

City of Sidney  
Historic Preservation Board  
Meeting Minutes  
April 8, 2014

The meeting was called to order by chairperson of the board, Kay Hicks, at 11:35am. The Open Public Meeting Act was acknowledged along with notifying those in attendance that the meeting was properly published in the Sidney Sun-Telegraph on April 1, 2014.

Roll call: Greg Huck, Rich Phillips, John Phillips, Dave Faries, and Kay Hicks responded to Roll Call. Members absent: Brandy Root. Additional attendees included: Megan McGown, Gary Person, Brad Rowan, and Shelley McCafferty.

Approval of Minutes: J. Phillips made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the March 26 meeting. Huck seconded the motion and the motion passed with all members present voting yeas.

Handbook Review:

McCafferty reviewed programmatic changes in the first section of the handbook, specifically detailing changes to the Façade Enhancement grant requirements and eligibility. She questioned whether or not to keep the entire area of eligibility for the facade enhancement grant. She suggested changing it to commercial buildings that are over 50 years old and are historically significant. She also recommended that the applying property owner also complete a Nebraska site inventory form. Because a survey is among our future projects, this step would likely only need to be done for a year. J. Phillips brought up the potential issue of limiting what properties that the board could help with, citing the old Pizza Hut/Western Drug example. The original intent was both about preserving as well as about beautification. General consensus of the board was to leave the guideline as is which allows for commercial buildings at least 50 years old in the expanded incentive area.

McCafferty asked about projects requiring review: to what extent does the board want the funds to go towards routine maintenance? She suggested changing the wording to exclude routine maintenance from needing review. Routine maintenance includes such things as window glazing, spot repainting with same color, and minor repairs that do not change the appearance of the building. Hicks said that there is a fine line between telling people what they can and can't do. R. Phillips said to stipulate that people that want to do routine maintenance shouldn't be coming to HPB for grant funds to pay for maintenance that they should be doing anyway. Faries suggested adding additional clarifications to the language to include examples of routine maintenance. It was also suggested to set a minimum amount. Who decides whether or not it's eligible? McCafferty suggested having a policy (not a written regulation, but a policy) to encompass those times it might come up without over-writing the regulations. McGown will be a buffer between the applicant and the board. If is clearly routine, minor repairs, she will tell them they are ineligible. If there is a question, she will recommend it come before the board.

McCafferty suggested adding a "Certificate of No Material Effect" protocol into the process: example given: if change to the exterior of the rear of the building that would not change how the building would appear from the street. No major changes, no changes that would affect the structure or the long-term life of the building, small maintenance-type projects, then the review could be done administratively between McGown and the HPB Chair.

R. Phillips concerned that regulations will turn people off from wanting to locate their business downtown. He asked about what power the HPB has for properties not seeking funding? McGown explained that the buildings in the National Register Historic District are locally landmarked and are protected by ordinance. Regardless of funding, those buildings

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do have to follow the guidelines that the HPB puts in place.

Discussion regarding historic accuracy - specifically dealing with windows: Hicks commented that even though vinyl windows are not appropriate/accurate, if they don't change the building or the structure, is there an issue. Huck also said he believed that the idea is to keep the look not necessarily the same materials. McCafferty said that it is still appropriate to use appropriate and more accurate materials rather than just allowing the cheapest and/or easiest option. J. Phillips suggested a middle ground, working with property owners to ensure more appropriate options that will still be feasible for the owner. McCafferty suggested putting together a specific guide for windows, working with the local contractors/window retailers to find some solutions. J. PHillips offered to talk to lumber yards and Sidney Glass to find more accurate, feasible options.

Reimbursement: McCafferty suggested adding an additional level of reimbursement specifically for windows: 65% for work and materials provided by contractors and vendors located within Cheyenne County. The goal is to get more properties to repair existing windows or add storm windows. She also spoke about the USDA Energy efficiency grant. R. Phillips noted that as long as it is an incentive to repair existing windows and/or add storm windows and not a requirement it is good to include it as another layer to the grant program.

McCafferty suggested that windows only projects do qualify, stating that the HPB wants to encourage quality and appropriate windows.

McCafferty added a section regarding the penalties for not having a COA citing ordinance 1242.99

She also added section regarding demolition by neglect.

Volunteer Rate for reimbursement – McCafferty suggested changing to "minimum wage" and also to provide additional clarification regarding the volunteer labor, stating in the guidelines that even if the owner is a professional, the project labor will still be reimbursed at the volunteer rate.

Transom Windows: McCafferty suggested allowing for grant funds to include restoring transom windows and tin ceilings, interior changes to the first level ceiling if it is required for the rehab or replacement of storefront transom windows. Huck asked how far do you go in? He indicated that he is a little skeptical to open it up for such a huge project that could cover the entire ceiling. McCafferty said it has to be associated with the restoration of transom windows. J. Phillips noted that the likely cost will exceed the \$5,000 anyway.

Other Business:

McGown announced that Scott Williams would be recommended by Gary Person to the City Council to become a member of the HPB. She shared Williams' bio with the board.

With all business being addressed, the meeting adjourned at 1:00pm.