

Planning and Development

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Minutes
Historic Preservation Commission
Tuesday, October 22, 2019
City Hall Auditorium
Special Meeting
7:30 PM

Present: Chair Kelley Archer; Ernie Lowell; Kate Gaudet; Diana Huot; Rob Biggs; Andrew Bracy; Jack Cianchette

Excused: Steve Ryan

Unexcused: Julia May

Also Present: Emily Cole-Prescott, City Planner; Isabelle Oechsle, Program Coordinator; Roger Gay, Council Liaison

1. Call to Order: Chair Archer called the meeting to order at 8:25 PM.
2. New Business, Tabled Items & Public Hearings –
 - a. Zoning Ordinance Revision Public Hearing
 - Historic Preservation Ordinance

Overview: Emily Cole-Prescott provided a brief overview on the Zoning Ordinance Revision project.

Public Hearing: **Diana Huot moved to open the public hearing. Kate Gaudet seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

The following members of the public chose to speak:

- *Roger Gay, Ward 2 City Councilor*, asked a question about vinyl siding over wood siding relative to the Commission's ordinance revision.
- *Beth Johnston, 62 Pleasant Street*, asked about the timing of the process and how the historic preservation ordinance would be changing.

Discussion from the Commission: If vinyl siding came off wood, wood would need to be used moving forward. Chair Archer expressed that the current Historic Preservation Ordinance has not been comprehensively updated since 1998, so it needed to be updated for clarity. Much of the content in the proposed ordinance has been edited for the better. The things which have been added are the vinyl siding that Emily addressed, protecting exterior details such as wood sashing and masonry. The Commission believes that staff review times for minor COAs should be 10 working days to retain timeline of current ordinance.

“Installation of vinyl siding on buildings that are not sided with vinyl is prohibited” is how the proposed ordinance reads currently. Kate Gaudet asked if it should be specified within the ordinance that wood is preferred, and Chair Archer asked about specifying no vinyl windows in the district. The Commission agreed to review potential material preferences and topic of vinyl windows as a subsequent amendment.

- *Carolyn Leibowitz, 177 Lewis Avenue*, asked if the Commission has contributed to the conversation about heights in the proposed Downtown district in the Zoning Ordinance.

Chair Archer reminded members of the public that the Commission will need to review any applications that would plan to develop within the District and in certain areas near the District. The Commission is always concerned about whether proposed downtown development will dwarf historic buildings and they do consider in the review process how proposals will fit in with the surrounding buildings.

- *Beth Johnston, 62 Pleasant St*, spoke, noting concern that potential of the height in the zoning ordinance would diminish character of surrounding buildings. Asked Commission to consider this and weigh in if possible.

The Commission discussed adding a review of heights to a list of subsequent amendments. Emily Cole-Prescott explained that the Commission has the authority to request specific data on proposed heights during plan reviews to ensure it is making an appropriate compatibility finding.

Action: Diana Huot moved to direct City staff to compile a draft report for the Historic Preservation Commission’s review at its October 29th meeting, noting its recommendation to the City Council to adopt the draft zoning ordinance’s historic preservation provisions with the following amendment: that the minor COA review timetable remain at 10 working days. Kate Gaudet seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Kate Gaudet moved to add the topics of vinyl windows, exterior additions, and discussion of height in the historic district to the list of subsequent amendments. Diana Huot seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Adjournment: Adjourned at 9:38PM.