City of Aurora

Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Minutes

Thursday
March 14, 2019
7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The following Preservation Commission members were present: Justyn Arnold, Fernando Castrejon, Jen Del Debbio, Amber Foster, Kristin Ludwig, Dan Miller, Simon Munoz, Al Signorelli and Mike Walker. Seth Hoffman called in and excused himself from the meeting. Mike Lord was absent.

OTHERS PRESENT

The following staff members were present: Jill Morgan and Sue Jackson.

Others Present: Hugh Yates (Next Door & Window).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

19-0162
Approval of the Minutes for the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on February 14, 2019.

A motion was made by Mr. Signorelli, seconded by Mr. Castrejon, that the minutes be approved and filed. The motion carried by voice vote.

COA REPORT

19-0205
February Historic Certificate of Appropriateness Report

There were no questions on the COA report.

This COA Report was discussed and filed.

AGENDA

19-0204
Certificate of Appropriateness to remove inappropriate vinyl windows and install five Marvin Wood Ultimate window, simulated divided light with
spacer bar matching the original muntin pattern in order to cure the existing window violation at 202 N. View Street (Oscar Rivera - 19-0204 / AU21/2-19.042-COA/HP - JM - Ward 4)

Mrs. Morgan said if you remember back in 2015, just to give the new Commission members some background on this, there was a violation from the original homeowner, who is different from the current homeowner. The original homeowner ripped out their historic wood windows. So here is the before, the historic wood windows, the 3 windows on the front façade, the gable end, that little window, and then the 2 windows on the side toward the street, and then the interior window on the other side. I don’t have a picture of that. So they ripped them out and they replaced them with vinyl windows. They wrapped the whole surround. Here are some pictures you can see of what they replaced, not only the windows, but they took out the whole framing and replaced that and wrapped them with vinyl and the gable end as well, as well as on the side. You can kind of see some of the original windows that weren’t changed and then this is one on the interior side that was changed. The original homeowner came before the Commission several times. We did agree to a rule to allow them a timeframe for replacing them. They came back and asked if they could sell the home as is. The Commission agreed to that with the condition that there is full disclosure. We provided them with a legal disclosure form that the city uses that they were supposed to give to the new homeowner. We told them that they needed to be replaced, basically take it back to what was there with the multi-paned wood window with a simulated divided light over the one sash. The gable end needed to be replaced with a 1 over 1 with the little oval surround and keystone. We did allow the one on the interior side that the vinyl window could stay if they could just remove the wrapping around the trim. Since it is not as visible from the street if they could just kind of get rid of the vinyl wrapping it wouldn’t be as obvious that the window was replaced. So those were the conditions that were stated. It was repurchased in 2018. Staff reached out to the new homeowner. The new homeowner has been in contact with us for the past several months just trying to work through finding a contractor who does this work and who would be able to do it. They did eventually find Next Door and Window who submitted a permit for the windows. They are going with Marvin Ultimate Wood double hung windows. They are a simulated divided light window with the spacer bar. The number of panes match the original windows with the 12 over 1, 9 over 1 and some 12 over 1 on the side. I did speak to one of the contractors. They said they could do the little oval on the gable end as well. They could replicate that. The muntins are 7/8 of an inch wide. From staff’s research, that is pretty consistent with muntins you find on historic buildings from this time. They range from about ½” to 7/8”, so that’s not out of character for the time period. There is a dimension of the proposed windows. The sashes themselves are 1¼ inch for most of the stiles, the part of the sash on the side. Staff noticed something a little inconsistent from historic windows is the bottom rail is a lot taller than the rest of the sash and what you would find on a historic window. Probably not really that visible just from the street being like an obvious something is wrong with the window, but just slightly out of character. Other than that, I felt like most of the dimensions, obviously it is wood, the simulated divided light is correct, the multi-panes are all correct, so in general all the windows adhere to what we had required. I have someone from Next Door. He probably can answer a little more questions about the product.

I’m Hugh Yates from Next Door and Window.

