

Heritage Preservation Commission
September 13, 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.

Call to Order and Roll Call

President Jessica Fortney called to order the meeting of the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) at 12:03 p.m. on Monday, September 13, 2021.

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

Attending: Stacey DeRoche, Jessica Fortney, Brandon Hartung, Jess McCullogh, Mike Poupore, and Sarah Wisdorf (joined late - during the downtown commercial historic design guidelines discussion)

Absent: Ken Buehler

Staff Present: Steven Robertson and Cindy Stafford

Public Hearings

None

Consideration of Minutes

None at this time. Will be ready next month.

Communications

The SPHO virtual conference is this week. Please consider attending even one session. Robertson sent the link. It is being held online, and is free of charge. President Fortney said there is a session focused on local jurisdictions. She plans on attending some sessions.

Robertson noted next month he hopes to have info back from SPHO on the sea wall project.

(The next items were moved around to accommodate the attendee.)

Consideration of Matters Regarding Commission Action

PL21-160 Review for Historic Impacts, 863 E Upham Road, Windwood Townhomes: Robertson gave an overview and introduced the attendee. Aaron Keniski addressed the commission. The HPC has been asked to review the project and determine whether or not the commission agrees with MHFA's determination that the Windwood Project would have no adverse effect on any nearby properties. The Phase I and II architectural history survey was shared. Chair Fortney noted the information in their packet. It doesn't fit the criteria to be on the National Register, and has no historic significance.

MOTION/Second: Fortney/Hartung - The HPC agrees that the Windwood Project would have no adverse effect on any nearby properties.

VOTE: (5-0)

(Commissioner Sarah Wisdorf joined the meeting during the next item.)

Report of Final Disposition of Matters Previously Before the Commission

PL21-161 Downtown Commercial Historic Design Guidelines – Robertson gave an overview and noted it is now on the website. He hopes to have a public meeting and another round of mailing in early October. They have received mostly positive comments to date. One person was concerned about what if they wanted to demo their property.

Today Robertson is hoping for more discussion between the HPC members. Chair Fortney noted if a building is demoed, when it is rebuilt, it would have to fit in the historic design guidelines. She noted the harsh words of “have to” and “must” and wanted to use this as a guideline and making it clear to help with maintenance plans. Mike Poupore said he has nothing to add at this point, but feels the document is lacking thoroughness and completeness. Jess Mccullogh suggested a clause for people who wish to build up, and the impact on view sheds. Chair Fortney noted page 62 – guideline 48 which talks about height compatibility with adjacent buildings. Maybe it needs to be more specific. Robertson noted a separate issue which might be in conflict with the Duluth Comp Plan. Chapter 11.1 Section 104 Demolition – part f – in case of a fire, if 50% remains standing, it is recommended that the structurally sound portion be rehabilitated and the other portion rebuilt. Chair Fortney shared a situation that happened in St. Cloud where people purposely set buildings on fire, so they wouldn’t have to follow the guidelines. The HPC has to consider what they can do to help people not get to that point. Sarah Wisdorf asked about estimated market value. What if there is no money to repair? Robertson said there is no good answer. If the owner says they can’t afford it and walks away, there could be a blighted building remaining for several years. Wisdorf noted then 105 – demo by neglect kicks in. She hopes there isn’t an uninsured owner in this situation. Robertson noted the possibility of a historic loan program, or TIF money. Wisdorf noted they can work on each situation on a case to case basis.

Chair Fortney will send her edits for consideration and urges the other HPC members to do the same. She would like to attend the informational meeting.

Reports of Officers, Staff and Committees

Planning Commission - Commissioner Sarah Wisdorf gave an overview. Essentia is seeking plan review approval for a 6-story parking ramp. They are also considering the sale of Lester Park Golf Course land.

Other Business

None

Adjournment

Adjournment at 12:49 p.m. (Next meeting scheduled for Monday, 10/11/2021 – Formerly Columbus Day now Indigenous Day and city hall is open.)

Respectfully,

DocuSigned by:
Adam Fulton
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Adam Fulton – Deputy Director
Department of Planning and Economic Development