



Approved

MINUTES HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR SESSION

5:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 20, 2015
City Council Chamber, Historic Federal Building

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Christina Monk; Commissioners David Klavitter, Joseph Rapp, Bob McDonell and John McAndrews.

Commissioners Excused: Commissioner John Whalen.

Staff Members Present: Laura Carstens and Dave Johnson.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Monk at 5:36 p.m.

AFFIDAVIT OF COMPLIANCE: Staff presented an Affidavit of Compliance verifying the meeting was being held in compliance with the Iowa Open Meetings Law.

MINUTES: Motion by McDonell, seconded by Klavitter, to approve the minutes of the July 16, 2015 meeting as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Monk, Rapp, McDonell, and McAndrews; Nay – None; Abstain – Klavitter.

DESIGN REVIEW: Application by the City of Dubuque for advisory design review of the proposed Dubuque Intermodal Transportation Center signs, 950 Elm Street, in the Historic Millwork District.

Staff Member Johnson reviewed the Staff report. He explained the City is requesting to install one internally illuminated monument style freestanding sign with an electronic message center and one wall mounted digital sign. He explained the role of the Commission in reviewing this public improvement project is to serve as an advisory design review body to the City Council.

Staff Member Johnson reviewed the size, materials, locations and illumination of the proposed signs. The freestanding sign will be 23.2 square feet in area and 6' 5" in height with a 7.4-square foot electronic message sign component. The cabinet will be made of extruded aluminum painted a pewter color to complement the Intermodal Transportation Center materials. The lettering will be routed, backed with white acrylic, and internally illuminated with white LED light. The sign will be located on the southwest corner of the site near Elm and E. 9th Streets to serve Jule Transit and other services at the Center. The wall mounted digital sign will be a full-color electronic message sign that will be 45.9 square feet in area and placed on a pre-cast panel flush mounted to

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the City of Dubuque parking ramp entrance facing 9th Street. He noted the Center's design, materials, and site were reviewed and supported by the Commission at the January 19, 2012 meeting.

Staff Member Johnson reviewed the plans and Architectural Guidelines which apply to the project. He noted the Architectural Guidelines do not recommend animated, message board or internally illuminated signs; however, the Architectural Guidelines have an overarching policy statement that all new signs should be developed with the overall context of the building and of the area in mind.

He explained the Commission should consider that the Intermodal Center is a modern designed structure and not a traditional historic building. He stated it is located in the Historic Millwork District PUD Planned Unit Development, but it is not located in the Millwork District National Register Historic District. He reviewed it is also important to recognize the Center serves a greater public purpose and it is essential the signage be dynamic to convey schedules and information important to users of the Center. He stated that traditional signage does not compliment the Center in design or purpose.

Staff Member Johnson explained that while the signs may not be consistent with the Architectural Guidelines which do not recommend internally illuminated and electronic message signs, the proposed signs can be considered consistent with the overarching Policy Statement of the Architectural Guidelines that all new signs should be developed with the overall context of the building and of the area in mind. He noted that the signs can also be considered consistent with the goals of the Historic Millwork District Master Plan as well as the performance standards of the Historic Millwork District PUD.

The Commission asked for clarification on the location and size of the two signs. Staff Member Johnson stated the wall-mounted electronic message sign will face 9th Street and the monument electronic message sign will be at the intersection of 9th and Elm Streets. Commissioners and staff discussed similar electronic message signs for public building and the requested display area of the proposed signs. The Commission felt the freestanding sign was appropriate in scale and materials. The Commission discussed the effectiveness and need for locating the wall mounted sign facing 9th Street, noting such a large sign is not needed to inform ramp users and few people will benefit from community messages because of limited visibility from the sign's proposed location.

Director of Transit Operations Candace Eudaley-Loebach arrived at 6:00 p.m. She explained the freestanding sign will provide Jule Transit information as well as community and public service announcements. She left the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Motion by McDonnell, seconded by Rapp, to recommend approval of the monument style freestanding sign as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye: Monk, McAndrews, Klavitter, Rapp and McDonell; Nay – None.

The Commission discussed the digital sign's materials, scale, lighting, and type relevant

to the Architectural Guidelines. The Commission expressed concern the wall-mounted sign on the ramp will flash light on adjacent buildings, impact residential uses, and be a detriment to neighboring properties and the character of the Historic Millwork District.

Commissioners noted the wall mounted sign is not in keeping with the Historic Millwork District neighborhood or the Architectural Guidelines. The Commission noted signage on public buildings in historic districts should be able to comply with the same standards applied to private entities. The Commission noted the wall mounted sign is too large, projects too much light, and is not in keeping with the building or district.

Motion by McDonnell, seconded by Rapp, to recommend approval of the wall mounted digital sign as submitted. Motion failed by the following vote: Aye – None; Nay: Monk, McAndrews, Klavitter, Rapp and McDonell.

The Commission discussed the need and effectiveness of the proposed wall mounted sign with regard to cost and visual impact, and then asked staff to clarify their purview. Staff Member Johnson reviewed the Commission's purview is to advise City Council with regard to the sign's size, scale, placement, lighting and type -- but not content.

In response to requests from Commissioners, Staff Member Johnson provided street views and aerial imagery showing adjacent buildings and development in the Historic Millwork District and public parking ramps in the downtown. The Commission compared the proposed wall mounted digital sign to externally illuminated signs and electronic message signs installed on other parking ramps in the downtown. Commissioners noted the proposed wall mounted sign would be much larger but less visible. The Commission stated the proposed wall mounted digital sign's lighting, scale and materials are inconsistent with the Architectural Guidelines.

