

Heritage Preservation Commission
November 9, 2020 Special 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 12:07 p.m. on Monday, November 9, 2020.

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

Attending: Ken Buehler, Stacey DeRoche, Jessica Fortney, Brandon Hartung, Mike Poupore (joined meeting after the election of officers vote), and Sarah Wisdorf

Absent: Meredith Anderson

Staff Present: Steven Robertson

Annual Meeting

1. Election of Officers - Ken Buehler asked if the existing officers are willing to serve another term. President Jessica Fortney and Vice President Stacey DeRoche both are willing to serve again.

MOTION/Second: Buehler/Wisdorf nominate Chair Fortney to serve as president and Commissioner DeRoche to serve as vice-president.

VOTE: (5-0)

(Commissioner Mike Poupore joined the meeting)

2. Discussion on Bylaws and Potential Proposed Changes – Steven Robertson gave an overview. The bylaws were last updated in 2013. The commissioners can choose to leave as is, but the meeting date and time should be updated. Chair Fortney is in agreement to update the meeting date and time. She asked if the other commissioners would like to see any changes. No changes were requested.

MOTION/Second: Fortney/DeRoche amendment to the bylaws to change meeting date and time to the 2nd Monday of the month at noon.

VOTE: (5-0, Poupore abstained due to technical issue)

Work Plan Items (Added to the agenda) – Chair Fortney asked if the commission should revisit now, or wait until the next meeting? Sarah Wisdorf suggested waiting until the next meeting, so it can be on the agenda for December.

Unfinished Business

3. Update on RFP for Design Guidelines for the Duluth Commercial Historic District – Robertson noted staff is hoping to move forward in the next two weeks.

Update on Pastoret Terrace (Added to the agenda) – Robertson noted there was a fire in the building about ten days ago. There is an ongoing investigation. The city is waiting on an engineering analysis to determine the extent of the damage.

Communication and Other Business

4. Unified Development Chapter (UDC) Proposed Text Change for Historic Preservation – Robertson gave an overview and noted this was more of clerical change. The challenge is to receive a preservation plan after the fact, so giving the applicant a set timeline (one-year) is being proposed. The timeline of “in the future” is too vague. Mike Poupore stated in the past the HPC had more power over property owners. Can this language be added to the UDC? Chair Fortney suggested looking at what it was, and what it is now to compare. Poupore doesn’t have the specific language at hand. Chair Fortney suggested adding it to their work plan. She asked if this proposed change would go before the planning commission. Robertson noted any zoning code change requires two bodies to approve. Staff proposed it, if it passes the planning commission, it goes to the city council. He asked the HPC if they are in agreement to moving forward, or if not, it can be removed. Poupore would like it tabled until they can revisit it before it moves forward. Robertson thought the language to the UDC may have changed in 2009. Poupore will do some research and share his findings with the other commissioners. Wisdorf stated UDC changes can be made throughout the year. If there are no objections, she would like to move the preservation plan clause forward to get it in the books. Poupore agrees.

MOTION/Second: Fortney/Poupore move forward with the updated language to the UDC regarding the preservation plan timeline be adjusted to one year.

VOTE: (6-0)

5. Update on EAW Related to the Proposed Demolition of Two Structures that Contribute to the Historic Character of Downtown Duluth. Robertson gave an overview and noted the Hacienda and the Duluth Oriental Grocery buildings. The EAW will be shared with the HPC during the 30-day comment period. The timeline is proposed for February or March. Poupore asked if this item can be added to the HPC’s December agenda. Robertson noted the EAW is still in the research phase and it would be best to wait for the actual EAW to come out. Poupore wants to make sure the HPC’s comments are included in the EAW. Robertson noted the HPC’s minutes can be shared with the EAW consultant.
6. Correspondence: US Army Corps of Engineers, The Rehabilitation of the Piers and Headwall of the Duluth Vessel Yard (30 Day Public Comment Period), October 28, 2020 – Robertson noted the correspondence found in the commissioners’ packet, and noted they can comment, Chair Fortney is not familiar with the vessel yard, and asks for comments from the other commissioners. Commissioner Buehler reviewed the paperwork, and does not find it clear on what they are proposing, or who would do the signage. Poupore asked if this includes Pier B. Robertson stated it does not, and agrees the document could be more clear and include exhibits. Chair Fortney would like to see a map of the proposed changes. Commissioner Wisdorf asked staff if they can request more specific information. Robertson agreed to email the individual and request more information. Chair Fortney noted she clicked on the link on page 93 for the MOA, but there was not much detail on the interpretive display.

7. Consideration of Minutes from 8-24-2020
MOTION/Second: Wisdorf/Buehler approve the minutes

VOTE: (6-0)

Chair Fortney asks the commissioners to be thinking about their work plan to discuss at their December meeting. She asked if there is an opening for another commissioner on the HPC? Robertson noted they had appointed Meredith Anderson, but she accepted a new job and may have to resign from the HPC. There may be an opening soon.

Commissioner Wisdorf – gave a planning commission update. There is nothing of interest to the HPC at this time.

Adjournment at 12:52 p.m. (Next meeting scheduled for Monday, 12/14/2020.)

Respectfully,

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