

**EAU CLAIRE
LANDMARKS COMMISSION**

Meeting of December 8, 2014

Members Present: Katrinka Bourne, Ken Ziehr, Jane Seymour Kunick, Carrie Ronnander, Dave Strobel, Brady Foust, John Mann

Members Absent: None

Minutes: The minutes of the November 3, 2014, meeting were approved as written.

The meeting was chaired by Katrinka Bourne and called to order at 4:30 p.m.

John Mann was welcomed to the Commission.

- 1. Consideration of Request to Demolish 1004 Menomonie Street – the Kaiser Lumber Company Office.** The Commission considered a request submitted by James Rolbiecki (DMB Distinguished Multiply Buildings, LLC) to demolish the property located at 1004 Menomonie Street, having the historic name of the Kaiser Lumber Company office. The building was designated as a local landmark property in 1999 for its historic association with the City’s lumber industry, specifically the Kaiser Lumber Company. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

Pat Ivory noted that copies of the Landmark nomination form and the National Register nomination form were included in their packets.

The building was constructed in 1905 and was used as an office for the Kaiser Lumber Company until 1939. It is one of the only remaining buildings from the lumber era in the city. After 1939 the building was utilized for various uses, including the Eau Claire Drum and Bugle Corps and a retail store. The building was later remodeled as a dwelling, but is currently vacant.

Pat Ivory reviewed the Landmarks Ordinance with the Commission relating to requests to demolish a designated landmark property. The provisions of Chapter 2.65.040 C, “Regulation of Demolition of Landmarks and Structures Within Historic Districts” would apply. The ordinance states that no person in charge of a landmark, or improvement in a historic district, shall be granted a permit to demolish such property without issuance of a certificate of appropriateness by the Commission. In determining whether to issue a certificate of appropriateness for any demolition, the Commission shall consider or may give decisive weight to any or all of the criteria listed under Section 2.65.040(C)(2).

Upon study of the application, the Commission may refuse to grant a certificate of appropriateness for a period of up to 18 months from the time of such application, during which time the Commission and the applicant shall undertake serious and continuing discussions for the

purpose of finding a method to save such property. At the end of this 18 month period, if no mutually agreeable method of saving the subject property bearing a reasonable prospect of eventual success is underway, or if no funds from any governmental unit or nonprofit organization to preserve the subject property have been received or granted, the Commission would then need to allow for the demolition of the building to proceed. Pat Ivory added that the ordinance contained specific criteria for the Commission to consider when reviewing such requests.

Pat Ivory also provided information regarding the original landmark designation of the building and the City's assistance to find the Rolbiecki's land to relocate their bike and skate store along Menomonie Street to the east of the Kaiser Lumber Company office.

Mr. James Rolbiecki and Mr. Patrick Rolbiecki, the applicants, were present at the meeting. They informed the Commission that they were proposing to demolish the building so that they could construct a new building on the site. This would include retail on the first floor and apartments on the second floor. A concept plan for the new building was included in with the information submitted by the Rolbiecki's. It was noted that the property would have to be rezoned by the City for this development to proceed. They added that they wished to optimize the use of the property and that this could not be accomplished with the existing building. They indicated that they had considered different uses of the building, but none seemed financially feasible in comparison to constructing a new building on the site. The recent announcement of the University's plans to construct a major arena/event center to the west of their property was also discussed.

The Rolbiecki's indicated that they would be willing to donate the building to be moved to another location, but would not be involved in any funding relating to the relocation of the building. They added that they did not feel that the agreement with the City back in 1999 precluded them from proposing to demolish the building at some point in the future.

Several Commissioner members discussed the historic importance of the building noting it was one of the last buildings left in Eau Claire relating to the lumbering era. The Commission noted their preference would be to attempt to preserve the building on-site, with moving the building as only a last option. They noted that the location of the building had historic importance as it related to the location of the lumber company, and Half Moon Lake.

The Commission asked if the Rolbiecki's had considered ideas such as converting the building into a restaurant, or selling the building to be used as a visitor center in relation to its location near the future events center, Carson Park, Water Street, and Hobbs Ice Center. The Commission also suggested incorporating the building into a larger development.

The Rolbiecki's indicated that they did not feel that a restaurant would be feasible due to the smaller size of the building. They did note that they had consulted with realtors about selling the

property over the past couple years, but it was unclear whether the property was ever listed. The Commission noted that the property may be valued higher now that the events center has been announced.

Sharon Hildebrand, 426 Summit Avenue, spoke in opposition to demolishing the building. Ms. Hildebrand indicated that she was a past member of the Commission and discussed the historic importance of the building and keeping it at the present location rather than moving it. She noted that the building could still be an asset to the area with a number of different uses.

It was noted that an email was received by Barbara Arnold, noting her opposition to the demolition of the building.

The Commission discussed the request further and noted that it would be beneficial to walk through the building to get a better idea of the condition of the building. Pat Rolbiecki indicated that he would be agreeable to having a building walk-through.

ACTION TAKEN: Brady Foust moved to postpone consideration of the request until the January meeting and schedule a time for the Commission to walk through the building. Ken Ziehr seconded the motion. All votes were in favor. Motion carried.

2. **Discussion of Possible Changes to the Historic Residential Loan Program.** Pat Ivory reviewed possible changes to the Commission's loan program to expand the scope of the program to include commercial and non-profit properties. This was discussed at the October meeting. The Commission indicated their support for the changes and directed Pat to review the changes with the City's CDBG administrator.
3. **Discussion of Design Guidelines Theatres in Established Business Districts.** Dave Strobel informed the Commission that he had been appointed to a committee to consider design options relating to the proposed confluence performing arts building. A consultant has been hired to develop a design for the building and the committee will provide input to the consultant. Dave discussed the process with the Commission that will also provide opportunities for citizen input. He noted that he would welcome any suggestions from the Commission members.
4. **Update on Landmark Activities and Properties, including:**
 - A. **Discussion of Status of Future Local Landmark Designations.** The Commission continued their discussion regarding the status of the properties recently contacted to determine the property owner's interest in locally designating their properties. Properties being considered include: 302-310 West Grand Avenue, 1129 Bellevue Avenue, 319 South Barstow Street, 1819 Lyndale Avenue, 1615 State Street, and 316 Eau Claire Street.

It was noted that the Commission had received a letter from the owners of 319 South Barstow Street requesting designation of their property and to proceed with the public hearing.

Pat Ivory indicated that he had recently talked to the owner of the 1615 State Street property and she is still considering the local designation. The property owners of 1129 Bellevue Avenue and 1819 Lyndale Avenue had not been contacted since the previous meeting.

The Commission then discussed 316 Eau Claire Street (the State Theatre). Ken Ziehr and Carrie Ronnander had met with the Board of Directors of the State Theatre prior to the November meeting. The Commission discussed the meeting and the Board's decision not to support landmark designation. The Commission agreed that they would not pursue local designation at the present time, but would monitor the status of the building and discuss the issue in the future as needed.

As mentioned at the November meeting, other properties/districts to discuss in 2015 included: Water Street, Roosevelt Avenue, and Emery Street. Bridges such as the Soo Line Bridge and High Bridge were also discussed.

- B. Coordination with Historic Preservation Foundation.** The Commission discussed the need to continue communication and coordination with the Eau Claire Preservation Foundation. John Mann and Pat Ivory indicated that the student intern hired by the Foundation, who is a UWEC student, could possibly attend each Commission meeting. John stated that he would contact the student and Foundation about this arrangement.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Submitted by,

Jane Seymour Kunick