

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Time and Date: Thursday, November 6, 2014, at 5:00 p.m. in the Birch Room of Wausau City Hall
Members Present: Gisselman (C), Crooks
Others Present: Lenz

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

Chairperson Gisselman called the meeting to order at approximately 5:03 p.m. stating that a quorum was not present.

Approve the minutes of the September 24, 2014 meeting

This item was tabled due to a lack of quorum.

PUBLIC HEARING: Proposed Designation of the Sav-O Supply building, 1418 North First Street, as a Local Historic Landmark

Gisselman reviewed the powers and duties of the Historic Preservation Commission from the charter. He also read the definition of He also reviewed some of the criteria for designating landmarks and historic sites from the Historic Preservation ordinance. Gisselman stated that the public hearing will be opened and this item will be acted upon at the next meeting. Then the item would move to the Plan Commission and finally to the City Council. Gisselman opened up the public hearing for 1418 North First Street.

John Fischer with Emmerich & Associates, 453 Grand Avenue Schofield, spoke against having this property be added to the historic register at this time. He understands that there are some potential developments for this site and one of them was hoping for this classification to help with their financing. However, the final decision on that proposal was not decided by council, it was sent back to committee to explore other options. As a developer in the area, he feels that doing the designation before receiving additional proposals could limit the number of proposals. He has walked through this building and four other buildings of similar construction and use. Fischer said that there are barriers to redevelop this structure, WHEDA and tax incentive funding was considered because doing a market development will be nearly impossible because it's not financially feasible. The engineering report explains that the exterior walls are in disrepair and would need to be reinforced or reinsulated because they don't meet current code, therefore the appearance would have to be changed. Fischer stated that although the framing is good, the walls themselves are bad. The report discusses the interesting mechanics such as the huge freight elevator, which is cool, but the mechanics are the same as most freight elevators of that vintage. He stated that the elevator would never survive the remodel and would never be legal today. Fischer said he feels this doesn't meet the definition of historic, although it meets the committee's definition. Merriam Webster's defines historic as famous or important or having great or lasting importance. This building was box manufacturing, a concrete/steel frame with a flat roof; he doesn't think it has any uniqueness to it. The old stone lumber mill made sense to him; it was the first lumber mill in a lumber town. Fischer stated that just another riverfront factory, that doesn't look different from other factories, doesn't make sense what makes it unique. When he looks at the big box retailers like Home Depot and Menards, will those buildings be historic in 60-80 years from now? He suggests that once economic development and council approves a certain type of development, and if that development requires type of funding, then it's fine to designate it as historic. However he feels that to designate it before getting the final approval could really cut down the options for redevelopment that are available.

Gisselman asked Fischer to compose a document listing his concerns so all of the points could be presented at a future date.

Fischer will write these down and submit it to the commission.

Gisselman closed the public hearing.

Lenz stated that with the state's historic tax credits that could be used by developers, landmarking this building could actually open up more options. If market rate is impossible, then there may not be other funding sources. The other proposals were considering tax credits as well. They realize that the exterior is in tough shape, if it were to be a local landmark, this commission could make a decision about those exterior changes. Lenz does not feel that landmarking it will restrict developments that come forward. He stated that this is one of the last riverfront properties and although it wasn't unique at the time, since there currently aren't any others on the riverfront perhaps that makes it unique. Lenz pointed out the boiler and freight elevator which may not have been terribly unique at the time, there isn't much left from that time period in Wausau.

Crooks noted a correction to photo 1 that it should state looking west at the east elevation.

Gisselman stated this will be discussed at the next meeting on December 3, 2014.

Discuss 726 and 802 Franklin Street properties

Bob Voigt, 1819 North 7th Avenue, owns these properties and would like to put a new roof, vinyl siding and new eaves onto 802 Franklin Street. He contacted the state regarding these properties and he was told that it's up to the city if they will remain listed within the historic district. He was told vinyl and historical don't go together so it would not be allowed on historic buildings. Voigt is trying to get funding from community development but that would require that these buildings are not in the historic district. He attended the earlier meetings regarding the districts but did not realize that all the buildings were going to be noted as historical properties.

Gisselman stated that both properties are in the Easthill Residential District and they are in the ordinances. He was not aware that this involved community development.

Voigt explained that in order to get their funding, he needs a statement that the buildings are not on the register.

