

REPORT OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION / DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

Wednesday August 3, 2016 – 4:30 PM

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

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Sarah Scripps, and Commissioner Tom Baldischwiler.

ALSO PRESENT: Associate Planner Kearns, Joseph Hoover, Brandi Makuski, Liam Wood, and Eric Yonke.

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Discussion and possible action on the following:

1. Approval of the report of the July 6, 2016 HP/DRC meeting.
2. Request from Eric Yonke, representing the property owner, for design review to construct a parking area at **1408-10 College Avenue (Parcel ID 2408-32-1004-06)**.
3. Staff update regarding the nomination of historic districts to the State and National Register of Historic Places.
4. Adjourn.

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1. Approval of the report of the July 6, 2016 HP/DRC meeting.

**Motion by Commissioner Siebert to approve the report of the July 6, 2016 HP/DRC meeting; seconded by Alderperson Ryan.**

**Motion carried 5-0.**

2. Request from Eric Yonke, representing the property owner, for design review to construct a parking area at **1408-10 College Avenue (Parcel ID 2408-32-1004-06)**.

Associate Planner Kearns summarized the request by Eric Yonke, representing the property owner of 1408-10 College Avenue in their absence, for design review to construct a parking area. He reminded the commission that it had been an item from November of last year and that the garage on the site had been demolished without authorization and the design review request had followed. He went on to explain that the postponement was placed in order to allow the applicant to pursue options of whether to reconstruct the garage or have parking stalls, and the costs associated with those options, as well as the location. Mr. Kearns explained that the applicant had responded with a formal request to construct a parking area, noting that the three stalls would be on the rear of the home near the center of the site. Lastly, he summarized the recommended conditions where the applicant would have to submit an updated site plan detailing the preservation of the top left corner of the site, landscaping on the north side of the site, wheel stops, and other minor requirements.

Commissioner Woehr asked how many tenants there were, to which Eric Yonke (1418 College Avenue) stated there were four tenants.

Commissioner Woehr stated for clarification that he would have to meet traditional neighborhood setbacks, thus not being able to reconstruct the garage in its previous location as it was too close to the property lines.

Aldersperson Ryan expressed concern over the old and current report where there were differentiating directions from staff over the amount of stalls to be constructed; two stalls in the old report, to three stalls in the new report. He added that three stalls would stray away from the house being converted back to single family ownership.

Associate Planner Kearns stated that staff had not recommended approval, but rather recommendations if it was granted approval. He added that the commission had requested to see both options of pursuing a new garage or parking area, but that the applicant had only presented the current option, to which staff reviewed based on current ordinance requirements. Lastly, he noted that the property was licensed for three stalls.

Aldersperson Ryan asked how that had affected the structure when they were licensed for three stalls.

Associate Planner Kearns stated that they would have taken the two stall garage into consideration. He added that the stalls had most likely been based on the amount of units when the housing license was issued, thus grandfathering the property and allowing the three stalls to exist on the site. He added that the new request to change parking meant that the applicant had to conform to current standards and requirements.

Aldersperson Ryan expressed concern over setting a precedent for those wanting to tear down existing structures in order to construct something else entirely when the commission is tasked to preserve what exists on the property.

Chairperson Beveridge asked if there were any consequences to tearing down structures without authority, to which Aldersperson Ryan confirmed that there was.

Chairperson Beveridge asked if there was a penalty or requirement to replace the structure.

Commissioner Woehr mentioned that he had asked the same thing at the November hearing in which he was told double fees would be charged for the demolition. He strongly agreed that council begin enforcing ordinances as written.

Associate Planner Kearns explained that citations were not issued due to good faith with the applicant, as well as postponement due to the pending nature of his request.

Commissioner Woehr mentioned a similar situation where a structure had been torn down without authorization and had been almost completely rebuilt in a wrong location, to which Associate Planner Kearns stated that the difference was with being in a historic district.

Commissioner Woehr reiterated his concern with a structure being demolished without prior authorization within the city of Stevens Point.

Aldersperson Ryan agreed with the concern of people doing that with properties, but he did not believe that was the case in this instance, and mentioned that cases could be treated differently as they came forward. He also inquired about the original concern of having to navigate a thin driveway when there were four tenants, but only three stalls.