The Commission noted it would be important to provide City Council with a sign alternative that would effectively identify the parking ramp while being more in keeping with the Architectural Guidelines. The Commission discussed sign alternatives that would both identify the parking ramp and comply with the Architectural Guidelines. The Commission discussed externally illuminated sign options as well as backlit sign options similar to the signs recently installed on the Locust Street parking ramp. The consensus of the Commission was to recommend an externally illuminated sign in keeping with the Architectural Guidelines and the Historic Millwork District.

Motion by Klavitter, seconded by McDonell, to recommend the wall mounted sign on the parking ramp be an externally illuminated projecting sign placed perpendicular to 9th Street over the main entrances of the ramp with lettering on both sides of sign to match the materials and color of the Dubuque Intermodal Transportation Center monument style freestanding sign. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye: Monk, McAndrews, Klavitter, Rapp and McDonell; Nay – None.

Commissioners requested Staff provide the Commission with the information that will

be forwarded to City Council.

ITEMS FROM PUBLIC:

Commissioner Klavitter excused himself from the table to address the Commission.

Heritage Works: David Klavitter, 1090 W. 3rd Street, explained he is part of Heritage Works and reviewed its mission and role in the community. He suggested inviting Duane Hagerty, Executive Director of Heritage Works, to speak to the Commission in greater detail about Heritage Works and partnership opportunities. By consensus, the Commission requested Staff invite Mr. Hagerty to the next Commission meeting.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSION:

Election of Vice-Chairperson: Staff Member Johnson reviewed at the July 16, 2015 meeting two nominations were made for Vice-Chairperson and both motions failed, so the Commission requested the matter be placed on the next Commission agenda when additional members could be present. Staff reviewed the terms and roles of officers.

Commissioner McDonell nominated Commissioner Rapp as Vice Chairperson due to his extensive historical knowledge of Dubuque. Commissioner Rapp nominated Commissioner Klavitter. Commissioner Klavitter declined the nomination. Motion by McDonell, seconded by Klavitter, to nominate Joseph Rapp as Vice Chairperson. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Klavitter, McDonell, Monk, and McAndrews; Nay – Rapp.

Work Plan Update: Staff Member Johnson explained the status of each work plan goal is identified on the goal sheet. He reviewed completed and ongoing work plan items.

Staff reported on recent discussions with the City Manager regarding the Commission's request to pursue a Historic Preservation Economic Impact Study specific to Dubuque. Staff stated the City Manager was supportive, but suggested developing a more in-depth economic study which addresses specific financial and incremental impacts. Staff explained the information can then be used to later inform a Historic Preservation Plan, which is more similar to the studies the Commission had been reviewing.

Staff explained the City Manager recommended the Commission look at the completed Arts and Economic Prosperity Study and the in-progress Arts and Culture Master Plan funded through the National Endowment of the Arts. Staff explained the Commission will also need to find funding for the project. The Commission discussed checking other art communities like Santa Fe for studies, and Heritage Works for possible funding.

Commissioners asked when the National Park Service (NPS) will act on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Nominations. Staff explained the NPS will decide on the nominations within the next two months. Commissioners discussed media coverage and education opportunities. Staff explained once the nominations are official, a media release will be issued.

NRHP District Entryway Signs: The Commission discussed developing entryway signs for Dubuque's NRHP Districts. Staff Member Johnson noted once the most recent nominations are accepted by the NPS, Dubuque will have 16 districts. The Commission discussed current entryway signs for local districts and their costs. Staff suggested considering alternative designs that could perhaps be co-located on existing posts such as street signs which would be a substantial cost savings. The Commission discussed drafting a letter to the City Council to inform them of their work plan accomplishments, thank them for their vocal and financial support, and initiate dialogue about entryway signs for Dubuque's NRHP districts. The Commission requested Staff research the costs and check with the Engineering Department about co-locating entryway signs.

Commissioner Recognition: The Commission requested Staff prepare letters on their behalf thanking former Commissioners Chris Olson and Mary Loney-Bichell for their years of service.

Commission Membership: The Commission and Staff discussed current vacancies as well as the benefits of transitioning back to a 7 member Commission. The Commission requested the item be placed on a future agenda.

Travel Dubuque Brochures: The Commission discussed including information on Dubuque's historic preservation program in the Travel Dubuque visitors brochure. Staff noted Dubuque's history is addressed in general terms, but space in the brochure is at a premium, making it unlikely more detailed information can be incorporated.

ITEMS FROM STAFF:

Staff Approvals: Staff Member Johnson reviewed and addressed questions about current staff design approvals.

Eagle Point Park Update: Staff Member Laura Carstens provided the Commission with an update on the activities in Eagle Point Park. She explained the NRHP nomination is in progress and the archeological investigation fieldwork is concluding. She stated a Resource Enhancement and Protection Grant has been submitted for an environmental restoration project in the park which will address sediment loss, erosion, and invasive species that have contributed to stormwater management issues in the park.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by McDonell, seconded by Rapp, to adjourn the meeting of August 20, 2015. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Monk, Rapp, McDonell, Klavitter and McAndrews; Nay – None. The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Carstens, Planning Services Manager

Adopted