Mr. Miller said did you want to present something or do you want us to just start with some questions about project?
Mr. Yates said there was just a little discrepancy on the contract versus when we went to apply for a permit. It was denied because of the way we presented the permit and it was the exterior look of that window up on the gable that had the oval. So when our re-measure man went to take a picture, it was already capped, so I had no visual of that oval of what we were supposed to reproduce. So I’m here to insure whatever we do from Next Door and Window is going to abide by the permit in the historic district. I just need to know those dimensions so I can recreate that look.

Mr. Miller said do you have the historical photos of the house with the oval surround?

Mr. Yates said I do not.

Mr. Miller said okay, we have that.

Mrs. Miller said I can send you. We don’t have exact dimensions, but we can send you the picture to get an idea of the approximate dimension of what it would look like. They were ripped out before from the past owner. It was a small rectangular window. Only the surround was an oval with a key on top.

Mr. Yates said that is correct, with a keystone at the top.

Mr. Miller said it was actually a really nice look. I was actually shocked that they removed it.

Mr. Yates said and then for the material for that we could get cedar or we could get a flexible product that doesn’t rot. I could do either or.

Mr. Miller said what is a flexible product that doesn’t rot? What are you referring to?

Mr. Yates said it is a composite made out of San Diego and it is made to follow the contour of a half round or an oval or a circle. It comes out in a raw state, kind of a creamy color like the countertop there and then it is paintable. It is a paintable product. There is absolutely zero rot. There is no wood in it. It is all composite. The other option would be just cedar that we’ll have to order in different, you know 1 by 12 dimensions and then rip it to fit to follow that contour of the oval.

Mr. Miller said so the composite product, is that like a vinyl or something or is it plastic?

Mr. Yates said it is a combination of plastic and polymers, so we give the dimensions of the oval to the manufacturer in San Diego and then they have a different composite based on how much curvature you need.

Ms. Ludwig said is there a major cost difference between the 2?

Mr. Yates said the flexible molding from San Diego is more expensive.

Ms. Ludwig said 2 times, 3 times?

Mr. Yates said about double. It is almost an offset with our labor. When we actually produce the labor with a cedar trim we have to cut to follow the contour of that oval, taking it from rectangles to oval.

Ms. Ludwig said but cheaper long term maintenance for the owners?
Mr. Yates said the second one yes, absolutely.

Mr. Castrejon said based on what you quoted, is the homeowner on board as far as the cost?

Mr. Yates said based on what we quoted, no that was not included at all.

Mr. Castrejon said but from what you’ve quoted to now, they are in agreement with what the cost is to be?

Mr. Yates said everything that was told to us on the contract would be just to replace the 5 windows and to take the capping off and replace it with wood trim because that was the historical aspect, not knowing anything about the oval. The oval would be something that we would have to address with the homeowner in regard to that additional cost for us to produce it.

Mr. Signorelli said can the composite material be painted any color?

Mr. Yates said any color.

Mrs. Morgan said part of the violation was that interior window on the interior side is wrapped in vinyl and I had mentioned wanting that removed to address the violation. Would that be something you guys could do as well?

Mr. Yates said that was the side window you have talked about, the one to the right there?

Mrs. Morgan said yes. I would assume that the original wood is probably under there. I think the owner had told me that he had a couple of other people look at it and they had that assumption as well.

Mr. Yates said well to answer your question, we could do that. I don’t see that on our contract whether the homeowner discussed that with our sales team. It has nothing on that extra window, but it can be done. We can take off the capping and replace it with wood cedar trim that can be painted.

Mrs. Morgan said any other questions about the other windows? It mentions the muntins, the look of them. They are wood. The owner said that he’s going to paint them himself either matching all of the rest of the windows or if he wants to come in and repaint all the windows he would do that as well.

Mr. Miller said this is a request for approval of an HCOA. Is there something written? I see the form here and some diagrams. I don’t see anything written as far as something that is requested for us to approve or not.

Mrs. Morgan said it would just be approving all the specs. They just have a general description of replacing the windows. You are approving the specific specifications.

Mr. Signorelli said so can we go ahead and approve even though there are still details about the oval window in the front gable?

Mrs. Morgan said you approve it with the conditions that whatever material is used and that they unwrap it. Then the owner can work with the contractor or if the owner needs
to come in for a separate permit for that as well.

Mr. Signorelli said I understand that. I was just wondering now that the homeowner would not know what costs were involved with what needs to be done there at this point.

Mrs. Morgan said I guess you could just approve it as is. That is still an outstanding violation that he can address at a later time too maybe to look at money or something as well.

Mr. Signorelli said I think the major issue is the size of the stile of the window, the number of panes. Obviously, that’s an immediate look and I don’t have an issue with the Marvin windows. I think, in my case, I could go ahead and approve what we have here.

Mr. Miller said did anyone have any questions on the measurement on that bottom rail?

Mr. Castrejon said it is probably not even noticeable with the windows closed.

Mrs. Morgan said I would say some of the downtown ones we’ve approved have been (inaudible) too.

Mr. Signorelli said and the sash is a little thicker as well, right?

Mrs. Morgan said yes, slightly.

Mr. Munoz said is it going to be the same length as what they’ve got in here because this siding is cement board?

Mr. Miller said it is yes.

Mr. Munoz said what I noticed when I look over there is there are pieces of tiles when they crack. To make the holes is not that easy, cutting them.

Mr. Arnold said you are talking about the gable window how they squared it off. You can see the old keystone mark when you zoom in, so there is something possibly there you can get measurements off of, but what he’s saying is did they cut that board out to square it off. It is hard to say what they did.

Mr. Miller said that may take a little bit of discovery.

Mr. Arnold said I don’t know what’s visible on top of the keystone. It is just the red keystone, but I can’t tell if it is just remnants or if it actually is a piece of the keystone still there and they just wrapped it.

Mr. Signorelli said maybe it is possible that it is intact underneath.

Mr. Arnold said that would be strange. I can’t tell zooming in either if that siding was compromised. It almost looks like they just went right on top of it.

Mr. Yates said it almost looks like the red keystone is still there and it is just the paint is peeling.

Mr. Miller said it is possible. It would be kind of a bonus if it is still there actually. It
would make things easier. That would be the best case scenario for us. Jill, did our specifications require that the gable and that small window would have a divider bar like the original one did?

Mrs. Morgan said I believe we did say 1 over 1, which I think is what they are proposing.

Mr. Miller said okay.

Mrs. Morgan said I don’t know if the original was an operable 1 over 1, but it did look to me like it was a sash, a 1 over 1 sash, from the pictures.

Mr. Miller said it does kind of look like that. Whether or not it actually opened I really don’t know.

Mr. Yates said we are supplying an active double hung.

Mr. Miller said so it is bonus for a little extra ventilation in the attic if they want it. On the question of these replacement windows, does anyone have any further questions?

Ms. Ludwig said is there anything visible that you can see in terms of the non-wood material. Once it is painted, is there any way that from the street you could tell it was sheen or texture or anything that you would ever be able to guess that it is not wood?

Mr. Yates said everything that we are supplying is wood. It will be raw and the homeowner is going to paint, so it just depends on what the homeowner uses for a paint for a sheen.

Ms. Ludwig said okay, I meant the other fabricated material. If they want to go with that option, is there any way you can tell once it is painted?

Mr. Yates said no, nothing whatsoever. It is just a smooth finish versus like if we are going with cedar around the windows, the cedar is going to be more textured.

Mr. Miller said do you know the name of the product, the fabricated product? Does anyone know if we’ve approved that type of product for exterior use before? I don’t know off hand. This is kind of a specialized use in that you are trying to get an oval.

Mrs. Morgan said in the FoxWalk they did a cornice with some type of polyurethane cornice that wasn’t wood. It hasn’t gone up yet, but the staff did approve that in the FoxWalk.

Mr. Yates said so the material that I’m speaking of is called flexitrim. It can be found on the website.

Mr. Miller said but for the homeowner it would be more expensive than the wood?

Mr. Yates said yes it would.

Mr. Miller said you labor maybe higher on the wood?

Mr. Yates said yes, not to offset the overall cost of the flexitrim.

Mr. Miller said you need to cut pieces.
Mr. Yates said right, they’ll have more seams.

Mr. Miller said I didn’t hear any questions on the windows exactly. Then on the idea of the flexitrims, does anyone have any questions on that?

Ms. Ludwig said are we able to leave that open to owner’s choice. If they choose to pay more now, but not have the maintenance of it and not have to worry about it later, if we think they look one in the same, how does that work? Do we have to pick one or the other?

Mr. Miller said we can leave it so the homeowner can decide.

Ms. Ludwig said if there was no objection.

Mr. Miller said does anyone have any discussion on the alternative material?

Mrs. Del Debbio said well if it is revealed after they remove the wrapping on the window that the original casing is there, can they just scrape it and paint it and leave it? Do they have the option of looking at the damage, if there is damage, and trying to replace it? Looking at it with just my eye, it looks as though counting the rows up from the bottom and estimating the width based on the vent in the attic, it could have been squared off and then just wrapped. So this might be a moot point.

Mr. Miller said you are saying it might actually still be there.

Mrs. Del Debbio said proportionately it looks enormous. It looks like they’ve maybe just squared it off and wrapped it.

Mrs. Morgan said to me it looks like what’s there looks bigger than this, so I would think they would have gotten rid of it. I could be wrong, but I just felt it looked like in order to fit the newer window in there that they would have had to gotten rid of at least the sides because I don’t think what’s there looks, to me, wider than the original one.

Mr. Signorelli said well if it is still there underneath, I’m sure it can be repaired.

Mr. Yates said it appears, based on the curvature of the top and the bottom of the oval, to me that if it was left they would have notched it to give us the square look of the capping that was provided by the previous contractor.

Mr. Signorelli said they could have just sawed off the oval niches on the top and bottom. That could be replaced.

Mr. Miller said that could be recreated.

Mrs. Del Debbio said it would be nice to keep as much as the original as possible. We had a couple of homes where they just cut corners off. You know, you try to piece the corner in rather than replace the whole thing. Is that something you’d do, just kind of fix what’s there or are you more just for the window pane?

Mr. Yates said we are more of the just completely tear out the old stuff that’s rotted or whatever and then put on brand new. If it is there and it’s been cut, then you are piecing the things together. I’m sure we could send out a serviceman before the install and take the capping off as long it is okay with the city and the homeowner and
see what’s underneath, as long as it is protected, the moisture barrier that’s not going to leak. That’s an option so we know what’s behind there.

Mr. Miller said that’s probably a good idea. I’ve not heard any objection to the Marvin windows. I’ve not heard anyone say no they are really opposed to the potential of the different material for the oval surround as long as it appears to be a painted wood from the street. We probably would require that it be painted.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE COA WAS MADE BY: Al Signorelli
MOTION SECONDED BY: Mike Walker

Mr. Miller said for discussion, I didn’t mention before, but the bottom rail. All these windows are on the second floor and I think the angle when I look at these from the street is such that I probably can’t tell because I’m looking up at them. Maybe the bottom inch or so they won’t be able to see anyway, so it could be kind of a moot point in this case.

AYES: Justyn Arnold, Fernando Castrejon, Jen Del Debbio, Amber Foster, Kristin Ludwig, Dan Miller, Simon Munoz, Al Signorelli, Mike Walker
NAYS: None

Mr. Miller said perhaps in that COA statement we didn’t quite clarify, but I didn’t hear objections to an alternative material. Could we leave that for staff to approve later?

Mrs. Morgan said yes, that’s how it sounds, that that’s open.

Mr. Miller said yes. If the homeowner wishes to use an alternative material, please submit the information to Jill who can approve it. You would not need to come back here. The staff can do that and we would just require that it painted.

Mrs. Morgan said as well as the homeowner agrees to the cost for removing the trim on the interior window.

Mr. Yates said and if you could just supply me with just some detailed pictures so I could recreate.

Mrs. Morgan said yes. Thank you so much for coming.

A motion was made by Mr. Signorelli, seconded by Mr. Walker, that this agenda item be approved. The motion carried.

PENDING

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A) Grants - Dan Miller, Chariman

Mrs. Morgan said we are hoping to have something to you next month to discuss. Staff has been working internally. I’ve spoken some to the Alderman about the program. We are still kind of back to possibly a grant program. We are still debating that. We had a couple of Aldermen reach out to us who felt that a grant, at least at first, then maybe a few years down the road look at a loan program. They thought the grants would be a lot more beneficial. Staff doesn’t disagree. That would need to go
before City Council again for approval since it was approved as a loan program.

Mr. Signorelli said so we don’t necessarily know how many dollars that would be do we?

Mrs. Morgan said we have $100,000.

Mr. Signorelli said I know about that.

Mrs. Morgan said the grant no. The loans we were looking at $100,000 for 5 years, then we would have $500,000 that then would keep revolving. So we looked at being able to give out $100,000 in loans every year. You might have some people who don’t end up making the payments, so eventually you might have to add to get some funds back into that to keep it at $100,000 a year in loans. For grants, no. The funding source and how much it would be are a little more up in the air. Staff has had a couple of ideas of where we could try to continually pull funds from.

Mrs. Del Debbio or qualification?

Mrs. Morgan said we did outline some qualifications for the loans. I think we are looking at about pretty similar for a grant. It would have to be, obviously, in one of the local historic districts or if it is the National Register and would be willing to become like a local landmark, we would allow that. We decided to go owner occupied. I don’t see that changing. That’s the discussions now. Up to a maximum of 2 units, unless it was build more, but it still had to be owner occupied. If it was a duplex and you rented out the other half, that would still qualify. A minimum of $5,000 and a maximum of $20,000. We are looking at anything over $10,000 would be a dollar for dollar match. Up to $10,000 it would just be giving the money, so kind of helping some small projects and people who don’t have money in their savings, but then for some larger projects asking people to contribute some to it so then you do a dollar for dollar match. As a grant, it would be a reimbursement program.

Mr. Miller said so you would submit expenses?

Mrs. Morgan said correct. Typically we do it at the end once the project is completely inspected and have reviewed all your receipts.

Mrs. Del Debbio and you were saying a minimum of a 2 unit or a maximum of a 2 unit?

Mrs. Morgan said maximum of a 2 unit.

Mrs. Del Debbio said why would you max out a 2 unit?

Mrs. Morgan said if you have more than 2 units in the house you wouldn’t be eligible for the grant.

Mrs. Del Debbio said why?

Mrs. Morgan said I think it was to try to help out more individual homeowners as opposed to landlords. Even if you lived in a property and you have multi-units you are more of a landlord and it is kind of a business more so than just an individual homeowner. I think it was also to try to encourage the less interior. Even though we don’t look at interior, the interior of multi-units are a lot less historic than the ones just divided into 2 or single family.
Mr. Signorelli said we don’t want to encourage multiple units, particularly in a building that was a single family home.

Mrs. Del Debbio said we would want to encourage people who own a multi-unit to replace their windows and work on the doors. Isn’t that what grants and loans would be?

Mrs. Morgan said I guess the thought is if you have multiple units you have income coming in that you could raise your prices gradually to recoup some of that.

Mrs. Del Debbio said it is also assuming a lot about of some of the conditions isn’t multiple. Some of these apartments are still considered efficiencies and they are still not getting very much. I’m not sure how much of an income getter it is, especially some of the people who are multi-generational homeowners where you have 3 or 4 names on a property. They are all living in separate units. I can think of at least 2 where their entire family is in 3 and 4 units.

Mr. Signorelli said but you have to keep in mind Jen overcrowding, cars, parking. Those all issues with multi-family.

Ms. Ludwig said could it be potentially though considered, let’s say you had something like the Herd House. We’ve got some really fantastic properties that you really wouldn’t want to see fall into disrepair despite the fact that they are multi-family at the time being and in a house like that it is so huge it is almost hard to even picture it going single family again. Could you have at least a consideration for something as so historically significant to the area and if it was involving exterior repairs only, doors, windows, or things that had to do with the façade from the street that could at least come up under consideration? So it is not trying to encourage them to be multi-family, but at least protects the property for hopefully a day when it reverts back to single family use, that it wouldn’t let it get to a state of disrepair that we lose the property.

Mr. Signorelli said well at one time we had a very successful downsizing program. That worked wonders, but that’s no longer in play.

Mrs. Morgan said and it might be something we could discuss or maybe have rounds. If like the first round we don’t get enough from homeowners, do a second round and open it up to the multi-units.

Mrs. Del Debbio said I hear what you are saying, especially if it is somebody who is profiting off of other tenants and there are people that aren’t profiting. They are just living. There might not be many of them, but if they do have a historically significant home and they need to have a door replacement or some window work, maybe to rewrite something to accommodate larger home dwellings that have historical significance.

Mrs. Morgan said that’s something we can discuss.

Mr. Miller said well if the City Council would allow it, they could write for owner occupied up to 2 units. If they would allow us, if someone felt that they really should be eligible due to the historic nature of their property and has 3 units, if they could come to us for something of a waiver if the City Council would allow for something like that. Just an idea. When you tell the majority of property owners it is really only up to 2 units, we don’t allow over that, most just wouldn’t say anything. But somebody with maybe a historic landmark that is extremely large and maybe isn’t quite as economic as a
single family these days may be special situations. I'm thinking in residential districts we don't have a lot of owner occupied 3 plus unit structures.

Mrs. Morgan said I would have to say I was thinking that as well.

Mr. Miller said an owner occupied 2 flat is not unusual and we have buildings that were built as 2 flats in our residential districts.

Mrs. Morgan said and maybe just the owner occupied might be the more important.

Mr. Miller said thank you for that update. That's encouraging. Has anyone discussed the old loan program that didn't have payments on it as an option? Is that just not under discussion?

Mrs. Morgan said no because that ends up in a way kind of being a grant. You eventually get the money back, but you never know when, so it doesn't really help fund the program. It is a lot of paperwork and a lot of time and effort.

Mr. Miller said to process a loan you mean?

Mrs. Morgan said yes. We get may be 2 to 3 a year paid off so that you are looking at getting $30,000 a year and you are never guaranteed that.

Mr. Miller said well I'd be really pleased if we could get a grant program. We've had some people in here that we know had some problems that would probably benefit from it, at least 2, and neither one was interested at all in a loan program.

Mr. Arnold said so with those that still have money out there, even though the program is not there anymore, that were to be paid out, would that go into the new program then?

Mrs. Morgan said it doesn't at this point. I talked to Jan and she said back in the day that money used to come back into the Preservation funds. It doesn't currently and I don't know when that happened or how. That maybe is a discussion as well if we could start funneling that back into the program.

Ms. Ludwig said do you know where it goes now?

Mrs. Morgan said just back into the general fund.

Mr. Signorelli said any idea how much is outstanding? What kind of money are we talking?

Mrs. Morgan said I don't. I thought about trying to see if anyone has what's still outstanding, but I haven't looked into it. I feel like it might be substantial.

B) Near Eastside Historic District - Jennifer Baird-del Debbio, Chairperson

No Report.

C) Riddle Highlands Historic District - Fernando Castrejon, Chairperson

No Report.
D) Public Awareness - Mike Walker, Chairman

Mrs. Morgan said so just a couple of updates. We are seeking nominations for the Mayor’s Awards. Staff has posted that out to a list of people listed on the Aurora Then and Now Facebook page. I did a mass mailing to remind everyone they are in a historic district and included the call for nominations. I think we mailed those out Monday, so they should be getting to people shortly. It will be in the newspaper as well. We haven’t received any nominations. We didn’t last year either. Typically I’ll send out a meeting request for the Committee, the Public Awareness Committee, to kind of maybe go over some potential nominations. I know Scott Pettit usually has some good ideas. There are a few from last year. There were quite a few last year and we felt like a little too many so we wanted to hold off until this year.

