Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
MINUTES
Wednesday, December 10, 2014

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

**Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission Members:** Eduardo Santamaria – Chair, Kristine Gerber – Vice Chair, John Hargiss, George Killian, Carrie Meyer, Regan Pence, Scott Dobbe, Kathryn Aultz and Joan Fogarty.

**Certification of Publication:** Omaha Preservation Administrator certifies publication in the Daily Record, the official newspaper of the City of Omaha, on Thursday, November 20, 2014 notice re: Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting, December 10, 2014.

**Members Present:**
Eduardo Santamaria, Chair
Kristine Gerber, Vice-Chair
Kathryn Aultz
Joan Fogarty
George Killian
Carrie Meyer
Regan Pence

**Members Not Present:**
Scott Dobbe
John Hargiss

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

Mr. Santamaria, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:37 pm, introduced the Commission members and staff. He explained the procedures for hearing the cases. Roll call was taken with seven members present.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Pence moved to APPROVE the minutes for the October 8, 2014 meeting. Ms. Meyer seconded the motion.

AYES: Gerber, Killian, Meyer, Pence, Santamaria

ABSTAIN: Aultz, Fogarty

MOTION CARRIED: 5-0-2
Election of Officers:

Mr. Killian moved to ELECT Mr. Santamaria as Chair of the Commission. Mr. Pence seconded the motion.

AYES: Aultz, Fogarty, Gerber, Killian, Meyer, Pence, Santamaria

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Mr. Killian moved to ELECT Ms. Gerber as Vice-Chair of the Commission. Ms. Meyer seconded the motion.

AYES: Aultz, Fogarty, Gerber, Killian, Meyer, Pence, Santamaria

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0
At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on Wednesday, December 10, 2014, Caitlin Kolb and Todd Heistand 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. The structure embodies major growth periods in the history of electric service and reflects shifts in electric power preferences within the city. She presented several photos which showed the plant at other periods during its history and from different vantage points. The photos included images of the east façade of Turbine Hall, the east and north façade of the switchgear building, and the west façade of the office and boiler Plant. There were also interior photos of the office and boiler plant, switchgear building, and Turbine Hall. More energy was being produced at the Fort Calhoun Nuclear Power Plant, which resulted in the northern half of the original structure being removed. The building was eventually decommissioned by the Omaha Public Power District.

Mr. Heistand discussed the some of the steps that were being taken to advance the project: obtaining a permit to construct within 500’ of the dike; re-plat of the site; working with Conagra and OPPD so that Howard Street is improved; and, removal of one of the fuel tanks along Leavenworth Street. He stated that the project would cost approximately $36 million and would add about 150 new construction jobs to the area. In response to Mr. Santamaria, Mr. Heistand stated that the City is in support of rezoning of the site from Industrial to CBD (Central Business District) and that the project is TIF (Tax Increment Financing) eligible, although it had not yet been applied for.

Ms. Gerber questioned whether the period of significance (1889-1964) was accurate since none of the buildings from 1889 were left. Ms. Kolb responded that the date was used since the history and many expansions were linked to that date.

Mr. Santamaria recalled that the Commission previously requested information about the types of activities that occurred in the surrounding area at the time the building was being constructed. Ms. Kolb responded that, due to time constraints, focus was on the history of the building so there was no information available.

Ms. Fogarty spoke about the significance of the site. She mentioned that it had been used continually for over 100 years as the electrical industry continued to develop. She noted the location of the site in relation to the riverfront, railroad, and the downtown area. She stated that there are several substations that still exist in Omaha. She expressed support for the project and the importance of the building to the history of Omaha.

In response to Jed Moulton, Urban Design & Preservation Manager, Ms. Kolb stated that the Nebraska State Historical Preservation Office had already granted approval of the site for listing on the National Register.
There was some discussion among the Commission and Mr. Heistand about some of the challenges of creating living spaces inside the building.

Mr. Santamaria inquired into whether plans were being made for the area surrounding the site. Mr. Heistand responded that a retention pond area was being included in the plans for the building. In addition, plans were being made to connect a nearby bike trail to the property.

Mr. Pence stated that he would be abstaining from voting on this case due to his professional involvement with the project.

Ms. Gerber moved to APPROVE the request. Ms. Fogarty seconded the motion.

AYES: Aultz, Fogarty, Gerber, Meyer, Santamaria

NAYES: Killian

ABSTAIN: Pence

MOTION CARRIED: 5-1-1
**Adjournment:**

It was the consensus of the Board to ADJOURN the meeting at 2:10 p.m.