Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
MINUTES
Wednesday, September 9, 2015

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

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

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

Members Not Present: Brian Magee

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

Mr. Killian, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm, introduced the Commission members and staff. He explained the procedures for hearing the cases. Roll call was taken with seven members present.
ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS:

Election of Officers

Ms. Aultz moved to ELECT Ms. Fogarty as Chair of the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission. Ms. Meyer seconded the motion.

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

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Killian moved to APPROVE the minutes for the August 12, 2015 meeting. Mr. Pence seconded the motion.

AYES: Dobbe, Killian, Meyer, Pence, Suarez

ABSTAIN: Aultz, Fogarty

MOTION CARRIED: 5-0-2
At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on Wednesday, September 9, 2015, Chris Jansen appeared before the Commission.

Ms. Jansen stated that the district was significant under Criterion A for its Black ethnic heritage and its strong association with the African-American community in Omaha. It is also significant in the areas of commerce and transportation as a predominant commercial intersection in Omaha. The intersection continues to serve as a central business district in the heart of Omaha’s African-American community. The Period of Significance began in 1882 when the first plot was made and ended in 1966. The proposed district includes a collection of 39 buildings on 11 partial city blocks along North 24th Street from Patrick Avenue to the south and Ohio Street to the north, and Lake Street between North 22nd Street on the east and just west of North 26th Street.

Ms. Jansen shared several images of the district and provided the history of many of the historic buildings which included the following: the Jewel Building, the Webster Telephone Exchange Building, Skeet’s Barbecue, the Carver Savings & Loan and the Omaha Star Building. She listed the architects along with past and present owners of several properties in the district. There are 3 plazas in the district: Hope Plaza, Dreamland Plaza and the Mildred Brown Memorial Strolling Park. She concluded that the buildings that currently stand in the district provided a sense of place for the African-American community and holds a vital legacy for Omaha.

In response to Mr. Dobbe, Ms. Jansen stated that many of the business owners were excited about, and in full support, of the nomination.

Ms. Fogarty suggested that the applicant’s nomination include that the fact that the streetcar line was specifically developed to be a major transportation route to the 1890 exposition, which helped to populate the area along 24th Street.

In response to Mr. Killian, Ms. Jansen stated that the boundaries could not be expanded to the south due to the large number of vacant lots that would create too many empty spaces in the district. She explained that many historical buildings no longer exist. Trina Westman, LHPC Coordinator, added that boundaries could be amended in the future if necessary.

Vince Furlong, 120 South 49th Avenue, appeared in support of the request. Mr. Furlong is a volunteer with Restoration Exchange Omaha. With regards to transportation, he noted that from the 1920’s through the 1950’s, thousands of people used the streetcar along 24th Street to travel to the work at the Stock Yards located on South 24th Street. He also mentioned the Carnation Ballroom located at 24th and Miami, a popular music venue that was owned and operated by Mildred Brown, owner of the Omaha Star newspaper.
Ruben Acosta, Nebraska State Historical Society, worked with the applicant on the nomination and expressed support for the project. He stressed the importance of having this particular district listed as soon as possible while the integrity of the remaining buildings still remain. He added that one of the benefits of the nomination would be that the business owners would be able to take advantage of the State’s tax credit programs that are geared towards business and property owners with income-generating properties. This could possibly spur new construction or rehabilitation of the existing historic properties.

Ms. Westman stated that the Planning Department recommended approval of the nomination based on the Criterion stated.

Mr. Killian moved to APPROVE the Nation Register Nomination. Mr. Dobbe seconded the motion.

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

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0
CLG BASIC TRAINING:

Ruben Acosta, National Register Coordinator – Nebraska State Historical Society, directed Part 2 of 3 of a training session with the members of the Commission.

Adjournment:

It was the consensus of the Board to ADJOURN the meeting at 3:01 p.m.