

REPORT OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION / DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

Wednesday February 3, 2016 –4:30 p.m.

City Conference Room – County-City Building
1515 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481

PRESENT: Chairperson Lee Beveridge, Alderperson Garrett Ryan, Commissioner Tim Siebert, Commissioner Sarah Scripps, and Commissioner Bob Woehr.

ABSENT: Commissioner Tom Baldischwiler and Commissioner Debauch

ALSO PRESENT: Associate Planner Kyle Kearns, Cathy Dugan, Bob Brush, and Tori Jennings.

INDEX:

Discussion and possible action on the following:

1. Approval of the report of the November 4, 2015 HP/DRC meeting.
2. Amending the Stevens Point Historic Preservation Design Guidelines, to regulate paint.
3. Process and procedures relating to the designation of potential historic properties, buildings, and districts identified within the 2011 Intensive Survey Report.
4. Request from the City Parks and Recreation Department to remove ash trees, consistent with the adopted Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan in the Design Review District.
5. Amending the Stevens Point Historic Preservation Design Guidelines, to regulate trees and landscaping.
6. Staff Update (informational purposes only)
7. Adjourn.

-
1. Approval of the report of the November 4, 2015 HP / DRC meeting.

**Motion by Commissioner Siebert to approve the report of the November 4, 2015 HP / DRC meeting; seconded by Alderperson Ryan.
Motion carried 5-0.**

2. Amending the Stevens Point Historic Preservation Design Guidelines, to regulate paint.

Associate planner Kyle Kearns explained that the commission has previously discussed this, and recommended to have staff draft an amendment to the Design Guidelines. He continued that he has provided the changes and amendment to the commission which includes identifying three color palettes as well as some other changes outlined in the draft. With this amendment it has been added that in the instance of a paint request, if the colors on the approved palettes are requested,

staff and the chairperson can approve the change internally, however if a color is not on the approved palettes, it would come before the commission for approval.

Commissioner Siebert asked if this amendment was passed, where it would go from here, to which associate planner Kearns stated it would go before the Plan Commission and then Common Council for final approvals.

Motion by Commissioner Siebert to approve the amendment to Section 3.11 and 7.4 of the Stevens Point Historical Preservation Design Guidelines, to regulate paint.

No second, Motion Failed.

Aldersperson Ryan asked how the community would be notified of the new requirements, to which associate planner Kearns stated there could be a press release as well as sending letters to those within the Design Review District and Historic Districts. He continued stating not every amendment would warrant notification, but in this instance it would, if that is requested and recommended by the commission.

Commissioner Woehr pointed out some of his concerns regarding the wording in the Design Review Guidelines which states that the body of a building is typically painted a lighter color than the trim and other detailing, but the photos in the Design Guidelines show a two toned house with white trim. Mr. Woehr continued stating that we need to go through the photos in the guidelines and change them along with the amendments. Commissioner Beveridge stated he has noticed that as well, but has also seen the reverse for the painting scheme. Commissioner Woehr feels that the language in the guidelines should match with what we are showing as an example of how it should be done. He then questioned the wording regarding previously painted masonry material. Lastly, he pointed out the word approved in Section 7.4.1 and 7.4.2 that would be better fitting to change to adopted.

Cathy Dugan, 615 Sommers Street, stated she is please with all the ideas put before the commission and is happy that the intensive survey is going to be put into practice.

Commissioner Scripps asked if the colors are going to be based on the style of home, to which associate planner Kearns explained based on the previous meetings the commission determined that color palettes were proposed to be adopted.

Commissioner Woehr pointed out he does not see any bright colors that are typically seen on a Victorian home. Associate planner Kearns explained that those requests would come before the commission with which the applicant would be required to provide some history and reasoning for the proposed color. Staff review of approved pallet colors will expedite the project for the property owners and not require them to have to wait until a meeting is scheduled which could take a month or more. He also emphasized that these are guidelines, and when created the guidelines were set as recommendations because they are subject to review via the commission.

Commissioner Scripps agreed that the wording in item 9 of the amended ordinance of the paint guidelines should be changed from approved to adopt.

Aldersperson Ryan stated he would like to see the wording more specific to get to a standardization throughout the document. He then clarified the provision allows someone to paint something out of the ordinary with first receiving approval from the commission.

