

MINUTES
BELOIT LANDMARKS COMMISSION
Meeting of April 21, 2009

A Meeting of the Beloit Landmarks Commission was held on Tuesday, April 21, 2009 in the City Manager's Conference Room on the fourth floor of City Hall.

Present: Marjorie Fizzell, Rick McGrath, Lynette Johnson, Jennifer Knezel, Daniel Shea, Sandra Williams, Charles Haynes

Absent: John Dummer

1. Roll Call

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

2. Minutes of the February 17, 2009 Meeting

Minutes of the February 17, 2009 meeting were approved on a motion by Commissioner Shea, seconded by Commissioner McGrath. The motion carried (6-0).

3. Public Comments

None

4. Community Action Inc. – Certificate of Appropriateness

COA-2009-07 Review and consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace four windows, to install a fan exhaust hood, to install an exhaust pipe, and to install an intake pipe on the house located at 410 Bluff Street.

Mr. Pennington read the staff report.

Neal Heller of Community Action Inc. identified himself as the applicant. Commissioner McGrath asked Mr. Pennington if the house's classification as a "pivotal" structure was due to the architecture or a prior owner. Mr. Pennington stated that he was also surprised at the classification, but that it probably was not due to a significant prior owner given the lack of a historical statement on the survey form. Commissioner McGrath asked the applicant if the proposed windows are the same style as the existing windows. Mr. Heller stated that the proposed windows are the same style.

Following this discussion, Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the requested COA, subject to the conditions recommended by staff. Commissioner Shea seconded the motion. The motion carried (6-0).

5. Eliazar Martinez – Certificate of Appropriateness

COA-2009-08 Review and consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness to retain unauthorized windows and an unauthorized second story alteration on the house located at 961 Bluff Street.

Mr. Pennington read the staff report.

Commissioner McGrath asked Mr. Martinez how long he has owned the property. Mr. Martinez replied that he has owned the property for five years. Commissioner McGrath asked Mr. Martinez if he was aware that the property is within a historic district. Mr. Martinez stated that he is aware that the property is within a historic district because he received a citation for replacing his roof without prior approval several years ago. Commissioner Williams asked the applicant if he had considered other solutions before enclosing the balcony. Mr. Martinez stated that he was trying to prevent water damage. Commissioner McGrath announced that he had visited the applicant's property earlier in the day. Commissioner McGrath stated that the balcony was poorly designed. Commissioner McGrath speculated that the pitched porch roof was not part of the original design, and that the original design allowed rainwater from the second story balcony to drain onto the roof of the porch. Councilor Haynes asked how an architect or contractor could miss such an obvious design flaw. Commissioner McGrath speculated that the poor design was the result of lax code enforcement in earlier decades. Mr. Martinez explained that he received orders to remove a tarp that he had been using to prevent water from entering the balcony. Commissioner Johnson stated that she understood the problem, but was not pleased with the inappropriate enclosure. Commissioner McGrath suggested that the applicant be allowed to enclose the balcony with several storm windows. Commissioner McGrath introduced a friend, Bill Dorr, who offered to help the applicant with the project. Mr. Pennington interrupted the discussion and recommended that the Landmarks Commission review and approve the proposed design of the enclosure. Mr. Pennington also recommended giving the applicant specifics, such as a number of storm windows and a timeline for submittal.

Following this discussion, Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve a COA to allow the applicant to retain the unauthorized windows, subject to the conditions recommended by staff. Commissioner Shea seconded the motion. The motion carried (6-0).

Following this vote, Commissioner Shea made a motion to approve a COA to allow the enclosure of the second story balcony, subject to a condition requiring the applicant to submit the proposed enclosure design to staff by May 5, 2009 for consideration during the regularly scheduled May Landmarks Commission meeting, a condition requiring a building permit, and the two conditions recommended by staff. Commissioner McGrath seconded the motion. The motion carried (6-0).

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

Mr. Pennington announced that he issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for the property located at 719 Bushnell Street. This project involves roof replacement.

Mr. Pennington announced that he recently issued several Notices of Violation for various infractions in the historic districts. Mr. Pennington also announced that follow-up inspections of projects approved during 2008 would be occurring throughout April and May.

7. Discussion of a New or Expanded East Side Historic District

Mr. Pennington explained that the Beloit Neighborhood Preservation Association had asked Beloit resident and former Wisconsin Historical Society employee Rick Dexter to meet with City staff regarding the expansion of the College Park Historic District. Because such a project would be labor intensive, Mr. Pennington promised Mr. Dexter that he would ask the Landmarks Commission about participating in events such as door-to-door surveys and fundraising. Commissioner Fizzell stated that any extended or new district should include every property on a block. Commissioner McGrath stated that any outreach should include an explanation of the benefits associated with owning historic property.

8. Committee Reports

A. Awards & Plaque Committee: Commissioner Shea announced that he has concluded his research into the history of 723 Church Street and recommends a date of construction of “circa 1885.”

B. Program & Publicity Committee: Nothing to report.

C. Education Committee: Nothing to report.

D. Outreach Committee: Commissioner Fizzell announced that she submitted a grant application to Visit Beloit to share the cost of producing an updated walking tour brochure.

9. Adjournment

At 8:14 PM, Commissioner Williams made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Commissioner McGrath seconded the motion. The motion carried (5-0)*.

*Commissioner Shea had to leave the meeting following his Committee Report.

Drew Pennington
Community Planner