

**CITY OF SAINT PETER
HERITAGE & PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, May 25, 2021
Saint Peter Community Center – Governors Room
Virtual Meeting via GoToMeeting Application**

The meeting was called to order by Director of Community Development Russ Wille at 5:31 pm. Commissioner's Larry Potts, Brian Oviatt, Joe Metzen, Sharon Litynski, Emily Bruflat and Remo Alexandri were in attendance. Absent was member Judy Douglas. Wille and Administrative Secretary Cindy Moulton were also in attendance. Visitor present was owner of Wild Roots Awakening, Cami Gillett.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Potts, seconded by Metzen to approve the meeting agenda as presented. All voting in favor, the agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes

Wille amended the minutes by noting the following changes: 1) correct spelling of Remo Alexandri's last name, Judy Douglas was absent from the meeting and Alexandri abstained on the motion pertaining to the Ouren sign.

A motion was made by Litynski, seconded by Metzen to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2021 special meeting as amended. All members voting aye, the minutes were approved.

Amber Patterson Design Co. (218 South Minnesota Ave.) Sign Review

Amber Patterson Design Co. will be relocating to St. Peter from Old Town Mankato. She would like to establish signage to denote her new location. A Sign Permit application has been submitted for the Commission's approval for the south portion of the façade.

Wille noted that the building is located in the Saint Peter Heritage Preservation District as created by the City Council. The building is considered a "contributing" building because it is also located within the St. Peter Commercial Historic District as designated by the National Register of Historic Places.

Patterson would like to recreate the signage that was used at her Mankato location. The black background board would include raised gold lettering and placed on the façade of the south store front. When Patterson expands her business to the north, a sign permit will be submitted for the store front.

Potts expressed his concern regarding the store front as it relates to the south. He asked if a sign would be re-created to fit both the north and south store fronts. He did not feel black was very aesthetically pleasing. Since Patterson has only requested approval of the south signage, he felt it would be appropriate to deal with the north side separately.

Wille indicated that Patterson's intention maybe to install black sign board to tie into the south store front.

Bruflat had no problem with the sign and thought it looked elegant. She also agreed with Potts that an additional application should be submitted for the northern signage.

Metzen approved of the sign.

Oviatt felt it was appropriate to act on the north sign once the space would be occupied.

Litynski felt the sign was classy and also agreed with Potts and Bruflat. She suggested that the signage be spread across both buildings.

Alexandri concurred with the Commission.

A motion was made by Potts, seconded by Bruflat to approve the application as submitted. All members voting aye, the motion carried. When the northern store front is occupied, Ms. Patterson will need to submit for design review of the additional signage.

Wild Roots Acupuncture (209 Mulberry) Sign Review

Dr. Gillett's business is located at 209 Mulberry. She would like to advertise her location of business and has submitted a Sign Design application.

The proposed signage would be similar to that of the existing signs that are located on the façade. The size of the sign would be 34" x 23" and installed to the right of the single walk-in-door of the laundromat annex.

The sign would be of similar height and would be made of similar material. Should the sign be approved, Wille suggested that a black ½" border be added along the edge of the sign.

Wille indicated that the HPC previously approved a similar sign in the same area

Bruflat said the sign was uniform with existing signs and agreed with Wille.

Metzen, Litynski, Potts and Alexandri were in favor of adding the black trim.

Oviatt was also in favor of adding the black trim. He mentioned he would like to see the signs organized on the façade as they are a distraction.

A motion was made by Potts, seconded by Metzen to approve the signage with the addition of ½" black trim on the edge of the sign. All members voting aye, the motion carried.

CBD/Accessibility Enhancement Grant

Wille explained that the City finances the accessibility enhancement grants through interest generated from the revolving loan fund. A total of 8 applications were submitted, with a total cost of approximately \$64,000. An ad hoc committee reviewed the 8 applications and 4 were chosen to participate (Nutter's, Cooks n Company, Red Men Club, and Arrow Hardware & Paint)

Red Men Club Inc. (412 South Third Street) Rear Door Replacement

The Red Men Club was chosen to participate in the City's Central Business District/Accessibility Enhancement Program. Their participation is contingent upon HPC approval.

To enhance accessibility and comply with the regulations of the Americans with Disability Act, the Club would like to replace the rear door entry and install a new steel door frame and door. The door would be of similar color as the existing door and there would be no alteration to the current opening. They would also seek to install a push button automatic door opening system which would be installed upon the exterior of the building.

A motion was made by Potts, seconded by Oviatt to approve the application as submitted. All members voting aye, the motion carried.

Arrow Commercial Properties, LLC (201 South Minnesota Ave.) – Automatic Door System

Arrow Hardware & Paint has also received a grant contingent upon HPC approval.

Dave Neiman, owner of Arrow Hardware & Paint, has submitted a design review application for review and approval. He has proposed to install a telescoping door system which is a sliding door system that operates with a sensor versus an automatic push button.

Wille consulted with Michael Koop of the State Preservation office because he felt that the alteration may be too contemporary. Koop indicated that the alteration to the building had previously occurred and it would be very unlikely that the doors would return to the original state.

