

## MEETING RECORD

**NAME OF GROUP:** HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Thursday, July 21, 2016, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 214, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Liz Bavitz (arrived at 1:35), Tim Francis, Jim Johnson, Jim McKee, and Greg Munn; (Melissa Dirr Gengler and Jim Hewitt absent); Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong-Hageman, George Wesselhoft and Amy Huffman of the Planning Department.

**STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING:** Regular Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Chair Greg Munn called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Munn requested a motion approving the minutes for the meeting of June 16, 2016. Motion for approval made by Johnson, seconded by McKee and carried 4-0: Francis, Johnson, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Bavitz, Gengler and Hewitt absent.

The opportunity was given for persons with limited time or with an item not appearing on the agenda to address the Commission.

**PRESERVATION CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT 219 S. 30<sup>TH</sup> STREET IN THE EAST LINCOLN/ELM PARK LANDMARK DISTRICT.** **JULY 21, 2016**

Members present: Bavitz, Francis, Johnson, McKee and Munn; Gengler and Hewitt absent.

Danny Harkins, Development Construction Manager with NeighborWorks Lincoln, stated this house is in bad shape and the best option is to tear it down. Harkins said the exterior is nicer in appearance; however, the basement walls are mostly gone and the interior is in very bad shape, including the structural integrity. It would be cost prohibitive to rehabilitate the structure. Plans have been submitted showing a new structure that could be built in its place over the next year or so.

Zimmer said this home is in the Elm Park/East Lincoln Landmark District. There is a request for new construction, but it will be useful to discuss the demolition first. Zimmer noted that NeighborWorks operates with a variety of funding sources and all projects are targeted to 1<sup>st</sup> time and low-to-moderate income home buyers. For that reason, their programs have constraints. They rehab houses when feasible, but they can only invest so much money on each rehabilitation. This house would become one that their clients would not be able to

afford buy from them. That is the analysis NeighborWorks has explained to him. There are several examples around town that show a relevant precedent where this body has dealt with similar projects from NeighborWorks, including a home in the Hawley Landmark District.

Francis said he is familiar with other projects undertaken by NeighborWorks.

[Bavitz arrived at 1:35 p.m.]

**Action:**

Francis moved approval of the demolition of the current structure at 219 S. 30<sup>th</sup> Street, seconded by McKee.

Munn asked for clarification if both the foundation and the joists in the current structure are beyond saving; if it were one or the other instead of both, it might be fixable. Harkins said both are bad shape.

Zimmer said this will also be subject to a Section 106 review in cooperation with the State Historical Society because it is likely that federal dollars in the form of HOME funds from HUD will be considered so that there is some leeway if they do not get enough funding from other sources. He evaluates the East Lincoln/Elm Park Neighborhood as National Register eligible and that also brings the Historical Society's review in.

McKee asked if that means the demolition may not necessarily go forward, even if this body votes in favor of it. Zimmer said not until the Section 106 issues have been taken care of. The applicant expresses more urgency to demolish than to build because they do not like having the deteriorating property left in the neighborhood. Munn said the empty lot is preferable in this case.

Motion carried 5-0: Bavitz, Francis, Johnson, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Gengler and Hewitt absent.

Zimmer said he just received the designs for the new construction. The proposed house is an L-shaped, 2-story plan and is compatible to the character of the district, which has contributing houses ranging from the 1880s through the 1920s. They are not looking exactly to replicate the existing house, which would not be desirable under the Secretary of the Interior Standards.

Munn said the design is a good attempt at period appropriate, but to him, the white trim around the windows stands out because the windows look small and do not have the proper depth. Sometimes these types of details can kill the character. The original windows have depth and are a character defining feature of the current home.

Francis asked Munn if he would prefer a wider trim. Munn said yes, a wider trim would help with the scale. He would also like to see a steel clad or wood window. Kuhlman agreed that a wood window would be better and would enhance the design. Munn added that they are better quality and will last longer. Harkins stated they are open to these suggestions. Francis said these houses look great, but with the wider trim, they look even better.

Zimmer said the district is only along the west side of the street; the north side has single-story ranch houses built a half century later. This house sits at the northeast corner of the district.

McKee moved approval of the Preservation Certificate of Appropriateness for work at 219 S. 30<sup>th</sup> Street, with the stipulation that the recommendations made for the window treatments and trim be included in the design, seconded by Johnson. Motion carried 5-0: Bavitz, Francis, Johnson, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Gengler and Hewitt absent.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT 1143 AND 1149 S. 17<sup>TH</sup> STREET IN THE CAPITOL ADDITION LANDMARK DISTRICT.**

**July 21, 2016**

Munn recused himself from discussion and vote. He introduced Garrett Peterson, an intern at BVH Architects who has assisted with the project. The south house came before the Commission a couple times before. Munn started on this project in 2011, when the Chi Phi fraternity purchased it. Prior to that, it had been a bed and breakfast. The first part of the project was to restore the exterior.

