

HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: January 8, 2020

PRESENT: Kendall Larson, Cynthia Jennings, Genia Hesser, Preston Lawing, Merle Hanson, Connie Dretske, Kelly Fluharty, Dennis McEntaffer, and Innes Henderson

ABSENT: Peter Shortridge

STAFF: Luke Sims, Assistant City Planner

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Genia Hesser called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

2. Approval of Minutes – November 13, 2019

Commissioner Lawing moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Jennings seconded the motion. All members present voted aye.

3. Approval of Minutes – December 11, 2019

Commissioner Lawing moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Jennings seconded the motion. All members present voted aye.

4. 2019 Priority List Consideration and Update

Mr. Sims recommended the Commission to consider possible projects based on the 2019 priority list, which is a robust list prepared by the Commission in January of 2019 based on the windshield survey conducted in the 1990s. The priority list helps set the stage for the upcoming May/June report to the City Council for budgeting and for pursuit of grants going forward.

Commissioner K. Larson suggested that the Commission look at the full list from the windshield survey before returning back to the 2019 priority list for a 2020 update. Commissioner Fluharty expressed agreement with that idea. Commissioner Larson suggested that this may still meet the grant cycle for legacy grants but that the January deadline on the 10th would be tough to meet. Commissioner Dretske asked if multiple legacy grants could be applied for in the year. Chairperson Hesser responded that all four grant windows could be applied for. Commissioner Henderson asked if it would have to be one application per quarter or if they could all be submitted at once. Chairperson Hesser responded that incremental grants building on each other are typically better received and too many open grants could be viewed poorly, but multiple grants could be applied for if an HPC so wished. Commissioner Dretske asked if a grant stays open due to something beyond HPC control whether that affects eligibility. Mr. Sims responded that as long as communication stays open and milestones are hit, having open grants is not necessarily a negative.

Chairperson Hesser asked if there was a clear motion from the Commission.

Commissioner Larson moved to add the Auditorium-Gymnasium to the priority list,

split out the Central Watkins Conservation District, and have the Commission review additional possibilities and add anything to the list from the larger survey. Commissioner Fluharty seconded the motion. All members present voted aye.

5. Certified Local Government Grant Recommendation

Commissioner Larson asked about the Lake Park Band Shell and when its upcoming anniversary was. Mr. Sims responded it was in the next few years. Commissioner Larson mentioned that she would prefer to see something that is in danger and not owned by the City as a priority. Mr. Sims recommended that if the Band Shell is chosen by the Commission, looking at a Legacy grant in the April window would likely be a better fit.

Commissioner Dretske mentioned that she would prefer to look at properties that are at risk rather than properties that are being maintained. She noted that the current list may not have any properties aside from the Auditorium-Gymnasium that are at risk.

Commissioner Larson recommended that a CLG grant decision be made today and the Commission wait for a Legacy grant. Commissioner Fluharty suggested going forward with Windom Park for the CLG grant. Commissioner Fluharty followed up to ask how this would affect the Drew House and whether there were any updates on it. Mr. Sims responded that nothing has come back regarding the Drew House but that it remains in the local historic district, which is what provides protections from demolition.

Commissioner Fluharty moved to put forward Windom Park for the CLG Grant cycle. Commissioner Larson seconded the motion. All members present voted aye.

Commissioner Larson questioned whether the larger Broadway Residential Historic District should be pursued or whether the smaller local historic district should be adhered to. Mr. Sims mentioned that he has approached consultants regarding the project and that the opinion to this point has been that the smaller, local district would be easier to pursue. He mentioned that the HPC could pursue the larger district but that the eligibility of that district may not mean it won't be difficult to officially nominate, which require support of a majority of property owners in the district which may have not have the demonstrated support that the smaller, local district has.

Chairperson Hesser mentioned that if a smaller district is designated, there is the option in the future that it could be added to in the future. Commissioner Lawing mentioned that if expanding the district, more rentals may be included which could be viewed poorly by those landlords who may see this as inhibiting improvements and repairs. Commissioner Dretske asked whether non-contributing properties can do what they want without oversight. Mr. Sims noted that if they are part of a local district, even if non-contributing, they would be subject to HPC review for exterior alterations. Commissioner Dretske asked if emergency repairs did not require HPC input. Mr. Sims responded that emergency repairs and regular maintenance or replacing like-in-kind does not require HPC review.

Commissioner Larson expressed concern that an expanded district not be seen to be rammed through and in the interest of time, beginning with the Windom Park local district would work better. General assent from the Commission was heard.

Commissioner Dretske mentioned that she sees improvements a block away from the Windom Park district that may be in response to the designated district and whether expansion would make sense.

Commissioner Larson asked if the grant could begin with the larger area and then be shrunk to the current district size. Mr. Sims noted that the Letter of Intent was the only thing due on the 31st then it could be pared down by the time of the final application in March.

Commissioner Hesser noted that making sure there is awareness with the district is important and care and time should be taken to communicate with the district or potential expanded district. Commissioner Dretske mentioned that it may be more prudent to begin with what the Commission already knows rather than looking at the expanded district as the Windom Park district took some time to gain support among property owners.

Commissioner Larson asked if the Letter of Intent could work the opposite way and then be expanded. Mr. Sims mentioned that it is unlikely it could be scaled up rather than being scaled back.