Lenz recalled that Compass Counseling came to the commission regarding the building on Grant Street before they got funding from community development.

Crooks asked if this is a Class II district.

Gisselman confirmed that the Easthill is a Class II district.

Voigt recalled that at the previous meetings they were told that all the buildings would be in the district but not all the buildings would be listed on the registry.

Crooks explained that the district is marked by geographic boundaries. Some buildings are contributing and some are non-contributing structures.

Voigt stated he would like to keep the buildings the way they are, that 726 has a nice structure but it's been an apartment building since the 1960s so the interior has changed. He believes the 726 building was

moved there and then the back half was added for apartments. The property on 802 has had exterior changes and a carport was added. Also a round dormer on the east side was removed.

Gisselman said he will talk to Tammy Stratz and he was confused about their requirements. Normally, when Voigt went to apply for a building permit he would be given the certificate of appropriateness form. The commission would meet to discuss the potential changes and make a recommendation. Gisselman said that perhaps if Voigt were to use a different form of siding, he could potentially get historic tax credits.

Voigt has spoken to other people who have gotten the tax credits and they have said it didn't really benefit them. His impression is that once you take the tax credits, the historical people will want more done than what a person would want to or need to do. Instead of spending \$40,000 or \$50,000, they would want a person to spend another \$40,000 or \$50,000 on top of that. He is not interested in the tax credits.

Crooks asked Voigt what his timeframe is to make these repairs.

Voigt wanted to have these projects done in September but he has been working with community development and had given Gisselman the contact information for the person he spoke to at the state historical society.

Crooks said they need to talk to community development first to clarify this matter.

Voigt would like the lower interest rate, he doesn't want to make exterior changes, he likes the old style buildings and has kept these apartments because of their unique layouts. He said that the 802 property has a lot of unique woodwork on the downstairs level. He wants to clean up the exterior and put a new roof on 802 and fix up 726. He would also like to blacktop the dirt driveway on 802. He has been working with Tammy, it took longer to get the two estimates because the contractors were so busy, and then Tammy found the historical portion of the criteria.

Lenz explained that community development has their own criteria. Since these buildings are in the historic district the updates would need to be reviewed by the historic preservation commission. The building on Grant Street for Compass Counseling was awarded funding for updates after they came to the commission.

Voigt would like to leave the exterior, do the roof trim and soffits in aluminum. He could leave the siding as is but vinyl was suggested to him.

Crooks said that normally someone would apply for a building permit first which Voigt has not done yet.

Voigt explained that he spoke with Tammy and gave her the estimates so he could then get the permit after he was approved to get funding.

Crooks would like to hear from community development what they need from the commission.

Lenz wasn't aware that Voigt had filled out the application with community development. Normally they would notify the commission when they receive this type of an application.

Voigt stated that he has gotten two estimates for everything and they discussed which contractors should

get what parts of the work but then this historical issue came up. He asked how a property could be removed from the district.

Lenz explained that the same process for designating a building would be followed for the rescission.

Crooks said that the district lines would have to change in order for the property to be removed from the district.

Gisselman said these buildings are on the western border of the Easthill district. The commission will discuss this issue on December 3rd.

Lenz will talk to Tammy and Bill about this tomorrow.

Voigt requested a map of historical districts.

Lenz said that Voigt could obtain a map online or from the inspections or GIS department.

Update on Federal Building historic sign plans

Gisselman was in New York and photographed a sign from the New York City landmark commission at the St. Fraunces Tavern and he brought in photos. He obtained sign pricing from the state historical society and Wausau Awards and Engraving and brought in the quotes. He suggested using their own logo like the city seal that is displayed in the council chambers as sort of a logo and composing their own copy for the sign. He is also waiting to see some designs for the historic street signs.

Crooks asked about the pricing from Wausau Awards and Engraving.

Gisselman stated that the Wausau Awards pricing did not include the lettering.

Review current Local Historic Landmarks

This item was tabled due to a lack of quorum.

Discuss potential Local Historic Landmarks

This item was tabled due to a lack of quorum.

Update on potential new members

Gisselman said that Jean Gidlund and Patty Grim's appointments will be voted on by council next week.

Future agenda items and next meeting date(s)

The next Historic Preservation Commission meeting will be on December 3, 2014 at 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

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Respectfully Submitted,
Gary Gisselman, Chair