

City of Sidney  
Historic Preservation Board  
June 10, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 11:35 by chairperson, Kay Hicks.

Roll Call: Hicks, Rich Phillips, Brandy Root, Scott Williams, and Greg Huck, Additional attendees: Megan McGown, Brad Rowan, and Gary Person

Introductions were made for new board member Williams

Approval of minutes: Huck made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 13, 2014 meeting as corrected to reflect the correct spelling of Gary Person's last name. R. Phillips seconded the motion and the motion passed with all members present voting yeas.

Handbook Discussion: The final draft was sent out incorporating any comments from board that had been directed to Shelley. Root asked for additional time to review the handbook prior to recommending approval. McGown stressed the importance of the HPB members thoroughly reviewing the document and feeling comfortable with the document prior to recommending approval; however she also stressed that the process needs to happen within the next meeting or two. Huck suggested once it is adopted, we send it to all building owners, make available to realtors, and really get it out to the public. McGown also suggested that the board review all the documents: handbook, preservation plan and ordinance and take it to the Council for approval all at once. She will send out the final drafts of both the handbook and the preservation plan for the board to review for July's meeting.

Rich suggested getting photos of each property in the district to make available with any applications that come forward in order to better acquaint the board with the current appearance of the property seeking COA.

Form Review and Adoption - Huck made a motion to approve the adoption of the forms created by Shelley McCafferty for COA, Grant Funding, Staff Report, and Reimbursement. Root seconded the motion and the motion carried with all members present voting yeas.

Ordinance Review:

Person noted that after reviewing the suggested changes from McCafferty, it appears that she is suggesting changing the Zoning Code, which prolongs the process and creates more complications due to the public hearing requirements (Planning Commission and City Council). Person suggested checking with the City Attorney prior to adopting any of the changes.

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Discussion regarding Fort Sidney Museum/Post Commander's Home: Person said that a concerned resident contacted the City noting that the windows had recently been removed from the Museum and sold at an auction house and replaced with vinyl windows. Person was asked by the concerned resident to bring the matter to the HPB. Person explained that the building is owned by the County Historical Association and overseen by the County Commissioners. He also noted that there is not much that the HPB or the City can do he wanted to bring it forward from an awareness standpoint, in terms of why it is important to consider the Local Landmark designation for all of our significant historic properties. There are not many other avenues to protect the historic elements of the buildings other than to designate them locally so that they are subject to the design guidelines and the preservation ordinance. Hicks noted that the issue cannot be ignored, stating that maybe we don't have grounds to do anything, however it is our responsibility to recognize that removing the original windows is detrimental to the historic integrity of the museum. She suggested that a letter of concern along with handbook be sent to them in order to suggest best practices. Person explained that the HPB can recommend that the City Manager send a letter of concern that historic preservation practices are not being followed. R. Phillips asked why the HPB did not locally landmark the museum? McGown explained the history of the process when it was last attempted. There was confusion surrounding the 51% of property owners contesting the designation since the ownership is the Historical Association. Because of the confusion as to the process, it was never pursued. Person suggested inviting the County Commission Chairman to help make them aware of what we do and how it reflects on other historic sites in the city. Williams suggested a well crafted letter spelling out what the HPB board does and why and note that there has been some concern with their preservation practices. Offer to be a resource. Make them aware that we are aware of what they are doing. It was further suggested to send copies of the letter of concern to the County Attorney, and to the County Clerk. Williams made a motion to recommend the City Manager draft a letter of concern and send it to the appropriate parties. Huck seconded the motion. The motion carried with all members present voting yeas.

Person also announced that the old District 77 School is donating an old historic piano. They are first approaching the Historical Association, but wanted a backup plan in case they do not want it.

Bid Review and Action as Applicable: Person noted that when reviewing bids for professional services, you are not bound by the lower bid. McGown announced that the City received two bids for the Upper Floor Feasibility study from the firms: UDS and BVH. McGown was asked for staff recommendation and noted that she preferred UDS as two of the consultants on the UDS team have worked extensively in Sidney, specifically on downtown projects. She suggested that their knowledge of the dynamics in Sidney as well as the relationships they already have with several building owners should give them a head start on the project.

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Huck made a motion to approve the bid from UDS, Root seconded the motion and the motion carried with all members in attendance voting yeas.

City Manager Comments: Person announced a situation regarding the Planning Commission: if you are on the Planning Commission you are not allowed to serve on any other City Board or Commission. The law affects John Phillips who serves on both boards. The City Attorney has suggested that until J. Phillips' term is up, which is October 2015, that he may continue to serve in both positions. Once his term is up, he will have the opportunity to choose which board to serve on.