



Living with History

MINUTES

CITY OF MILWAUKEE

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, April 20, 2009, 3:00 PM

Room 301A, Milwaukee City Hall

Matt Jarosz, Chair
Sandra McSweeney, Vice Chair
Sandy Ackerman, Pat Balon, Ald. Robert Bauman,
Randy Bryant, Ann Pieper Eisenbrown

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Pat Balon, Ald. Bauman, Randy Bryant, Matt Jarosz, Ann Pieper Eisenbrown, Sandra McSweeney

Commissioners Excused: Sandy Ackerman

Staff Present: Carlen Hatala, Paul Jakubovich, Martha Brown

Chair Matt Jarosz called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM.

2. MINUTES

Approval of the March 16, 2009 Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes

THE MOTION: Pat Balon moved and Ann Pieper Eisenbrown seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2009 commission meeting. The motion carried with Sandra McSweeney abstaining as she had not been at the March 16th meeting.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

None

4. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Reconvene Public Hearing on the Interim Historic Designation Application of the Nicholas Senn Building 300-318 W. Juneau Avenue (Commonly called Sydney Hih) (6th Ald. District, Ald. Milele Coggs)

THE MOTION: Pat Balon moved and Sandra McSweeney seconded a motion to reconvene the public hearing. The motion carried.

Ald. Bauman reported that the owners have now come up with a development plan to include both the Senn Building and the Gipfel Brewery Building on their site.

Matt Jarosz asked staff to swear in any persons wanting to testify and Carlen Hatala did so.

David Florsheim, one of the developers of the Sydney Hih property, was recognized. He testified that they are working on a mixed use plan that would include retail and apartments and that the Gipfel Building and Sydney HIH would be incorporated into the project and the Gipfel would be placed at the west end of the collection of buildings, much as in the original scheme. They were studying the economics of the project. It has not been shown to the public yet.

Matt Jarosz asked whether or not the floor heights would remain as they are at present. Mr. Florsheim replied that they would.

In answer to Sandra McSweeney's question about their time frame, Mr. Florsheim indicated that they had the option on the property with Milwaukee County through the end of the year.

Pat Balon said this project could be a catalyst for other development in the Park East.

Sandra McSweeney asked Mr. Florsheim what effect historic designation would have on his plans. He replied that it might benefit the project but they wanted to look at financing to see whether designation would help or hurt. He was opposed to the designation because of its potential impact on development.

Matt Jarosz asked Mr. Florsheim to keep the commission informed of their progress.

Gail Fitch was recognized. She reminded the commissioners that the need for designation was just as valid today as it was when she nominated the building. Each month she was hoping for some resolution.

Commissioners agreed that the item should come back next month. They did not want to see the building get demolished.

THE MOTION: Ald. Bauman moved and Sandra McSweeney seconded a motion to adjourn the public hearing. The motion carried.

B. Public hearing on proposed boundary changes to the Concordia Historic District. (4th Ald. District, Ald. Robert Bauman)

Staff Carlen Hatala gave a report on the proposed boundary change. She summarized the buildings to be added and indicated that they were of the same architectural quality and historic significance as those already in the district. They appeared to meet criteria e-3, e-5, e-6 and e-9 of the preservation ordinance.

THE MOTION: Ald. Bauman moved and Randy Bryant seconded a motion to open the public hearing. The motion carried.

There was no one to testify on the matter although there were several persons from the neighborhood in the audience.

THE MOTION: Ald. Bauman moved and Randy Bryant seconded a motion to close the public hearing. The motion carried.

Ald. Bauman stated that the Concordia Historic District is in his aldermanic district and that he lives at 29th Street and Kilbourn Avenue. He and Randy Bryant questioned why these buildings were left out of the Concordia Historic District to begin with. Staff Carlen Hatala replied that she did not know. It might have been a matter of architectural integrity. Ald. Bauman added that the Harry Rogers House at 839 N. 29th Street was 100% original on the interior and that the current owner has occupied the house since the 1950s. The house at 832 N. 29th has been a rental for a long time and the owners have

removed two chimneys. The house at 826 N. 29th was remarkable as an example of a late 19th century starter home. Its exterior has been restored.

There was a discussion about including 826 N. 28th Street into the district as well. The owner had expressed interest in being included. Staff reported that the city attorney had reviewed this request and that the house could not be added at this public hearing because it had not been properly noticed. A new public hearing would have to be scheduled with notices to all of the district owners.

Ald. Bauman brought up additional properties on 31st Street, houses between Wells Street and Wisconsin Avenue. Staff Carlen Hatala responded that these properties could be grouped as a separate, new, historic district.

There was no further comment from the commissioners. They were of the opinion that the boundary change was appropriate.

THE MOTION: Ald. Bauman moved and Pat Balon seconded a motion to recommend the changes to the boundary of the Concordia Historic District as the added properties appear to meet criteria e-3, e-5, e-6 and e-9 of the ordinance. The motion carried.

C. Public Hearing on the petition for interim historic designation for the Samuel Weinstock House at 3402 W. St. Paul Avenue (4th Ald. District, Ald. Robert Bauman)

Staff Carlen Hatala gave a summary of the staff report and that the Weinstock House appeared to meet e-5 and e-9 of the ordinance. She also reported that notices sent to two addresses for the owner came back. She even made a site visit to the Milwaukee address, the official address of record with the city, and found that the owner of the Weinstock House did not have a business at that address. The current occupant had no knowledge of the owner or the owner's LLC. Staff used the address provided by the owner to the city through the Assessor's office.