Wille said that the installation of the telescoping door would be placed within the existing void created by the removal of the double doors. As per the conversation with Koop, Wille did not feel the sliding door would cause any further damage to the building.

Oviatt asked if the system would be flush with the building or within the vestibule.

Wille stated that it would be located where the double doors are currently located within the vestibule.

Oviatt did not feel the telescoping doors were appropriate for the building. He suggested installing swing-out doors similar to the existing doors. He felt the sliding doors would be too contemporary. Without a proper rendering, Oviatt said it was hard to visualize.

Oviatt said that handicap accessibility is important and asked if handicap doors could be installed in the rear of the building.

Wille indicated that the rear entrance has an 8" step and it would not be possible to install a door without going into the right of way.

Litynski agreed with Oviatt and felt the look of the door was too contemporary.

Alexandri had the same concerns as Oviatt. He would like to hear from Neiman.

Potts also agreed with Oviatt and Litynski. He also thought the doors would look out of place. He proposed using a product that would make the panes of glass appear smaller for a more authentic look. He suggested that Neiman reconsider and install swinging doors.

Bruflat liked the design and wouldn't notice the doors one way or another because they are set back and are less visible. She believed that functionality was more important than aesthetics.

Metzen asked how telescoping doors operate.

Wille stated that they are sliding doors that are operated by a sensor. When someone walks up to the door it opens and when the entry is clear it closes.

Wille asked the Commission if it would make a difference if the door was solid versus glass.

Oviatt said if there was a way to mimic 2 doors, he may consider telescoping doors. He said the push button door openers would be less expensive than installing the telescoping doors. He

commented that approving the less expensive option would allow for more businesses to gain access to limited program dollars.

Litynski said she would like to stay with the 2 doors.

Alexandri agreed with Oviatt. He expressed his concern with the modern look of the door and felt it would look out of place.

Bruflat felt a compromise could be made if the doors are modified to limit the amount of glass.

Referring to the denial of Jill Haas's awning, Litynski felt that the Commission tends to send mixed messages favoring one business over another. She said that historic integrity should be maintained.

Bruflat felt that she is consistent with her decisions from one review to the next. She agreed with Litynski maintaining in historic integrity.

A motion was made by Litynski, seconded by Oviatt to table the request. Members Litynski, Oviatt, Metzen, Bruflat, and Alexandri voting aye, Member Potts voting nay, the motion carried.

Reports

Parking Lot #5 – The City has entered into an exclusive negotiating rights agreement for the development of parking lot #5. Old Town Development LLC has been given a 6 month option which does not allow the City to negotiate the sale of the lot to another party for a 6 month period of time.

Wille indicated that the parking lot is located within the Heritage Preservation District and the HPC has the opportunity to comment on new construction in the central business district.

The RFP that the City has put out for parking lot #5, requests a structure complimentary and sympathetic to the historical district.

Wille stated that the City will be working with the Developer as to the design of the commercial/residential structure. The City Council has reserved the right to approve the design, materials, colors, the site plan, the layout, and the parking plan.

Potts asked if the City Council would be approving the exterior of the structure.

Wille indicated that the City Council will approve the final design but the HPC would also have an opportunity to review and comment on the design.

Oviatt indicated that he has not received the information that has been distributed to HPC members. Moulton will provide the information to members.

101 South Minnesota Avenue Billboard - Oviatt asked if the HPC has ever completed a Sign Design review for the billboard located on the north wall of the building.

Wille stated that a review has never been done related to the sign.

Sandwich Board Enforcement – Wille stated that the sandwich board sign regulations have not been enforced since the COVID epidemic. He asked the Commission to think about what they perceive to be the appropriate standards for sandwich board signs. Wille indicated that the downtown business owners have requested that the standards be loosened to allow for a low maintenance and long lasting sign such as plastic.

4 Seasons Mall – Litynski once again brought up that the Four Seasons Mall is an eye sore in the downtown district. She suggested that the Commission put pressure on the owner(s) of the property to improve the condition of the building.

Wille said the HPC or City Council does not have the means to compel the owners to make improvements. He said that unless there is a life safety issue, the City cannot take action.

Bruflat asked if the gateway district restrictions have anything to do with the downtown.

Wille said that the gateway overlay district only applies to the highway service commercial area.

Litynski suggested that the Commission put pressure on the City Council to go after the owners to clean it up. She stated it is an embarrassment to Saint Peter.

Wille indicated that in order to proceed, the City Council would need to pass resolution regarding the minimum maintenance of effort.

Wille suggested that Bruflat, as a representative of the HPC, bring the matter to the City Council. He suggested that before Bruflat approaches the City Council, it may be advantageous to receive additional information regarding the process.

Bruflat welcomed more information and asked for the topic to be discussed at the next HPC meeting.

Adjourn

With no further business, a motion was made by Metzen, seconded by Potts to adjourn. With all members voting

Adjourn

With no further business, a motion was made by Metzen, seconded by Potts to adjourn. With all members voting aye, the meeting adjourned at 6:07 pm.