Eric Yonke confirmed that it had been an issue, but stated that there was at least one stall per apartment, and that any additional vehicles would have to be negotiated. He added that when the garage still existed, an option for the third stall was to create a gravel parking space east of the garage, but that green space would have been lost. He noted that the owner used to tell the tenant that they could not have a vehicle which had not been practical.

Commissioner Siebert asked why they did not park on the street, to which Mr. Yonke stated that the city did not allow for overnight parking and that parking had recently changed on the street.

Commissioner Siebert asked why it had changed, to which Mr. Kearns could only speculate that it may have been due to snow removal.

Aldersperson Ryan noted that the city was currently looking at overnight parking restrictions, to which Mr. Kearns confirmed that the Police Department was looking into it.

Commissioner Siebert referenced a section of paved driveway on the map, to which Mr. Yonke stated it belonged to 1408 College Avenue, adding that the owner's intention had been to make it easier for vehicles to turn around, but it had not been working as intended.

Commissioner Siebert asked whether there was enough room in that area for parking, to which Mr. Yonke stated there was only enough room for a car to make a turn and parking a vehicle there would block the driveway.

Chairperson Beveridge asked if that space was owned by the property, to which Mr. Yonke could not confirm, and suggested it might belong to the city.

Eric Yonke explained that he had approached three different companies for building a garage and three different companies for building a driveway. He stated that the garages that had been brought forward for consideration had been generic structures with no historic aesthetic. He added that they had looked into two versus three stall parking as there were several issues with moving forward with a garage. He also stated that the owner's intention was to keep the home as a rental property, adding that the three units dated back to the 1930s.

Commissioner Woehr asked whether a permit was required, to which Associate Planner Kearns confirmed it would be a commercial permit.

Aldersperson Ryan referenced trees on the submitted site plan and asked whether they were currently on the property, to which Mr. Yonke stated that besides one tree, the bushes and trees on the plan were part of the artist's rendition.

Aldersperson Ryan asked if they were planning on putting in the plantings, to which Mr. Yonke stated that while they were not in a rush to do so, they were open to improving the space.

Commissioner Debauche asked whether there was more or less concrete when comparing the old and new site plans, to which Mr. Yonke confirmed that there would be a little more concrete due to the proposed patio.

Aldersperson Ryan asked if they had to rip out part of the existing pad from the area, to which Mr. Yonke confirmed that they had, stating that the concrete near the house was in disarray and that they would like to replace it in order to maintain it better.

Aldersperson Ryan asked Mr. Kearns if the plantings could be added as a condition.

Associate Planner Kearns explained that the green space would be a requirement of the parking area in addition to having a green space on the north side of stalls, additional screening around the patio in the form of shrubs or fencing, and wheel stops for each stall. He noted that all plant species would have to be identified.

Commissioner Siebert asked for clarification on the wheel stops, to which Mr. Kearns explained that wheel stops or curbing would prevent vehicles from encroaching into the screening area or patio, as well as being a requirement within the zoning code.

Chairperson Beveridge asked if approving the request would have been an issue for anyone had there not been a garage, to which Aldersperson Ryan stated it was not.

Commissioner Siebert expressed concern over setting a precedent, to which Chairperson Beveridge agreed.

Aldersperson Ryan asked if the proposed driveway was to be concrete or asphalt, to which Mr. Yonke confirmed it would be concrete.

Chairperson Beveridge asked whether snow would be plowed onto the patio when clearing the driveway. Eric Yonke explained that he would prefer to do so instead of onto the green space where the grass might not survive due to the road salt. He added that the wheel stops would assist in creating a barrier for plowing.

Chairperson Beveridge asked what the potential penalties for tearing down a garage without a permit would be, to which Mr. Kearns estimated \$200-250 a day. Chairperson Beveridge asked if there had been discussion to double it, to which Mr. Kearns explained that failing to get a building permit would result in double fees per the ordinance.

Chairperson Beveridge asked if there were additional penalties for historic preservation. Associate Planner Kearns explained that there would be a citation per day until they had complied with requirements, reminding the commission that citations had been postponed for this matter. He further explained that if the construction of a garage or parking area had not been completed within adequate time given, they could then look into citing or charging fines.

