removed. The stairs will be rebuilt for safety reasons. Ken Buehler asked how far along is the overall project. Gordon stated this is a big project, but in general feels it is moving along nicely. They are happy to be working with Saturday Properties. Kim VanDynHoven of Saturday Properties noted the financing is progressing well. Buehler asked how many tenants will the building house. Gordon stated there will be 125 units, so it depends on how many people live in each unit. Chair Fortney noted she appreciated the mortar analysis and feels it is important to have the mortar and masonry done correctly. She also likes the window detail and the retaining of the terrazzo floors. Gordon noted the windows will be replaced according to SHPO guidelines. Chair Fortney referred to the new elevators, and confirmed there would be no protrusion through the roof. Gordon noted the elevators will have four stops and the over-run will go into the attic space. There will be no protrusion through the roof. Deputy Director Adam Fulton thanked the HPC Commissioners, and noted this is a really important project for the city of Duluth. It is a city defining structure which has great potential for success. He values HPC's role in development.

Public Comment: There were no speakers. Robertson noted there was no communication from the public via email either.

Commissioners: Buehler enjoyed reading the 1993 Historic Designation literature. As long as the developers address SHPO's concerns, he feels this is a game changer for downtown Duluth, and is a gorgeous building. Chair Fortney thanks the applicants and the commissioners.

**MOTION/Second:** Buehler/DeRoche approve the historic construction permit and the Certificate of Appropriateness for the Redevelopment of Historic Old Central High School

**VOTE: (5-0)**

3. Consideration of Minutes

February 8, 2021

**MOTION/Second:** Fortney/Buehler approve the minutes

**VOTE: (5-0)**

4. Communications - Nothing new.

5. Report of Final Disposition of Matters Previously Before the Commission

EAW 319-333 E Superior Street Redevelopment - Robertson gave an overview and noted the HPC has one more opportunity to submit a comment. The planning commission is accepting verbal comment tomorrow night. He noted no action from the HPC is needed at this time.

6. Reports of Officers, Staff and Committees

Planning Commission - Commissioner Sarah Wisdorf gave an overview, and noted the PC will be discussing the EAW tomorrow and welcomes HPC comments. Chair Fortney noted page 19 and the list of historic properties, which it is recognized as such. She noted the mitigation strategies in the proposal. Robertson stated if the EAW is deemed sufficient, the HPC may see the demo permit approval come to them in April. Chair Fortney asked if the item will be open to the public at that time. Robertson affirmed.

7. Consideration of Matters Regarding Commission Action – No items.

8. Other Business

Robertson noted there will be a Comp Plan progress presentation at tomorrow's planning commission meeting. He noted there is pending legislation to extend the state historic tax credits. Robertson is working on obtaining a direct contact. The HPC can comment individually, or as a group. Wisdorf thought it would be beneficial to have an official HPC statement. She thinks they should move forward with a letter of support. Buehler agrees. Chair Fortney stated she can work on a letter of support to present at their next meeting.

**MOTION/Second:** Wisdorf/Hartung the HPC is in support of the state extending their historic tax credits and authorize President Fortney to create a letter on behalf of the HPC to voice their support

**VOTE: (5-0)**

9. Adjournment

Adjournment at 12:53 p.m. (Next meeting scheduled for Monday, 4/12/2021)

Respectfully,

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Adam Fulton – Deputy Director  
Department of Planning and Economic Development