

MINUTES OF THE ALBERT LEA HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

October 10, 2023

5:30 pm – City Center

Call to order at 5:30pm by Megan Boeck.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brad Kirchner, Tom Staker, Tarrah Hall-Sather, Nic Lang, and Larry Baker.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Linda Bryan, Stephanie Kibler, and Darin Johnson.

STAFF PRESENT: Megan Boeck, City Planner.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Kirchner and second by Hall-Sather to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Kirchner and second by Hall-Sather to approve the September 12, 2023 meeting minutes with name corrections. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1) Heritage Preservation Design Guideline Update – MacDonald & Mack-Pigeon Consulting

Boeck stated that MacDonald & Mack-Pigeon Consulting were unable to attend tonight's meeting due to illness but they provided a list of questions for the commissioners in order to start the update process before the next meeting. Below is a summary of both the question and answer:

1. What are the ways that you have found that the existing guidelines are very helpful as part of your deliberations?

Pictures and definitions are helpful.

2. Where are they not helpful?

Guidelines are vague at times and don't address modern materials. Commissioners want to note that preservation of what is current over re-creating a "look-a-like" is the goal of the district.

3. Are the guidelines flexible enough to allow you to accommodate specific/unique issues that arise in each project that you review?

Commissioners have found ways to compromise or be flexible over the years with different requests – really want to balance integrity of the structure with preservation.

4. Are there any items that need more detail/guidance for your assessment of the project?

Comprehensive list of acceptable materials.

5. We are looking for modification ideas in the new guidelines: sustainability, expanding the eras of buildings that are significant, ease of applicants understanding the guidelines, and flexibility in the guidelines. Are there any other big topic issues that we should be aware of?

Administrative approvals for work like tuck-pointing, window replacement (same size, shape to original opening). Commissioners questioned if it was necessary to hold public hearing (which required a public notice in the official newspaper and a mailing to all property owners within 350') for every COA?

6. The National Park Service issued new guidance on using replacement materials for historic rehabilitation projects. What replacement materials are you seeing the greatest request for? Are any of these replacement materials undesirable to staff/the HPC and, if so, why?

Vinyl windows have been highly requested for upper floors especially. Commissioners don't love vinyl but understand a vinyl window is better than no window or in-fill with other materials.

7. What do you want the new guidelines to do for you?

Commissioners want the guideline document to be easier for the public to understand and also for the staff and board to administer.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1) Certificate of Appropriateness – 139 William Street East

Staker opened the public hearing at 5:34pm.

Boeck stated that the property owner has applied for a COA for exterior modifications. The application proposes replacements of store front glazing on the south and east side of the building as the current ones are deteriorating. A clear storefront transom glazing with black anodized aluminum storefront system is proposed for replacement.

Kirchner stated that an original feature like the transoms are important but understands that the existing ones will no longer work for structural efficiency or longevity of the building. He asked that the transom glass be salvaged if possible.

Lang stated he believed the transom could be salvaged with additional framing.

Hall-Sather stated that she thinks it is okay to compromise, however she would prefer to see a separate transom than a floor to ceiling window as proposed.

Staker closed the public hearing at 6:13pm.

Motion by Kirchner and second by Hall--Sather to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for 139 William Street East with the following conditions:

1. The lower window section is maintained
2. The lower mop board maintained with a modern material
3. The transom separation maintained with a modern material
4. Transom remain the same size as current preference for lead panels to be salvaged in some capacity.

Motion carried on a 4-0 voice vote.

COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION

None.

STAFF COMMUNICATION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Lang and second by Staker to adjourn the meeting at 6:55pm.

Motion carried.

Megan Boeck, City Planner

Tom Staker, Chair