Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

MINUTES

Wednesday, October 8, 2014

Public Meeting:
1:30 PM, Room 1210 – 12th Floor
Omaha/Douglas Civic Center
1819 Farnam Street

Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission Members: Nancy Novak - Chair, Eduardo Santamaria – Vice Chair, John Hargiss, Kristine Gerber, Regan Pence, George Killian, Scott Dobbe and Carrie Meyer.

Certification of Publication: Omaha Preservation Administrator certifies publication in the Daily Record, the official newspaper of the City of Omaha, on Thursday, September 25, 2014 notice re: Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting, October 8, 2014.

Members Present:
Nancy Novak, Chairperson
Eduardo Santamaria, Vice-Chair
Scott Dobbe
Kristine Gerber
George Killian
Carrie Meyer
Regan Pence

Members Not Present:
John Hargiss

Others Present:
Jed Moulton, Urban Design & Preservation Manager
Trina Westman, City Planner
Jennifer Taylor, City Law
Clinette Warren, Recording Secretary

Ms. Novak, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm, introduced the Commission members, as well as staff. She explained the procedures for hearing the cases. Roll call was taken with seven members present.

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Dobbe moved to APPROVE the minutes for the September 10, 2014 meeting. Mr. Pence seconded the motion.

AYES: Santamaria, Gerber, Pence, Dobbe, Meyer, Novak

ABSTAIN: Killian

MOTION CARRIED: 6-0-1
National Register Nomination:

CASE NUMBER: H5-14-11 (from 9/10/14)  NAME: Omaha Power Plant Building
PRESENTED BY: Caitlin Kolb and Christina Jansen of Alley Poyner Macchietto  LOCATION: 505 Marcy Street
REQUEST: Request for National Register Nomination

At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on Wednesday, October 8, 2014, Caitlin Kolb appeared before the Board.

Ms. Kolb stated that the building was being nominated under Criterion A for its widespread impact on the growth and development of electrical service in Omaha. In addition, it embodies major growth periods in the history of electric service and reflects shifts in electric power preferences within the city. She shared several historical and current photographs of the building. The photos included images of the east façade of Turban Hall, the east and north façade of the Switchgear Building, and the west façade of the office and boiler Plant. Interior pictures were also included.

In response to Mr. Santamaria, Ms. Kolb stated that the Omaha Power Plant was the largest building that served the electrical needs of the city at the time. It was built in 1889 and was expanded in later years. She explained that part of the building is steel frame and other parts masonry. About 1/3 of the original building had been removed since more energy was being produced from the Fort Calhoun Nuclear Power Plant in an attempt to reduce coal use. Ms. Kolb stated that the building would be converted to a residential use. She was not sure whether the metal skin that had been attached to the building would be removed or what internal fixtures would remain. The plant began to be phased out in the 1970’s and was closed down in the 1980’s when it began to be used for storage. She stated that, overall; the structure is in good condition.

In response to Ms. Gerber, Ms. Kolb stated that, to her knowledge, State and Federal tax credits would not be used for the project, especially since the interior of the building would need to be changed significantly for its intended use. The National Register Nomination for this particular project would be mainly for recognition purposes.

Jed Moulton, Urban Design & Preservation Manager, provided additional historical information about the property and expressed support for the project. He explained that the site had evolved with the technology of the times. He reminded the Commission that the State Preservation office had reviewed the case and recommended the nomination of the Omaha Power Plant Building for the National Register. He urged the Commission to take into consideration that this particular building could be rehabilitated at-will since the owner did not require tax credits for the project. Because of the massive size of the structure, Mr. Santamaria expressed interest in the identity of the original contractors. Ms. Kolb felt that, since the owner was seeking a nomination for the building, he would not want make any changes that would jeopardize its place on the registry.
Motion by Mr. Santamaria to APPROVE the nomination. Mr. Dobbe seconded the motion.

AYES: Santamaria, Gerber, Dobbe, Meyer

NAYES: Killian

ABSTAIN: Pence, Novak

MOTION FAILED: 4-1-2

Mr. Santamaria moved to LAYOVER until the November 12, 2014 meeting to give the opportunity for all Commission members to hear the case. Mr. Pence seconded the motion.

AYES: Santamaria, Gerber, Pence, Dobbe, Meyer, Novak

NAYES: Killian

MOTION CARRIED: 6-1

Discussion:

There was some discussion regarding the Hupmobile Building (Case H5-14-09). Ms. Gerber stated that she was in attendance when the case was presented to the State. She mentioned that additional information and more images had been added to the presentation as requested by the Commission when the case was approved at the LHPC August meeting.

Ms. Westman discussed the option of having the monthly LHPC documents uploaded to the Google Drive.

Adjournment:

It was the consensus of the Board to ADJOURN the meeting at 1:55 p.m.