

City of Sidney Historic Preservation Board
Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2015

The meeting of the City of Sidney Historic Preservation Board was called to order by Kay Hicks, Chair of the Board at 12:03 p.m. Announcement of the Open Public Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Roll Call: Kay Hicks, Greg Huck, Bruce Leypoldt, Kathy Wilson, Jake Vickery and Rich Phillips. Members absent included Scott Williams. Additional attendees included: Economic Development Director Tina Hochwender, City Manager Gary Person, Chief Building Official Brad Rowan and local business owners Mary Jo Putman and Jerry Steffens.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Leypoldt moved and Huck seconded to approve the July 14, 2015 minutes as written. All members present voted “yes.”

Certificate of Approval Requests:

1. Mary Jo Putman requested façade enhancement grant funds for an awning over the front door at 1516 10th Avenue, the French Door Antique shop.

Putnam stated that this project is the start of the renovations they would like to do to the building. In 1938 this was the Coca-Cola bottling company. Hochwender stated that the grant eligibility requirements are that the building must be located in the Downtown Sidney Historic District; or if located outside the district, but be historically significant; and used for commercial purposes. Leypoldt asked if this property was in the Historic Downtown Sidney District. Person said it is not in the Historic Downtown Sidney District but it is in the expanded district.

Huck asked what was under the metal façade, is it stucco? Putnam responded yes it is stucco. They would like to take the metal façade off and expose the front stucco and brick side at some point. Vickery asked if there were any old photos of the building. Putnam had none, but offered to look for some. Vickery commented that it would be nice to have the old photos to refer back to the historic features that may have existed on the building. Currently with the metal façade not finding the building is of any historic significance. Huck stated that at some point when the metal façade is removed and improvements are made to the building, this Board would have to review the improvements. Hicks stated that the building is over 50 years old and is in a historic district. Phillips asked if any other awnings were assisted downtown. Person stated that there were several other awnings assisted. Vickery added that he would have liked to have seen the a full package of the entire project including taking the metal façade off and costs to bring the property back to its original historic self. Discussion ensued.

Huck made a motion to approve COA and the requested façade enhancement grant funds for an awning over the front door at 1516 10th Avenue, the French Door Antique shop. Phillips seconded the motion and the motion carried with 4 members present voting yeas, Vickery voting no, and Wilson abstaining.

There were no other COA requests.

CLG Grant Project Updates:

Hochwender informed the HPB that the 2014 CLG Grant project's upper floor feasibility studies for 5 downtown have been completed. Hochwender added that draft copies of the studies were provided at last month's meeting. Due to comments from the last meeting, a definitions page was created and included in the final studies to further assist property owners with how to come up with income and expenses that may arise. Hochwender stated that this study is another tool in the City's/HPB's toolbox to assist property owners with redeveloping their downtown historic properties. An action is needed to approve and submit the final study to the NE State Historical Society to close out the 2014 CLG grant.

Phillips made a motion to approve and submit the final upper floor feasibility studies for 5 downtown properties to the NE State Historical Society in order to close out the 2014 CLG grant. Huck seconded the motion and the motion carried with all members present voting yeas

Hicks introduced Jerry Steffens property owner of 844 11th Avenue to report on the success and failures, if any, of a second story redevelopment project. Jerry started off by noting that a key component to success is to find a contractor that can do the project efficiently and effectively. The projects borderline on whether or not they pencil out. Three properties were gutted, new electrical and plumbing installed, and one even needed new roof supports. There are increased expenses similar to a single family home demolition that you would take down to the foundation. Costs are roughly \$80-100 per square foot. For rents they try to get \$100 per square foot. Jerry added that his units are always full, people love them. Every building they have renovated was reaching 100 years. His approach is to remodel them to where the units will be around for another 100 years. Tried to stick with the character of the historic structures by utilizing oak doors and trim similar to what would have been used when initially constructed. Leypoldt asked how the units were equipped to get people out in the event of a fire. Steffens stated that every room has a smoke detector and they provide a rope ladder for each unit. The units are renovated in accordance with the building codes. A second exit is not required. Discussion ensued regarding fire code requirements.

Leypoldt asked if there were any issues with tenant parking in public parking. Steffens said they had an issue with a tenant that was parking in a space convenient for an adjacent commercial tenant. This was resolved. Typically parking is not an issue, because people are working 8am to 5pm when the businesses are open. Discussion ensued regarding parking and satellite dishes.

Vickery and Hicks commended Jerry for the great work that he has done and continues to do. Vickery asked if Jerry received any financial assistance or tax credits to complete his projects. Steffens said he received a façade enhancement grant to assist with the Sam and Louie's building

and the Boutique's awning. Otherwise, not other outside funds were utilized. Person stated that there was a condominium / motel project that was being pursued at one point utilizing CDBG funds. These funds have income restrictions on the tenants. Historic tax credits were utilized on Phillips and Gaston's downtown properties. Discussion ensued.

Vickery asked if there were any ways to bring costs down. Steffens stated that costs could be less if not as an extensive tear out was done and less expensive finishes are used. The \$80-100 cost per square foot is very economical. Discussion ensued.

Hochwender informed the HPB on the status of the 2015 Certified Local Government Grant, which was awarded to the City of Sidney in the amount of \$25,000.00 to do an Intensive Level Survey of Sidney's Old Town Plat. Hochwender stated that the public notice for the "Request for Proposal" with the criteria and qualifications needed to conduct the survey were published in the newspaper and posted on the City's website. RFPs are due August 17th at 4pm. Following submittal of the RFPs, they will be routed to the HPB members and City staff for review and ranking August 18- September 2. Hochwender provided a copy of the ranking sheet that will be included with the RFPs to assist the HPB with their review. Then the HPB is expected to consider selecting a consultant at its September board meeting, with the consultant to conduct the survey work through April 4, 2016.

Other Comments:

Hochwender stated that the September 8th and November 10th HPB meetings will need to be held at another location. The Council Room will be utilized by the City's Auditors those months. Person suggested holding the meetings at the Library or in the Fire Hall. Hochwender to confirm the location and ensure the public notices reflect the change in meeting place.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 12:58 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Tina Hochwender