

MINUTES
BELOIT LANDMARKS COMMISSION
Special Meeting of September 23, 2008

A Special Meeting of the Beloit Landmarks Commission was held on Tuesday, September 23, 2008 in the City Hall Forum.

Present: Kent Maxted, John Dummer, Marjorie Fizzell, Rick McGrath, Sandra Williams, Daniel Shea, Charles Haynes

Absent: --

1. Roll Call

Commissioner Maxted called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Community Planner Drew Pennington called the Roll.

2. Minutes of the August 19, 2008 Meeting

Minutes of the August 19, 2008 meeting were approved on a motion by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Fizzell. The motion carried.

3. Public Comments

None

4. Lisa Anderson-Levy – Certificate of Appropriateness

COA-2008-29 Review and consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace five basement windows with glass blocks on the house located at 723 Church Street.

Mr. Pennington read the staff report.

Commissioner Shea recused himself from discussing and voting on this agenda item. Commissioner Williams stated that the glass blocks were a good idea. Commissioner Fizzell stated that, although the glass blocks would be visible from the side, they would enhance the overall appearance of the house.

Following this discussion, Commissioner Dummer moved to approve the COA, subject to the conditions recommended by staff. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried (5-0). Commissioner Shea did not vote.

Following the vote, Robert Davis, the contractor hired for this project, asked if he could address the Commission. Commissioner Maxted invited him to the podium. Mr. Davis shared a sample of the glass blocks that would be used on the project. Mr. Davis then described the materials and techniques that he uses when working on historical buildings.

5. Discussion of Revisions and/or Additions to the Historic Preservation Ordinance

Mr. Pennington described the Ordinance revision process, which includes the involvement of the City Attorney's Office and final action by the City Council.

Commissioner McGrath announced that he had talked with Assistant City Manager Steve Gregg and that Mr. Gregg seemed receptive to Commissioner McGrath's ideas. Mr. Pennington described the evolution of the Ordinance and described why items have been added to the list of projects eligible for staff approval. In the past, a lack of quorum and concerns about limited staff availability influenced the content of the Ordinance. Commissioner Dummer stated that there has been public confusion about the nature of the Ordinance.

Commissioner Fizzell asked Mr. Pennington why an earlier request from a church on Bluff Street to install glass blocks in basement window openings had been approved by staff. Mr. Pennington explained that, unlike agenda item four, the earlier request involved replacing window openings that had been boarded up for decades. Mr. Pennington stated that the size of the rough window opening was not changing, and therefore the project was eligible for staff approval under Section 32.06(1) of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Mr. Pennington stated that agenda item four was also eligible for staff approval, but given the visibility and the replacement of windows, he decided to take the request to the Commission. Commissioner Fizzell expressed dissatisfaction with this explanation. Mr. Pennington recommended amending the Ordinance to specifically address glass blocks, and Commissioner Fizzell recommended adding the project to the list of projects eligible for staff approval. Commissioner Fizzell stated that Section 30.20(1) should be amended to state that violators of the Ordinance "shall" be required to restore the building to its prior appearance. Several Commissioners expressed an interest in changing all references to "like materials" to "historically appropriate materials."

Commissioner McGrath suggested increasing the number of Commissioners to eleven and increasing the meeting frequency to twice each month. Commissioner McGrath suggested removing Sections d, f, i, j, and l from the list of staff-approved projects listed in Section 32.06(1) of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Commissioner McGrath suggested adding a relief mechanism to address cases of hardship and suggested adding language pertaining to streetscape improvements. Commissioner McGrath suggested a membership hierarchy where an individual with specific qualifications (e.g. an architect) would be considered first when filling a vacancy.

Mr. Pennington stated that he would incorporate the suggested changes into a redline version of the Ordinance to be discussed at the next meeting.

6. Report on Staff-Approved Certificates of Appropriateness Since Last Meeting

Mr. Pennington read a list of Certificates of Appropriateness that had been approved (by staff) since the last meeting. The list included the following:

COA-2008-26 – 745 Church Street

This project involves the replacement of the existing flat tar roof with like materials and replacement of the gutters with white, K-style steel gutters and downspouts that resemble the existing gutters and downspouts.

COA-2008-27 – 528 Bluff Street

This project involves the installation of vinyl siding on the three gabled ends on the third story of the house, as well as soffit and fascia replacement.

COA-2008-28 – 957 Bluff Street

This project involves replacement of the existing shingles with shingles that are “estate gray” in color.

630 Park Avenue - Announcement

The house has suffered severe water damage due to hole in the roof. This house has been unoccupied during the past few months and is currently for sale. The City’s Building Inspectors are very concerned about the structure’s integrity and are attempting to gain access for an inspection. The house may be in danger of condemnation.

7. Committee Reports

A. Awards Committee: Commissioner Fizzell announced that she would be nominating Fairbanks Flats for an award next spring.

B. Plaque Committee: Nothing to report.

C. Program/Publicity Committee: Nothing to report.

D. Cemetery Building Committee: Nothing to report.

E. Landmarks/DBA Design District Committee: Nothing to report.

8. Adjournment

At 8:05 PM, Commissioner Dummer made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Commissioner Fizzell seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Drew Pennington
Community Planner