Motion by Commissioner Scripps to approve the amendments to Section 3.11 and 7.4 of the Stevens Point Historical Preservation Design Guidelines as presented, to regulate paint with the following changes:

- **Section 3.11, Paint Guideline 9 shall state: Masonry surfaces were historically unpainted and should not be painted. Paint previously painted masonry material in colors that reflect the original underlying material.**
- **Section 7.4.1, Letter S. shall state: Painting using colors not adopted by the Historic Preservation Design Review Commission**
- **Section 7.4.2 Letter U shall state: Painting using colors adopted by the Historic Preservation Design Review Commission**

Seconded by Commissioner Woehr.

Motion carried 5-0.

3. Process and procedures relating to the designation of potential historic properties, buildings and districts identified within the 2011 Intensive Survey Report.

Associate planner Kearns explained that there was a lot of information provided in the packet for this item, including a district survey form, information about the state CLG program, a list of all districts, all registered properties, and a document from 2014 which identified the process for creating more historic districts and getting more historic districts on the National Register. Mr. Kearns then confirmed the state the CLG program was still in existence, outlined steps for applying for the grant. He then stated the first step in pursuing creating the additional districts, is to have meetings with affected property owners, in which the state representative would also be in attendance. The primary goal is to receive input as to whether or not those property owners were in support of additional historic districts. At the meeting, the state would present on the benefits of district nomination as well as identifying the process for tax credits. If positive input is received, that would initiate the submission of a letter of intent to apply for the CLG Grant to receive 100% funds and assistance from a contractor to complete to historic district nomination forms. Once those are sent to the state and the federal government, the typical time frame for adoption is one-two years, upon which the City would could then locally designate the same districts and/or properties.

Commissioner Siebert asked if districts would be done one at a time, or all at once, to which associate planner Kearns explained that is dependent upon the amount of money that the state is willing to provide through the grant, and the cost for the nominations. Within the intensive survey a lot of the research has already been done for the proposed districts, which may reduce the

nomination application costs. Mr. Kearns then recommend at least pursuing the Main Street and Clark Street district followed by the others, however that may be dependent upon the CLG grant funding. Mr. Kearns explained the time line is to have the community meetings before June, when we need to submit a letter of intent to apply for CLG funds, followed by the submission of the full CLG application in November. Award nominees would be announced in early 2017.

Commissioner Siebert asked for clarification as to whether a motion from the commission was needed to proceed with the process of putting all five districts on the register. Associate planner Kearns confirmed that is what would be needed, which would be followed by staff contacting the state to organize the public workshops.

Commissioner Woehr asked if this was to be creating locally designated districts or national register district, to which associate planner Kearns stated with the CLG funds we would be looking first at national and state districts. Once on the national and state register, local designation can occur. He continued stating that the only national district we have is the Mathias Mitchell Public Square. This recommendation would put the Clark Street Historic District on the National Register, however the design review district is too large to designate and has many non-contributing buildings. Lastly, associate planner Kearns confirmed that the CLG funds are still available and that the time line would be similar to that outlined in the memo from 2014 provided.

Commissioner Scripps clarified the steps for applying nationally and then locally, and inquired if the design review guidelines govern all districts, to which associate planner Kearns answered the City's Design Review Guidelines pertain to any locally designated Design Review or Historic Districts. The biggest benefit for the home owner to be on the historic register is that they can get up to 40% tax credit for interior and exterior improvements.

Aldersperson Ryan asked if we could establish these as local districts before going to the national level, to which associate planner Kearns stated yes, but national nomination should occur first to entice property owners of the available tax credit for improvements. Aldersperson Ryan then asked if there is any negative to looking at doing both districts and individual properties. Mr. Kearns responded stating that it will be harder to do the individual designations because you have more research to do, regarding the prior residents and the historic links, so the application is more in depth. The cost would likely be greater for individual nominations.

Commissioner Woehr asked when districts have been proposed and created in the past, are the property owners given an opportunity for a referendum vote, to which associate planner Kearns stated he did not think a referendum vote occurred. The state wants to ensure that there is feedback and input gathered before they begin the application process.

Motion by Commissioner Woehr to pursue the process and procedures relating to the designation of potential historic properties, buildings and districts identified within the 2011 Intensive Survey Report; seconded by Commissioner Siebert.

