

Heritage Preservation Commission  
February 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 12:00 p.m. on Monday, February 8, 2021.

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

Attending: Ken Buehler (arrived after the approval of the minutes), Stacey DeRoche, Jessica Fortney, Brandon Hartung, Mike Poupore, and Sarah Wisdorf

Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Steven Robertson, Adam Fulton, Jason Hale, and Cindy Stafford

2. Public Hearings

None at this time

3. Consideration of Minutes

January 9, 2021

**MOTION/Second:** Poupore/DeRoche approve the minutes

**VOTE: (5-0)**

(The first item in agenda #7 is moved up in the agenda order)

7. Consideration of Matters Regarding Commission Action

-Presentation and Discussion for Redevelopment of Historic Old Central High School – Deputy Director Adam Fulton gave an overview. This is not an action item to be considered today, but he hopes it will be in the future. He is pleased that the development group is in attendance. This item will eventually be brought to the HPC for their consideration. Mark Laverty of Saturday Properties introduced himself. They are based in the Twin Cities and have been working with Zenith for over a year. This is their first project in Duluth. Mike Dosan of Kraus Anderson introduced himself and gave an overview of their history. They have four regional offices. Their Duluth office opened in 1999. He has a passion for historic preservation. Molly Dalsin of AWH Architects introduced herself. Their company focuses on historic preservation, and they are excited to work in Duluth. They have worked on other historic projects including the Maytag in Minneapolis, the Guardian in St. Paul, and the Patterson Hotel in Bismarck, North Dakota. Old Central High School is rooted in 129 years of history. They would like to shepherd it into the next 100 years of life. The exterior will remain the same. The interior will become mixed-income modern apartments. The building will include amenities and will provide views of the lake, park and green spaces. The design will include apartments, a mechanical room, gathering spaces, and a gym. They plan on keeping and enhancing the building's original woodwork. They need to update the elevator to meet current building codes. They are excited to work on the building and would like to hear the HPC's comments and feedback. Chair Fortney thanks the presenters, and welcomes HPC comments. Ken Buehler asked what the plans are for the auditorium. Laverty noted there won't be many modifications. They will remove the 1/2 walls, and will implement a co-working concept. Mike Poupore asked what the size of the apartments will be. Dalsin stated the sizes will vary. The studio units will be 400-500 sq feet, and the one-bedroom units will be 600 feet. There will be larger units on the 3<sup>rd</sup> level

which will include two to three-bedrooms up to 1,500 square feet. Poupore asked about parking. Lavery noted there will be some on the site in the loading dock area, and there will be adjacent parking lots to the north and east. Poupore asked what the purchase price of the building was. Lavery noted it is public record, but does not feel it is an appropriate time to share it at this time. Dalsin noted their firm provides historic consulting including tax credit planning. Lavery noted they have their "band" together early and they are confident knowing that AWH and Kraus Anderson have great knowledge and experience. Chair Fortney thanks the speakers for their presentation. City Senior Planner Steven Robertson gave an overview of the next steps. In March, the HPC will review the Historic Construction Permit to determine if it meets the conditions to warrant a certificate of appropriateness. They will determine that what is being proposed is in line with the preservation plan created in 1990. They will look at the building's historic nature, and if the new project fits. City Senior Housing Developer Jason Hale noted Saturday Properties is partnering with the city to make the project viable. The project will include tax-increment-financing through the Duluth Economic Development Authority (DEDA). If DEDA approves, it will go to the city council. It will be presented to the planning commission to ensure it conforms with the city comprehensive plan. Staff would like to help streamline the process. Commissioner Poupore asked if the HPC will see the State Historic Preservation Office's (SHPO) comments before the HPC makes their decision. Robertson stated when the city gets the developers' application, staff will contact SHPO to share their comments. Deputy Director Fulton noted the developers may also have received feedback from SHPO. Dalsin stated they received feedback last Friday, but haven't reviewed it fully yet. Topics mentioned included the auditorium and the elevator locations. Lavery would like to keep the HPC up to speed and noted the importance of gathering SPHO's comments for the HPC's review. Chair Fortney understands what is involved with working with tax credits. Stacey DeRoche stated this looks like a great plan. Her dad went to the Old Central school. She is glad to see such attention to detail. She would appreciate a tour. Lavery noted they can accommodate only small tours due to Covid restrictions. Chair Fortney welcomes a tour, and thanks the developers again for their presentation.

#### 4. Communications

Press release, Lincoln Park Concept Plan – They are accepting public comments until February 12, 2021. Chair Fortney attended the January 28, 2021, public meeting. She commented at that meeting that the pavilion is a local landmark, and the HPC would like to re-use materials when possible. She noted the letter to SPHO in their meeting packet. Robertson noted they are documenting correspondence. There is no presentation at this time. Robertson noted there may be a need for HPC action in a couple of months.

Information Meeting, MN Duluth Loop Reliability Project from MN Power. Robertson noted this is a big project that will begin in 3-4 years. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be needed, and he wants to keep the HPC informed.

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

None at this time

#### 6. Reports of Officers, Staff and Committees

Planning Commission - Commissioner Sarah Wisdorf gave an overview. Robertson noted the possible reuse of historic buildings for adaptive re-use. Wisdorf noted nothing is finalized at this time, but will keep the HPC in the loop.

## 7. Consideration of Matters Regarding Commission Action

-Note on Final Draft EAW, 319-333 E Superior St Redevelopment – Robertson shared his memo to the planning commission, which is included in the HPC staff packet on page 30. Page 31 gives a draft timeline. The comment period will be held. He invites the HPC to comment if they see anything in error; otherwise, it will go to the planning commission. Chair Fortney noted on page 19 they list historic properties. Are there any comments or questions? Buehler appreciates the effort that went into it. They have looked at this before, and doesn't see any errors. Robertson invites the HPC to provide a formalized comment at their next meeting.

-Discussion of Preservation Plan – Library – Robertson was unable to invite the property owner to attend the HPC meeting at this time. Buehler noted it is fascinating reading, but hasn't read everything yet. He appreciates the effort and the knowledge of the parties who put this plan together. He would like the HPC to revisit it. Chair Fortney noted the cool dome as an exterior feature, and noted this preservation plan also included interior preservation plans. She is agreeable to keep this item on the agenda.


## 8. Other Business

Nothing at this time.

## 9. Adjournment

Adjournment at 1:03 p.m. (Next meeting scheduled for Monday, 3/08/2021)

Respectfully,

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Adam Fulton – Deputy Director  
Department of Planning and Economic Development