Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

MINUTES

Wednesday, June 10, 2015

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

Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission Members: Eduardo Santamaria – Chair, George Killian – Vice Chair, Carrie Meyer, Regan Pence, Kathryn Aultz, Joan Fogarty, and Jaime Suarez.

Certification of Publication: Omaha Preservation Administrator certifies publication in the Daily Record, the official newspaper of the City of Omaha, on Thursday, May 28, 2015 notice re: Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting, June 10, 2015.

Members Present: Eduardo Santamaria, Chair
George Killian, Vice-Chair
Kathryn Aultz
Joan Fogarty
Carrie Meyer
Regan Pence
Jaime Suarez

Members Not Present: Scott Dobbe

Others Present: Trina Westman, LHPC Administrator
Jennifer Taylor, City Law
Clinette Warren, Recording Secretary

Mr. Santamaria, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:38 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:
The minutes for the May 13, 2015 will be approved at the next scheduled meeting.
Local Landmark:

CASE NUMBER: 15-09-H1          NAME:       Ernest P Buffet House
PRESENTED BY:                    LOCATION:   1015 S 30 Ave
Meredith Efken_Owner            REQUEST:  Approval of Local Landmark Designation

At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on Wednesday, June 10, 2015, Meredith Efken appeared before the Commission.

Trina Westman, LHPC Coordinator, stated that the Commission was being asked to provide a recommendation to the Planning Board for approval of the Local Landmark Designation for the Ernest P. Buffet House. The Planning Department recommended that the Commission support the designation under the designation standards (a) Historical and Cultural Importance and (b) Architectural and Engineering Importance.

Ms. Efken presented a slideshow of the home in addition to providing some historical information about it to the Commission. She stated that Mr. Buffet was very influential in the community as a grocer. His social activities were well documented in the social pages of the Omaha World Herald.

Both Ms. Fogarty and Ms. Aultz expressed appreciation for the amount of research that went into the nomination. Ms. Fogarty felt that the home fulfilled all of the elements for Criterion B and C (for the National Register Nomination). In response to Mr. Santamaria, Ms. Efken stated that, aside from one home nearby that shares some similarities to the Buffet house, she was not aware of any other homes that were similar in style and appearance. She explained that the color of the house was chosen based on typical Victorian colors from around 1880. Ms. Efken passed around original wall paper samples from the home along with a book by Bill Buffett about the family store. The original woodwork in the home has all been preserved. There are also a couple of original stained glass windows that remain.

Ms. Fogarty moved to APPROVE the proposal of a Landmark Designation for the Ernest P. Buffet House and recommendation to the Planning Board and City Council of approval of such designation. Mr. Killian seconded the motion.

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

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0
At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on Wednesday, June 10, 2015, Lawrence Butler appeared before the Commission.

Trina Westman, LHPC Administrator, stated that Mr. Butler has been working with Ruben Acosta (Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office) on the nomination and that there was ongoing research with the property. She received some updated information regarding the building that she submitted to the Commission. The Planning Department believed that the structure held some historical, cultural, and architectural importance and was significant under the designation standards (a) and (b). The Department recommended a layover to give the applicant time to continue researching the property or approval of the request, whichever the Commission preferred.

Mr. Butler presented interior and exterior photos of the property, described it location, and explained the layout of the building. He explained that the property was abandoned and in various stages of disrepair, but that the building was structurally sound. He also provided some history about the architect and owners. He felt that the building fulfilled Criteria A (Historical and Cultural Importance) and Criteria B (Architectural and Engineering Importance). With regards to Criterion A, he explained that the Atlas is one of two remaining four-plexes that exist in Omaha. It was also the site of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition and on a major street car route. It fulfills Criterion B because it is the first known work of architect Charles Rosenberry. He mentioned the areas of the building that are still intact including: the front door/facade, handrails, most of the window trim, and many of the doors. Repairs need to be made on the floors as a result of roof damage. In addition, some tuck pointing needs to be done to the exterior brickwork. The applicant and the City will provide funds for renovation. He planned to apply for federal and state tax incentives that will allow him to do more work on the building.

In response to Ms. Fogarty, Mr. Butler stated that the building will be used for residential purposes as it was originally intended. There was some discussion about past/present/future development planned for the area and what would need to be done to bring the building to code.

Ms. Aultz was concerned about the Planning Department’s recommendation of a layover. She did not want to vote on the case without the Department’s recommendation of approval. Mr. Santamaria responded that, based on what had been presented, there was enough information to fulfill both Criterion A and B. He felt that the project should be allowed to go forward without state approval, which was not connected with approval on the local level. Ms. Westman added that she could update the City’s report to indicate that the Planning Department supported the recommendation with some conditions.

Mr. Pence moved to APPROVE the proposal of a Landmark Designation for the Atlas Apartments and recommendation to the Planning Board and City Council of approval of such designation on the condition that a finalized Designation Report is presented to the LHPC administrator. Mr. Suarez seconded the motion.
AYES: Aultz, Fogarty, Killian, Meyer, Pence, Suarez, Santamaria

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Discussion:

Ms. Fogarty mentioned the committee that had been established to create appropriate guidelines for infill projects. She felt that the information from that committee should be discussed and shared with the LHPC. She noted that the Commission’s input on those types of matters was part of the reason that it was established by the City. Ms. Westman responded that she would suggest that the Infill Design Guidelines be presented to the Commission.

Ms. Fogarty also discussed the need for the Commission to actively look at historic structures for nomination. She suggested that Ford Birth site area be considered as a potential Historic District. Other areas of interest mentioned were Park Avenue to the west and Field Club to the east which have excellent examples of early Victorian architecture. There was some discussion about surveys that had been done in those areas.

Mr. Santamaria informed the Commission that it was his last meeting and he expressed appreciation for being able to serve.

Adjournment:

It was the consensus of the Board to ADJOURN the meeting at 3:04 p.m.