Ald. Bauman questioned whether the commissioners were comfortable that staff had properly noticed the owner.

Ron Roberts, Department of Neighborhood Service, was recognized. He said the owner, Andy Meetz, was deliberately masking his location. DNS has issued condemnation orders against the property but would reverse that if the house received historic designation. They had reached the owner through a long history of issues with his buildings and would check their files to see what address they had. DNS preferred to see the Weinstock House locally designated and the features of the building preserved.

Commissioners discussed whether or not harm could come to the building if interim designation were postponed at this meeting. Randy Bryant indicated that the city was obliged to go by the official address. Ron Roberts suggested the hearing be postponed until the owner received notification.

THE MOTION: Randy Bryant moved to adjourn this item until the next HPC meeting. There was no second to his motion.

Juan Balderas spoke up from the audience stating he was representing the owner. In light of that comment, the commissioners agreed to proceed with the public hearing.

THE MOTION: Ald. Bauman moved and Pat Balon seconded a motion to open the public hearing. The motion carried.

Staff Carlen Hatala swore in those interested in speaking.

Juan Balderas was recognized. He stated he was an agent of the owner. He was or had been living in the Weinstock House and inspector Krause had called to let him know about the public hearing today. Mr. Balderas stated that the owner Andy Meetz was aware of the hearing also. Mr. Meetz's brother wanted Mr. Balderas to attend the hearing to find out what was going on because he did not want the house to get knocked down. Mr. Balderas had worked on the Weinstock House last year and was paid for his work by Andy Meetz. Mr. Balderas said he wanted to purchase the house, he was a licensed contractor, and that he had the manpower to do the work needed on the house. He said about 90% of the interior was intact. Mr. Balderas said there would be problems getting a mortgage for the property but that he was intending to purchase the LLC from the Meetz's so that he could have the house.

Commissioners discussed the amount of investment needed to fix the masonry porch because they wanted Mr. Balderas to know what he was getting into. They suggested calling around for estimates and getting a contractor knowledgeable about historic buildings. Mr. Balderas said he knew it would be expensive. Commissioners also asked about other repairs that were needed.

DNS Commissioner Art Dahlberg and Ron Roberts then explained an unfunded program that would allow DNS to make repairs to historic buildings. It had been used on Sherman Boulevard and the Peck Rowhouse. It is intended to stabilize structures in danger of collapse.

THE MOTION: Pat Balon moved and Ann Pieper Eisenbrown seconded a motion to close the public hearing. The motion carried.

Juan Balderas assured the commission that he wanted to move back into the house and continue repairs. The commissioners were in agreement that the house merited historic designation.

THE MOTION: Ald. Bauman moved and Sandra McSweeney seconded a motion to give interim historic designation to the Weinstock House based on criteria e-5 and e-9 of the historic preservation ordinance. The motion carried.

The commissioners digressed from the agenda at this point to ask about the status of the repairs at 2121 E. Lafayette Place. There was also discussion about adjourning public hearings, as in the case of the Senn Building. Adjourning a hearing would keep the designation open, as what happened with the houses on Kenwood Boulevard. A no decision by the commission would mean that no new designation could be submitted for two years. A yes decision could impact the owner's planning and complicate their financing. The owner could appeal and have the interim designation overturned. There was also discussion about the city's internal process of notification when an owner applies for a demolition permit. Commissioners agreed that they need to stay on top of

the Senn Building and the Gipfel Building to prevent demolition by neglect. Windows need to be boarded up and the Gipfel cannot sit on the flatbed indefinitely. The corners need bracing as brick are falling out. It also needs to be tarped. Matt Jarosz suggested the Gipfel be set down and stabilized until restoration is possible. The commissioners wanted the matter on next month's agenda.

Commissioner Ann Pieper Eisenbrown left the meeting at 5:16 PM.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Certificate of Appropriateness for new storefront at 1108 W. Mitchell St. (Mitchell Street Historic District) Applicant: Patrick McGlin (12th Aldermanic District, Ald. James Witkowiak)

Staff Paul Jakubovich reviewed the project which consisted of two parts. There was work done without a COA. Brick was spalling and the owner took it upon himself to apply a Portland cement stucco coating over the brick. He then scored the stucco to resemble brick. This cement could not now be removed due to its application directly over the brick. The second part of the project was a new storefront.

Martha Brown left at 5:25 for another meeting.

Commissioners agreed with staff that a marble cladding over the exterior would not be appropriate. The emphasis will be on the new storefront.

THE MOTION: Pat Balon moved and Sandra McSweeney seconded a motion to follow staff's report and continue the stucco procedure above the storefront, install the new storefront and cap off the front with some form of coping subject to staff approval. The motion carried.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Vote on preservation candidates for the Mayor's Urban Design Awards.

Staff Carlen Hatala passed out the ballots and showed images of the nominees. Matt Jarosz instructed the commissioners not to dilute the awards and make sure the recipients have firm credibility. He stated that since there were three coach houses on the nominee list, perhaps only one should receive an award and that the others can be looked at next year. The votes would be tallied after the meeting.

7. ADJOURNMENT

THE MOTION: There being no further business, Pat Balon moved and Randy Bryant seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM.