

Heritage Preservation Commission  
May 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes  
Web-Ex Meeting Format

*Due to the COVID-19 emergency, the HPC members participated through video conference from home. The meeting was held as a Special Meeting pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13D.021 in response to the Covid-19 emergency.*

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

President Jessica Fortney called to order the meeting of the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) at 12:03 p.m. on Monday, May 10, 2021.

**Attendance:** (Via WebEx video conferencing – all votes conducted via roll call)

Attending: Ken Buehler, Stacey DeRoche, Jessica Fortney, Mike Poupore, and Sarah Wisdorf

Absent: Brandon Hartung and Jess Mccullough

Staff Present: Steven Robertson

2. Public Hearings

PL21-054 Historic Construction/Demolition Permit for 521 West Second Street (Former St. Louis County Jail) – Meghan Elliott of New History gave an overview. She condensed their 300 page application into 4 slides. New History is working as historic consultants with the owner and developer of the building, Grant Carlson. The jail was built in 1923. It was vacated in 1995 and sold to Grant Carlson in 2010. In 2012 the building went through exterior stabilization. From 2012 – 2018 project viability was determined. A jail is a tough building type to reuse. In 2018 a housing project was proposed. 2019 the project received historic tax credit approval. 2019-2021 Covid. Today is the HPC hearing and they hope to begin construction in the fall of 2021. Exterior restoration – very few changes are being made. The non-historic annex will be demoed, and the non-historic glass block windows will be replaced. The primary entry doors will be restored. Interior restoration includes the restoration of the elevator and stairs, the retention and reuse of cells in the living units. The design trick (proposed by LHB) is the reuse of the existing central mechanical chase as a corridor. There will be additional internal stairs added to meet code requirements. Elliott welcomed questions. Planner Steven Robertson asked about signage. Elliott stated they will preserve the historic cornice and plan to use wayfinding signage, which will include external parking spaces. Robertson noted their plan seems to be minimal and appropriate. Stacey DeRoche asked if they will be retaining any of the old jail features in the lobby area. She also asked about parking. Elliott noted the 1<sup>st</sup> floor lobby area is a common area. They plan to restore current concrete floors and are keeping as much of the building as is, subject to building code requirements. There will be some parking on site: 14 spaces, including two handicap accessible spaces. There will also be some parking on right side of the site by the loading dock. There is no interior parking, and will keep the basement level as storage. Mike Poupore asked about the tunnel to the St. Louis County building. Elliott said the tunnel was in-filled by the county due to water infiltration. It is no longer connected. Poupore asked if the 2<sup>nd</sup> stairwell will eliminate the need for the exterior fire escape. Elliott affirmed. Chair Fortney appreciated the demo drawings in their extensive application. She asked about the replacement windows. Elliott stated they will be based on what they were historically, but will be more sound and energy efficient. Poupore asked how many units there will be. Elliott stated 32. DeRoche asked about historic interpretation. Will there be some sort of plaque in the lobby to denote the architecture and history of the building? Elliott said none are planned at this time, but there are opportunities to add to the lobby area. Chair Fortney noted knowing the history of the building

could appeal to new tenants. Poupore addressed the building owner, Grant Carlson, and asked him if there was anything the HPC could do to help with the project. Carlson stated no specific request today, but he appreciated the offer. Elliott noted there will be more public hearings in the future, including the planning commission in June. They are working on their TIF (Tax Increment Financing) application.

Public Comment – Chair Fortney opened up the meeting for public comment. There was none.

Commissioners – Chair Fortney would like to see a historic interpretation in the lobby area. She thinks it is a wonderful project. Buehler agreed and appreciates the owner’s perseverance.

**MOTION/Second:** Buehler/DeRoche approve the historic construction/demolition permit for 521 West Second Street

**VOTE: (5-0)**

### 3. Consideration of Minutes

April 12, 2021

**MOTION/Second:** Fortney/Buehler approved the minutes

**VOTE: (5-0)**

### 4. Communications

- Short verbal presentation on maintenance/preservation project at Carnegie Library (AKA Duluth Public Library) at 101 West Second Street – Architect Robert Fern gave an overview. The plaster in the dome is deteriorating, and starting to fall. They created scaffolding to protect the area from falling debris. They are proposing a rubberized covering be placed over the dome to temporarily prevent water from entering. The stucco has to be completely redone. The clay roof also needs replacement. The temporary rubberized covering for the dome will be tinted green. The project will come back to the HPC in the future. They are currently in the beginning stages. Poupore asked if the copper roof could be restored or reused. Fern noted the weight of the copper is 12 oz, and should be 16 oz. Soldering repairs compromised the entire roof. There is nothing left to save. They need to deconstruct the structure to discover what is there and then ultimately reconstruct. Chair Fortney thanked Fern for the update. She appreciates the green tint to the dome and thinks it will blend in nicely.

- 106 Review, Proposed Brewery Creek Apartments at corner of East 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue East – Robertson gave an overview. This item came before the planning commission last month for a variance on height requirements. There are no locally or nationally listed properties in the area. The HPC doesn’t need to make motion, but their comments will be added to the record. Chair Fortney asked if the height variance was approved by the planning commission. Robertson and Wisdorf affirmed. Chair Fortney asked about the tenants’ view from the adjacent apartment building. Robertson stated the top levels will not be effect, but the bottom levels will experience a visual impact. Chair Fortney would like to comment for the record that she is glad the new building won’t effect the next-door old Traphagen apartments. She feels the newly proposed building is cookie cutter and she would like to preserve the character of Duluth and keep the pocket apartment buildings that show that character. The HPC should be involved with the housing task force to help save the old apartment building next door. DeRoche echoes Fortney’s comments. The design of the new apartment building does not fit the neighborhood. She thinks it is generic and disappointing. Poupore also feels the newly proposed building has no character. He wished there were more controlled design guidelines in place for new construction.

### 5. Report of Final Disposition of Matters Previously Before the Commission

None at this time.

6. Reports of Officers, Staff and Committees

Planning Commission (PC) - Commissioner Sarah Wisdorf gave an overview. The PC looked at TIF funding for historic Old Central. It was suggested that the HPC add Old Main to their list of structures to be made aware of. It is in disrepair. Chair Fortney asked staff to place on their agenda for next month. Buehler also noted Washburn Hall in back of Old Main is crumbling, too. He noted the near-by park is very-well used and enjoyed by many.

7. Consideration of Matters Regarding Commission Action –

None at this time.

8. Other Business

- Change to the Zoning Code (UDC) Related to Local Historic Preservation – Wisdorf noted the planning commission recommended approval with the condition the HPC weigh in before it went to the city council. Chair Fortney noted it does not diminish the HPC's role, but clarifies they have control over locally designated landmarks. The HPC is not opposed to the new language. Robertson will note in the ordinance to the city council.
- Update on RFP for Historic Downtown Design Guidelines – Robertson noted they should be signing a contract this week. A special HPC meeting may be needed.

9. Adjournment

Adjournment at 1:07 p.m. (Next meeting scheduled for Monday, 6/14/2021)

Respectfully,

DocuSigned by:

*Adam Fulton*

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Adam Fulton – Deputy Director  
Department of Planning and Economic Development