Motion carried 5-0.

4. Request from City Parks and Recreation Department to remove ash trees, consistent with the adopted Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan in the Design Review District.

Associate planner Kearns explained currently in our guidelines, staff can approve the removal of trees over six inches in diameter. Given this request and given that he feels they are character defining trees, currently not diseased, staff did not feel comfortable approving the request. Being that they are Ash trees, they have the potential to carry the Emerald Ash Borer which is in neighboring counties and likely will strike with devastation throughout the City. Rather than approve based on the guidelines, he felt it should be addressed by the commission. Currently there are 15 mature trees which are lining parking lots and will be removed and replaced. He feels they are character defining and serve a purpose on the right-of-way and edge of the parking lots. In 2013 there was a management plan for the Emerald Ash Borer, which was adopted by the Common Council which outlined the process for several trees within city right of way and city property as to whether they would be treated or removed and replaced. These 15 trees have been identified to be removed and replaced by the City Forester as part of the management plan.

Commissioner Siebert asked since the trees are not diseased yet, is there an issue with waiting until they have been affected. Associate planner Kearns stated the same question was posed to the forester, and the other question brought up was that these sites are potential developable sites. Mr. Kearns stated the forester identified the trees as being next in the implementation of the plan.

Commissioner Scripps asked if one of the options was to remove and not replace the trees, to which associate planner Kearns stated that is possible if the recommendation is made by the commission.

Commissioner Siebert pointed out that there is the plume of pollution, and asked what type of development could there be in that area, to which associate planner Kearns answered it depends on if WPS cleans up the site in the future or accesses cleanup funds, and if a developer remediates the site. Commissioner Siebert asked if we could turn it into a park, to which associate planner Kearns stated that is an option too.

Aldersperson Ryan asked if the tree removal was put in the city's budget for treatment, to which associate Planner Kearns stated yes the removal was in the budget, but he is not sure if they are left, if they would be treated at all. Aldersperson Ryan asked if we replace the trees, is it possible to replace them with a more mature tree, to which associate planner Kearns stated at the time of replacement, the zoning code becomes applicable which regulates tree size in parking lots, but you can recommend larger if you choose. He also stated that the reason the city does not handle all the trees at once is because of the cost and saving money.

Motion by Aldersperson Ryan to approve the request from City Parks and Recreation Department to remove ash trees, consistent with the adopted Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan in the Design Review District with the following condition:

1. **The replacement trees be a minimum of four inch diameter if feasible, subject to the City Forester’s professional knowledge and expertise given the location of trees.**

Seconded by Commissioner Woehr.

Commissioner Scripps pointed out this is the most expensive option, and we are making it more expensive for an area that is blighted.

Motion carried 4-1. (Siebert voting in the negative)

5. Amending the Stevens Point Historic Preservation Design Guidelines, to regulate trees and landscaping.

Associate planner Kearns explained as stated prior staff can approve removal of trees greater than six inches. Staff feels more comfortable if, in instances like the previous agenda item, the item would come before the commission. Therefore staff have identified “character defining” within the line items in Minor and Major works of the Design Review Guidelines. Character defining was previously defined in the guidelines, but primarily focused on structures, so staff is recommending to amend the definition so it would identify a sense of property and sense place.

Motion by Commissioner Woehr to approve amending Section 7.3 and 7.4 of the Stevens Point Historic Preservation Design Guidelines as presented, to regulate trees and landscaping; seconded by Commissioner Siebert.

Motion carried 5-0

6. Staff Update (informational purposes only).

Associate planner Kearns stated there is no staff update at this time.

Commissioner Beveridge recognized Tori Jennings to speak regarding a request for a future agenda item for the Historic Preservation / Design Review Commission to discuss.

Tori Jennings, 1632 Ellis Street, brought up the signage in the downtown area and encouraged the commission to look into the sign guidelines downtown. She had a concern for the recent replacement of the Massage Therapy and Chiropractor signs downtown and feels that they do not match with the façade of the building. Associate planner Kearns explained that signage typically goes before the chairperson and staff to review, and within our ordinance, a sign face of a cabinet sign or framed sign can be changed without affecting the sign. It is something that we can add to a future agenda for discussion, the sign ordinance specifically relating to the B-3 district.]

7. Adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 5:52 PM.