Mr. Signorelli said I have one of those in the Highlands that I’ll get you the information for.

Mrs. Morgan said I did make it a little more relaxed saying that work completed in general in the past year, but we might make exceptions to that. We’ve done a couple where they’ve done work years ago even, but they were just overlooked for an award, but they’ve maintained their homes since then so we’ve been doing some of those. There’s been a couple that were de-sided this past year, so those are potential nominations. I think we’ll have some.

Mr. Miller said I could suggest the District Committees like Tanner, Riddle and Near Eastside could meet in person informally and come up with some nominations if you know what’s going on in your neighborhoods.

Mrs. Morgan said and we love to get some in all of them, so that’s a good idea so we could have all of them represented if possible. It is not just limited to historic districts. We’ve done stuff in the West side. We did one near downtown last year.

Mr. Miller said last year we had a West Side, like W. Downer Place. Someone did a pretty spectacular addition. It was an addition, but you would never know it was an addition.

Mr. Signorelli said and again, I don’t recall the address Jill, but we had discussed a commercial property in the downtown that wasn’t quite done, so we didn’t want to include it, so maybe that’s at a point now where we could.

Mrs. Morgan said that’s the one by the old Fire Museum near the library. They redid the whole front façade.

Mr. Signorelli said but last year it kind of still wasn’t quite done.

Mrs. Morgan said it still had a chain link fence.

Mr. Signorelli said so it wasn’t quite there so we figured we’d table it.

Mr. Miller said yes that’s another thing to keep in mind. A good photograph is kind of important. With still chain link up it doesn’t make a nice award presentation and this is lot about visual.

Mrs. Morgan said March 26th is the deadline for nominations. We’ll be presenting
them at City Council on May 28th. Then we’ll have the reception to follow at the same place it was last year. We’ll just go down the street to the Public Art Commission space. The March 26th deadline we can always extend up until the Commission meets if we don’t have some.

Mr. Signorelli said I have a question. You and I, after the last meeting, discussed the Preservation pamphlets, booklets. I was moaning once again that they weren’t in the slots in all the buildings. You said that we were running low. Do we need to talk about that at Public Awareness? How low is low?

Mrs. Morgan said I have one box left from what I can find.

Mr. Signorelli said so we should talk about that?

Mrs. Morgan said yes. One year, last year or maybe the year before, the State put out a CLG grant request for specifically just reprinting stuff that’s been previously published. I tried to get something and it didn’t get approved. I wish they would come up with that because this would be an easy thing to just reprint this.

E) Landmarks - Al Signorelli, Chariman

Mr. Signorelli said I have a landmarks question.

Mrs. Morgan said it is the street?

Mr. Signorelli said yes.

Mrs. Morgan said I did look into it. I’m still looking into it. There does appear to be a Resolution at some point appointing it as a landmark, but I can’t find anything that it was ever acted upon, like really done anything with, so I’m still looking into it.

Mr. Signorelli said just so the Commission knows what we’re taking about is Chestnut Street. It is beside Healy Chapel. It is the only cobblestone street left in Aurora, so I wanted to make sure that it was landmarked. The previous Director said well it is already landmarked, so that’s where we are at now. Is it landmarked or is it not landmarked? We’re not sure, so that’s the scenario we’re talking about here.

Mr. Miller said if no one can tell if it’s landmarked, in my opinion you might assume that it is not.

Mr. Signorelli said I think we should go through the mechanics. Do you agree Jill?

Mrs. Morgan said let me see if I can pull some more information. I’ll look into it and if not, we can look at actually proceeding with another nomination.

Mr. Miller said if there is existing documentation that can be found, then obviously we wouldn’t do that. I’m wondering what it means if we think it is landmarked, but there is no documentation indicating that it is. I’m not sure what that means exactly.

Mrs. Morgan said and it might be one of those things when we went digital that it got lost.

F) FoxWalk Design Review - Fernando Castrejon, Chairperson
No Report.