This latest iteration of the project was presented to the Near South Neighborhood Association just over a month ago, and the reaction was positive. The interior main floor of the classical revival Morris Weil house is original and in fantastic condition; the fraternity is maintaining those rooms. Many of the upper rooms were modified when the house was a bed and breakfast.

Peterson said the north house is the Carl Weil house, built for Morris Weil's son. It is similar to the original house, but scaled down and has not been as well cared for. The interior has been split into apartments and detailing has been removed. Though that is unfortunate, one advantage of the situation is that the interior can essentially be stripped down. Munn pointed out that the stair has been replaced and a wall was added in the grand entrance.

Peterson said the carriage house is in terrible condition and not much has been preserved; not much can be done to save it. Munn added that they looked at ways to restore and use the structure, but it is not viable.

Munn said that because this is a fraternity house, it will require a sprinkler system and a 2<sup>nd</sup> exit. A plan was submitted at one time showing a tower and third stair on the back. Parking was a challenge in that design. From the beginning, they were trying to negotiate the purchase of

the north house, but the owner was not interested until last year.

Peterson said that once the north house was purchased, it was decided that it could be used in the design as well. A link will be created between the two houses, and the carriage house will be removed, which creates enough parking along the west to meet code. That the link will also serve as the 2<sup>nd</sup> exit for both buildings. The north house will keep the idea of a central stair and will be divided up for a house director's suite and an ADA accessible restroom.

Munn went on to say that the property is on the National Register so the Secretary of Interior standards for rehabilitation will be followed; any new additions will not alter or destroy the original, historic features. The new work will be differentiated, but will be compatible with the historic elements and will be built in such a way that it can be removed in the future. There are firewalls on the addition so it would actually be relatively simple to pull out. The link includes a significant amount of glass and is setback in a slightly darker color so it recedes more into the background. The windows take on the muntin pattern and are a character feature. There will be a garden wall.

McKee asked if the link will be done in masonry. Munn said it will be wood paneled in something like a Hardie panel. McKee asked if both properties are on the National Register. Munn said they are at the very west end of the district.

Munn went on to say that they will lose their back yard, so there will be a garden wall, trellis and landscape. Bavitz asked if the brackets are the same design. Munn said they are the same idea, but are exaggerated and a little more curvy. Peterson said there is brick in the garden wall with the same grouping pattern. It is on a smaller scale and stands back a bit. The intent is to let the two original houses read as two buildings.

McKee said it is reminiscent of the linking of the Pace and Lally houses at 26<sup>th</sup> & N. Francis agreed.

Bavitz asked if the 3<sup>rd</sup> stair was still necessary. Munn said the main stair only went from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and there needed to be a stair from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>. This has been worked into the plan so there is no need for an exterior stair at all. The attic was closed off because they did not want to make the link three stories tall. There was enough room in the larger house for four beds and a bath. For the sake of code review and square footage, occupancy is a maximum of 40, however, it is designed for 22 students plus one house director. That number will fluctuate and they have no intention of putting that many people in these homes. The fraternity has been raising funds since 2011. They will have an estimate soon and compare numbers. They would like to move forward right away. If that happens, students could move into the smaller house in the fall of 2017. That would be completed in 2018.

McKee asked was needed in addition to a motion. Zimmer said this is for a Certificate of Appropriateness because in addition to being in the national registry district, it is a local landmark district as well, which gives this commission jurisdiction. They are not requesting a special permit since the current zoning allows a fraternity house. If they meet the parking standard, they are compliant.

Keith Dubas and Jerre Brammeier were both present representing the Near South neighborhood. Dubas said there was opposition from the neighborhood association when previous plans including tearing down the north house. The fraternity has been a very good tenant and owner and the neighborhood has a good working relationship with the fraternity. After the most recent presentation, no consensus was reached for approval or disapproval. One area of concern is the potential for up to 40 students to occupy the house. The second concern relates to the fact that there is no guarantee at this point that the funds exist to build the plan to completion, as presented. A final concern relates to being able to return the houses to two separate structures, should they ever be sold. The Near South Neighborhood Association seeks to preserve the use of homes as they were intended. Fraternities obviously change that character, but the zoning allows for it. After the last meeting, there was a call from a realtor asking if there were any other available properties in the neighborhood that would be suitable for a fraternity. Even though there was no consensus reached, there were many very positive comments about the new design and how much better it is than tearing the north home down.

McKee asked if the parking would still be adequate if the occupancy ever increased materially. Munn said yes because that calculation is based on square footage. There are currently only six members in the south house. He went on to say that he does not know how much they have raised, so far, but it has been five years. If the plan is approved, that will be further marketing material for fundraising efforts.

