

Heritage Preservation Commission  
October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes  
Council Chambers – City Hall

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

President Jess McCullough called to order the meeting of the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) at 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**Attendance:**

Attending: Chris Adatte, Ken Buehler, and Jess McCullough

Absent: Kal Randa

Staff Present: Chris Lee, Ariana Dahlen, and Sam Smith

**Consideration of Minutes**

July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024 HPC Meeting

**MOTION/Second:** McCullough/Adatte approved

**VOTE: (3-0)**

**Consideration of Matters Regarding Commission Action**

PLHCDP-2408-0001 – Historic Demolition and Construction Permit to reconstruct staircase at 2229 W 2nd St for Duluth Art Institute

**Staff:** Chris Lee addressed the commission. He said he would answer commissioners' questions for this project to the best of his ability given that the representative was not in attendance.

**Commissioners:** McCullough noted that this project is not a small fix. He asked if the staircase collapse was due to snow fall and asked how long it's been visibly deteriorating. McCullough also inquired if there was any action taken prior to this to try to preserve or improve the stairs.

**Staff:** Lee responded that the applicant said the stairs have been deteriorating for some time, largely due to the record snow falls that we've had over the past couple years. Additionally, the amount of moisture that got into it last year caused it to degrade further and collapse. Older photos of the stairs from 4 to 5 years ago show that this deterioration of the staircase has been slowly getting worse over the years. To Lee's knowledge, there has not been any previous action taken to try to preserve the staircase. He believes it was a matter of trying to secure funding as well as not wanting to disturb the remaining in-tact parts of the staircase.

**Commissioners:** Buehler commented that people have been using the side entrance for several years now, and it's been problematic. Funding has been an issue, but he believes that funding was secured for this work. Discussion ensued about other funding opportunities that could have been utilized in the past to help keep the stairs from deteriorating.

McCullough asked staff if the plan is to remove the entire staircase and what the timeline for this project looks like.

**Staff:** Lee answered that the plan is to remove most of the stairs, but try to salvage some parts that can be saved. It will likely be a full replacement of the stairs, and the scope of work can be found on the last page of the packet. Lee stated that the applicant wants to start demolition work immediately, but he speculated that work may not begin until early next year because the construction season is coming to an end.

**MOTION/Second:** Buehler/Adatte approved

**VOTE: (3-0)**

## **Presentation**

Adaptive Reuse at 2401 W 6th St for Laundromat and Multifamily Dwelling by Festies Inc:

**Staff:** Chris Lee addressed the commissioners. This location is the Belanger Building, and the preservation plan for this item was discussed at the previous meeting in July. Dave Festies, the applicant for this project, was not able to attend the October HPC meeting. Lee explained that if the applicant had been present, he would've given a brief presentation of his plan and field commissioners' questions. This is not an action item, it's simply a preliminary step before it goes to planning commission for an interim use permit.

The applicant is planning an adaptive reuse of this structure for a combination of uses, including a laundromat on the main floor and multi-family dwelling units on the upper floors. As of right now, there is no final plan by Festies regarding how much square footage each of the proposed uses will take up. Lee stated that he believes the laundromat will be shared with the apartments above it, but it will also be privately owned and will not have 24/7 access.

With adaptive reuse, the applicant is allowed any uses in the mixed-use neighborhood (MU-N) zone district. The proposed uses by the applicant are interim uses, which are good for 6 years. Interim use permits must be approved by the Planning Commission (PC), which is among some of the next steps for the applicant. Lee told commissioners that he will relay any commissioners' questions or concerns to applicant.

**Commissioners:** McCullough said that the Belanger Building has been in bad shape for a long time, and he was glad to see this project moving along. He asked staff what stage of the process the applicant is in, and what the timeline looks like for this project.

**Staff:** Lee confirmed that the applicant is currently in the paperwork phase. The IUP for this project will likely go to the planning commission in December or January. The IUP must be approved before any building permits can be pulled. Lee believes that there will be more movement for this project sometime within the first quarter of next year.

**Commissioners:** Buehler also commented that it's nice to see some progress for this project. He asked staff if there have been any efforts made by the applicant to update the neighbors on this project.

**Staff:** Lee explained a notice of a public hearing will be sent to neighbors within a 350 ft radius of the project as a direct effort to notify them before the interim use permit goes to planning commission for approval. Staff can work with the applicant to see if he'd like to outreach to the community further.

## **Communications**

**Staff:** Chris Lee reminded the commissioners of the upcoming annual HPC meeting in November. During the annual meeting the commission will be doing the election of officers as well as other appointing duties. There are people who want to join the commission and have recently submitted applications. Ideally, those applicants would be appointed by the annual meeting. Staff is waiting on leadership for next steps with those appointments.

**Commissioners:** McCullough asked staff if a date has been set for the upcoming annual meeting. He also asked how many applicants have expressed interest in joining the commission.

**Staff:** Lee stated the Annual meeting will be held on November 12<sup>th</sup>. Staff has not received any new applications for the upcoming agenda, so the meeting may just consist of housekeeping items. There are 2 new applicants who wish to join the commission, and he believes they will be good additions to this commission.

**Report of Final Disposition of Matters Previously Before the Commission**

N/A

**Reports of Officers, Staff and Committees**

PC Liaison Update – Chris Adatte addressed the rest of the commission. He did not have anything substantial to report from the previous Planning Commission meeting.

**Other Business**

No other business.

**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully,

Signed by:  
  
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Jenn Moses, Manager  
Planning and Development Division