Commissioner Fluharty mentioned that she doesn't mind going for the bigger district as it gets the foot in the door and allows for research.

Commissioner Larson asked if there were strong drawbacks to starting bigger. Commissioner Henderson asked that there were no concerns so long as the level of research and public meetings can be held successfully prior to the submission of a full grant application. Commissioner Hesser mentioned that she had concerns about holding the meetings and reaching out the public prior to a full grant application.

Commissioner Dretske mentioned that she would prefer to see more community buy-in before pursuing the larger district and put forth best efforts to communicate.

Commissioner Henderson asked how many property owners in the expanded district have rental properties in that area as this appears to be a concern brought up in the discussion. Commissioner Dretske noted that some property owners in Windom Park have rental certificates and that being a landlord may not necessarily preclude support. She noted that this is something that the Commission doesn't know.

Commissioner Larson asked to clarify the process of determining eligibility and then to nomination to the register. Mr. Sims responded that the Broadway Residential Historic District has already been determined as eligible and that the grant would be to nominate the district.

Commissioner Lawing asked how the boundaries were determined previously. Mr. Sims responded that the residential nature and cultural ties of the property owners in the district created that boundary. Mr. Sims mentioned that when Windom Park was created as a local district, the intent was to nominate it to the National Register and that is reflected in communication to SHPO. Commissioner Lawing mentioned that the broader district includes properties that are almost six blocks from Windom Park and that it may appear gerrymandered. Mr. Sims responded that the boundary reach was a concern from the consultants that reviewed the potential project.

Chairperson Hesser questioned whether this was an unmanageable larger district due to public response and the boundary concerns. Commissioner Henderson asked whether the direction expressed should be to begin with the smaller district and communicate with property owners in the broader district about potentially joining the district in the future. Chairperson Hesser mentioned that the expansion could be whatever is feasible and may not stretch to include the six blocks distant from Windom Park.

Commissioner Larson moved to put forward the Windom Park Local Historic District for the CLG Grant Letter of Intent due on January 31, 2020. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. All members present voted aye.

Chairperson Hesser recommended that the education committee look at a potential plan to reach out to Windom Park's current property owners regarding the application.

6. Downtown Strategic Plan Review and Comment

Mr. Sims mentioned that comments over the next few weeks would be accepted and that the Commission could provide detailed comments via email if they so wishes, there would be a public open house on January 21st at 4:30 pm, and that there will be an online review period with surveys for the Commission.

Chairperson Hesser mentioned that the full packet does not need to be reviewed page by page at this time. She asked if the comments should come from the Committee as a whole or whether they should be coming independently as individuals. Mr. Sims said that the City would like Commissioners review and that individual responses are also requested and that responses should come back by end of January, 2020.

Commissioner Larson mentioned that there is a need to clarify that the sense of place in the Chapter Two Summary should include historic nature or character to be referenced specifically. She also noted that money put toward signs, seating, and light posts could be a quick win to help bring in placemaking and character improvements. She also said that page 11 could include references to the historic nature of Winona as well in the summary of placemaking. She also mentioned that the engagement themes on page 22 could include historic connections and character. Chairperson Hesser expressed agreement. Commissioner Larson mentioned that the ease of walking should be included as a tie-in as well. Chairperson Larson noted that historic buildings are listed on page 31 and 32 but

could be enhanced to talk more about the historic nature of the downtown. She also noted that she was happy to see historic preservation as an incentive for improvement.

Commissioner Fluharty asked where money for improvements of historic buildings could come. Mr. Sims mentioned that small city block grants or other federal programs can be utilized. He noted that the existing façade grant program has a SHPO review but also has prevailing wage requirements which can be prohibitive to property owners going through the process.

Chairperson Hesser mentioned that on page 38, practical art in downtown can enhance the historic nature of the downtown.

Commissioner Larson mentioned that increased code enforcement would be a good suggestion.

Chairperson Hesser suggested that page 63 include language alluding to preserving the historic aspects of design in the downtown area. Chairperson Larson added that there are past documents supporting preservation of brick roads in the Comprehensive Plan but that it hasn't been done but could be addressed as preserving those types of elements.

7. Committee Reports

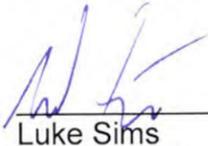
Commissioner Larson mentioned that the Education Committee was planning to meet on January 27th.

8. Other Business

Commissioner Lawing asked if there was an update regarding the Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment public hearing before the Planning Commission. Mr. Sims responded that the 330 West Second Street public hearing was scheduled for January 13, 2020 at 4:30 pm and it would be a first step toward rezoning of the property. Commissioner Lawing asked if the first step was approved whether I-2 Heavy Industrial could be pursued or I-1 Light Industrial would be. Mr. Sims responded that it could potentially move toward either designation. Commissioner Lawing asked about the zoning to the west. Mr. Sims responded that the property to the west is zoned industrial. Commissioner Henderson asked about a conditional use rather than a rezoning. Mr. Sims mentioned that it is a prohibited use and does not have a conditional use process tied to it for that use.

9. Adjournment

On a motion from Commissioner Lawing and a second from Commissioner Jennings, the Commission unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 4:54 pm.



Luke Sims
Assistant City Planner