McKee wondered if an adjusted plan would come back to Commission if the project did not pan out economically. Munn said the schedule is based on the school year so if the funds were not available immediately, it would shift the project back. The main issue that held the project up in the past was parking, but now the north house has been purchased and a solution has been reached. To address concerns of neighbors, McKee asked for confirmation that the north house is already purchased. Munn confirmed that is the case.

Brammeier wondered how the link will impact the existing homes. Munn said doors will be cut to accommodate the link, but that is a minor impact that can be reversed. Johnson added that it also makes a difference that it is not the street-facing side of the homes undergoing changes. Munn said the addition will actually help to clean up the messy additions that have been made over time.

Dubas asked if the stair railing in the north house is original. Munn said the railing is not the same and is bulky and crude in construction. It is also matched on the exterior porch. A more elegant railing will be added. Dubas commented that the handrail appears to be of finer quality. Munn agreed that the handrail could be original and any remaining elements like that will be salvaged. He is not sure why the spindles of the railing were replaced.

Bavitz asked for more information about alterations where the link will connect to the existing structures and if they will be made through existing openings. Munn said there are existing doors and a window. One window will have to be filled in and there is a window where a door will be. McKee said it is more reversible than he thought. Kuhlman agreed. She had wondered how the back would be impacted but she can see that the connection is to the side of a bay window. She added that the design is very nice and is appropriate.

Zimmer noted that this is not legally required to have review by the State Historical Society.

**Action:**

McKee moved approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for work at 1143 and 1149 S. 17<sup>th</sup> Street, seconded by Bavitz. Motion carried, 4-0; Bavitz, Francis, Johnson, McKee voting 'yes'; Munn abstaining; Gengler and Hewitt absent.

**Staff Report and Misc.:**

- Item No. 4 on today's agenda was a request from Nebraska Sign Company for a Certificate of Appropriateness for work at the Toolhouse at 800 Q Street. The project is for a vintage Husker memorabilia shop located in the basement. No design information has been received at this time.
- A letter addressed to Planning Commission regarding Cooper Commons at 9<sup>th</sup> and D Streets was distributed. That item was delayed at Planning Commission due to lack of quorum. The letter asserted that the recommendation of this body was void because it did not follow Certificate of Appropriateness procedures. That statement is not accurate. HPC was asked to give advice to the Planning Commission, as is typical when there is a zoning action affecting historic property. Planning Department did not send a notice to the neighbors, but that is not required since seeking the advice of the Commission is an extra step taken as part of the Planning Commission process. The letter was not addressed to Historic Preservation Commission, but staff shared it with HPC since the Commission is mentioned.

- There were inquiries for a landmark designation with a special permit for a long-vacant property that would be an interesting proposal if it reaches application stage. It involves the house of Mr. Cordner, the early architect out at 55<sup>th</sup> and L Streets. Francis said he knows of the home.
- Zimmer will attend the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions biennial Forum next week in Mobile, Alabama.
- Planning Department has received a favorable response for our final report for our last grant year from the Historical Society. Soon after submitting that, Ed heard that Ruben Acosta will take a similar position in Florida, so there will be a new hiring for the National Register and CLG Coordinator.
- Zimmer introduced intern Ben Callahan, and new Planner, George Wesselhoft, who sat in on today's meeting.

Johnson asked if there has been any movement on the project at 9<sup>th</sup> and O Streets. Zimmer said that discussions continue, but there are no plans to show yet.

- Zimmer said he is working with the Telegraph District group on a master design plan and potential design standards for the area. There may be something to show in the near future. Work has started on the interior of the warehouse. It was pulled out of the request for TIF funds. It will be back before Commission when exterior work begins.

The next construction to commence will be on the garage building. The design standards are challenging since the historic structures remaining are few and widely scattered. He is trying to draw characteristics from the historic buildings still standing to set the standards but the features are varied so it is difficult to define characteristics the district should have.

Munn said one important characteristic will be scale. Zimmer said scale is largely taken care of by the underlying zoning. Southeast Community College has set their bond issue for November. That will give us an idea of whether the district will include them as a neighbor.

- Ed mentioned a recent obituary for Colleen Burden, noting that Commissioners may recall her as co-owner of the Westview Bed and Breakfast, with Jim Burden. Ed offered to include condolences from this Commission in a note. The Burdens made something viable from a difficult property and have maintained it for decades.

- Munn wondered about some sidewalk repairs in the Haymarket where there has been sloppy application of asphalt to brick sidewalks. Zimmer said those are intended to be temporary, emergency repairs to reduce liability where there has been enough sinkage to cause injury. There are broader discussions taking place about longer-term solutions.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

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