

City of Sidney
Historic Preservation Board
Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2013

The Meeting was called to order by the Vice Chairperson at 12:05pm and Open Public Meeting Act was announced.

Roll Call: Meagan Smuin, Greg Huck, John Phillips, Kay Hicks, Rich Phillips, and Casey Cortney. Additional attendees included: Gary Person, Ben Dayton, Megan McGown, and Travis Arellano. Members absent: Doug Meier.

Approval of Minutes: R. Phillips made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted, Huck seconded the motion and the motion carried with all in favor.

Arellano Appeal - Arellano explained his project, describing progress to date and asked the board to reconsider their decision to deny funding for his project. He explained that he did work in addition to the windows. He repaired mortar on the front of the building and he is waiting to install a new door on the front. Hicks explained the process of applying for the incentive program as well as the regulations already in place. She said that to be eligible, the project needs pre-approval prior to any work being completed. She also commended Arellano for the work that he is doing, stating that the building looks much better. She stated that the board wanted to encourage rather than discourage him from moving forward. Arellano explained that he wanted to complete the project by August, which is one year from purchase. J. Phillips explained that the procedure of getting prior approval is important and if the board overlooks it, precedence may be set. Arellano asked if he could get approval since the project is not yet complete. Huck suggested that we have a little leeway since Shelley is in the process of firming up the processes however, Cortney said she thinks it was clear in the guidelines that the approval needs to come before beginning she also cited the "window only" issue. She cited verbiage from Design Committee Recommendation sheet that accompanies application guidelines. She encouraged him to apply for the things that he hasn't completed yet. J. Phillips reiterated that additional work may qualify for the incentive, such as the stucco on the side of the building, the door, and the front, walk-out. Cortney asked about street facing. Huck, J. Phillips, and Hicks said they believed that the sides would be eligible because they are visible from Illinois Street as is the back that is facing Hickory St. Arellano asked if concrete work to the storefront would be eligible. Person explained that because it is a stand-alone building and the concrete work is part of the storefront that it would be an eligible expense. Board members agreed it would qualify.

Hicks went on to explain that because this is a public board that uses tax payer dollars, the board has to be diligent and maintain consistency in the processes. Cortney encouraged Arellano to work with McGown on the application process. Hicks explained that the board wants to find a way to make it work. J. Phillips explained that the reimbursement rate is at 50% if the contractor is in Cheyenne County or is a Cheyenne County Chamber member. It is reimbursed at a rate of 35% if the contractor is outside the county and not a member. R. Phillips once again reiterated the appreciation of the board for Arellano fixing up the building, stating that it is exactly what the board is about. Discussion followed regarding possible uses of the building. No motion is necessary because the original decision to deny the incentive program for the March 12, 2013 application stands. Arellano will file a new application for work yet to be started.

Review of plans: Huck explained that he is not asking for additional funds, however needs to update his Certificate of Approval application to include the upper floor windows. Smuin asked about the original window and the grid that it had. Huck does not know what the original windows looked like. Smuin cited from the Design Guidelines stating that the windows can be made compatible with the building and the original openings. She cited from the Secretary of Interior Guidelines: "Installing windows of a new design when the historic windows are completely missing, a new design that is compatible with the window openings and the historic character of the building is recommended." J.

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Phillips made a motion to approve the amended Certificate of Approval, Smuin seconded the motion. The motion passed with yeas from: Hicks, Smuin, J. Phillips, R. Phillips, and Cortney. Huck Abstained.

Reimbursement Request: New To You requested reimbursement for their sign. McGown explained that the owner used a different sign company and was able to get a sign at a lower cost. J. Phillips made a motion to approve the reimbursement, R. Phillips seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

Discussion of R. Phillips's letter to the board: R. Phillips asked about how rigidly the guidelines are enforced or if they are open for interpretation by each community. Person said that is an ongoing struggle. Our local standards are based on what other communities have done. When dealing with state and federal preservationists, guidelines tend to be very rigid. As a local board we've exercised some discretion, but historic preservation is a tough issue. Smuin said that making policy is difficult. The board is in agreement that they are appreciative when a property owner fixes up their building, however any construction activity on a building does not equal historic preservation. The buildings also need to be functional and sometimes it isn't about using all historic materials, while still maintaining the historic character. However, it is still important to look at such elements and resources that we have and not allow such material as vinyl windows. Smuin further noted that there needs to be a black and white process while there can still be discretion with each project, decisions need to be made on a case by case basis.

Cortney reiterated that the process needs to be rigid. R. Phillips asked about the "windows only" guideline because for in some cases, the building may only need windows. As long as we specify why it deviates from the norm and put it in the minutes, our bases are covered and it allows the board to use discretion on a per project basis. That way when the next property owner wants the same thing, if the circumstances aren't the same, we can take that into account as no two projects are going to be alike.

Cortney asked about how to get away from so much gray area, stating that we need to use the tools that Shelley and Audrey have created for us. Hicks said that we'll always have gray areas because no two buildings are alike.

Certified Local Government Grant: McGown announced that the grant deadline for the CLG grant is April 1. In order to be eligible for funding, at least one board member or staff must attend CLG training in Omaha on June 15. J. Phillips said that he would be interested. Smuin noted that if J. Phillips could not attend, she may be able to go. Shelley McCafferty recommended, as part of our Preservation Planning, that we create a Historic Preservation Handbook in order to have a comprehensive, consistent document to hand out to property owners, contractors, and the public. The Handbook will include our design guidelines, ordinance, maps, incentive program and procedures, among other items. Smuin asked if we could write for board training in the grant as well.

Smuin made a motion to approve writing the CLG Grant to include comprehensive board training as well as creating a Historic Preservation Handbook. Cortney second the motion and the motion carried with all in favor.

With all business being addressed, the meeting adjourned at 1:20pm.