G) Tanner/Palace Historic District Committee - Justyn Arnold, Chairperson

No Report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Signorelli said I would just like to say that I recently attended a Ward 6 meeting. I am very, very happy to say that I can’t remember the last time that so much historic preservation was discussed all at the same meeting. They were highlighting the buildings that are being worked on in the downtown and I had to pinch myself because, as I said, that’s the most I’ve ever seen where we’re discussing very positive projects in so many historic buildings at one time. It is great. It is really wonderful.

Ms. Ludwig said what happened to the onion dome?

Mr. Signorelli said they say they have it.

Mrs. Morgan said no. It was too deteriorated. They took detailed measurements of it and I think there are pieces, but they are going to rebuild it. The original was too deteriorated.

Mr. Castrejon said do you have an update of the plans that were presented last week, the Broadway, Stolp and Benton redo and all that?

Mrs. Morgan said nothing new.

Mr. Castrejon said does everyone know what I’m talking about? There was a planning meeting, or presentation, last week. There are 4 major areas downtown that are being proposed to enhance in some way. For example, that curve by the old library where Benton kind of dips, the plan is to shorten the street to be more unison with the actual curve and the gap would become green space and benches, so make that whole tri-corner area more like a park setting. That seemed pretty appealing. Also the possibility, which I think this will go through, they just need to deal with IDOT, that New York and Galena would become two way and hopefully slow down traffic, create more parking and just make it more appealing. Broadway between Benton and New York, a mini redo to possibly widen the street and stop the constant report of mirrors being knocked off cars.

Mrs. Morgan said the sidewalks would end up being a little smaller.

Ms. Ludwig said I actually heard they were going to do the opposite. They were going to narrow it and try to force the traffic from going around instead of through the downtown and make it more pedestrian friendly. I wonder if they changed that because that was as of last year. They were going to try to force the traffic around. They were going to make it even harder for cars.

Mr. Castrejon said the latest was to widen it. It would narrow the sidewalk.

Mrs. Morgan said the thought is while people would be walking around, the sidewalks are really wide, but they are not going to be something where anyone is going to ever want to have outdoor seating. So you would still have room for walkability, but still be
able to try to slow down the traffic or make it less dangerous for cars to park. They are going to try to work on the parking lot behind those buildings to make it a little nicer and that little alleyway a little safer.

Mr. Signorelli said do you have any information Fernando on when the restaurant is going to open up in the old Leland?

Mr. Castrejon said no. There’s been continued meetings. There was one big meeting last Friday. There’s delays.

Mr. Signorelli said what about the restaurant in the Elk’s Club?

Mr. Castrejon said I think we showed it 3 times this week. The space scares most people. It is too big. It is a little bit over 10,000 square feet.

Mr. Castrejon said unrelated and non-historic, what do we know about the Carson’s building?

Mrs. Morgan said nothing permanent.

Mr. Castrejon said it was sold. It is intended to be another storage facility. What I heard was the owners, or whoever bought it, was not very wise because they bought it without being rezoned.

Mr. Signorelli said plus we heard the building is in terrible condition. We talked about it at the Ward meeting and more than just us in the Highlands are not going to be happy and I said at the meeting to the powers that be to nix on full storage. The other issue was they were talking about putting a car wash in front of it facing Lake Street and we said nix on a car wash. So what they’ve left us with is that they want to talk the new owner into not a complete storage facility for the building, but maybe part of the building used for storage and then another part for retail of some kind. None of us are really too happy about the storage facility.

Mr. Castrejon said well I’m not happy that it took me 8 years working on that park and now to have U-Hauls parked in the back.

Mr. Signorelli said well the one positive thing that you’ll like is they are talking about finally landscaping the Palace Street side.

Mr. Castrejon said so another plus, back to that area, also finally Dan Management responded to some request, so they are possibly open to selling that third lot, which is in total disarray and that also would be annexed to the park as a green space.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Signorelli, seconded by Mr. Munoz, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by voice vote. Mr. Miller adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

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