Commissioner Woehr stated that according to the ordinance, anything approved by the commission had to be completed within a year. He reiterated his point in having council and staff look into citations in order to enforce the process of getting proper authorization or permits.

Commissioner Siebert asked whether any of the companies contacted had been interested in building an architecturally similar garage. Eric Yonke responded, stating that the companies had not responded seriously to the historic requirement, nor were they interested in working in a historic preservation district. The ones that did had presented generic structures, stating that is where their pricing began. At that point the owner did not want to pursue that option any further.

Chairperson Beveridge and Eric Yonke attempted to find the dimensions of the torn down garage, but could not find the actual dimensions other than it being 480 square feet.

Commissioner Woehr asked whether tenants parked in the garage, to which Mr. Yonke explained that it had sunk into the ground so much that the door would not open, adding that the neighboring building had been leaning on it, thus encroaching on the property.

Commissioner Debauche stated that if it were to be turned into a single family dwelling, the commission would most likely have someone wanting to raze the structure had it been preserved in order to build a two stall garage.

Commissioner Siebert stated that was the process when buying into a historic district, to which Commissioner Debauche mentioned that it might deter people.

Commissioner Woehr added that many people don't know they are buying into a historic district.

Chairperson Beveridge referenced an image of the garage within the handouts and suggested that the structure looked like a two stall garage. He also asked what the garage would be worth to the rent and suggested perhaps \$40-50, to which Mr. Yonke agreed with the estimate.

Chairperson Beveridge asked what kind of numbers he was getting for the garage, to which Mr. Yonke stated the numbers began at \$25,000 for a generic garage with no features.

Commissioner Debauche asked whether they would still be allowed to put in the extra pad for additional parking if they required a two stall garage.

Associate Planner Kearns explained that a two stall garage would be considered as two of the three stalls allowed on their license, but that an additional pad would still come before the commission due to it being in a historic district.

Commissioner Siebert asked whether the structure could constitute as a two stall garage if the side door was taken out and the space extended, to which Mr. Yonke confirmed that two vehicles could fit within the garage had they been looking at the footprint of the structure.

Commissioner Woehr stated that garage would have to be moved to the east by at least 4 feet as it was too close to the west property line. Associate Planner Kearns added that it would also have to be moved forward at least three feet away from the rear property line.

Commissioner Siebert asked if the setbacks could be waived to meet historic standards, to which Mr. Kearns confirmed that the variance for the traditional neighborhood overlay district would only apply to single family homes, not multi-family or commercial.

Chairperson Beveridge asked whether they were going to forget the teardown of the garage.

Aldersperson Ryan stated that it was a one-time thing, adding that if anyone else came forward after tearing down a structure without approval, he would not be lenient. Lastly, he commented on the willingness of the applicant to create a nice space where most would just place gravel down.

Commissioner Siebert asked whether anything would be seen from College Avenue, to which Mr. Yonke confirmed that none of it would be seen.

**Motion by Commissioner Woehr to approve the request from Eric Yonke, representing the property owner, for design review to construct a parking area at 1408-10 College Avenue (Parcel ID 2408-32-1004-06) with the following conditions:**

1. Wheel stops shall be installed in parking stalls and the turn around area to prevent encroachment onto the patio and greenspace.
2. The parking area shall be concrete to match the existing driveway.
3. A building permit shall be obtained and all pertinent ordinance requirements shall be met.
4. The applicant shall submit an updated parking plan to be reviewed and approved by the Community Development Department.
5. The patio shall be Brick or stone pavers.
6. One tree shall be planted on the northwest corner of the property.
7. Plantings shall be installed along the north and west side of the home as well as along the driveway and patio.
8. The Chairperson and designated agent shall have the authority to approve minor changes to the project and plan.

**Seconded by Aldersperson Ryan.**

**Motion passed 5-0.**

3. Staff update regarding the nomination of historic districts to the State and National Register of Historic Places.

Associate Planner Kearns reported that staff was seeking approval from the Plan Commission, Finance Committee, and Common Council to apply for the nomination of five additional historic districts as there were minimal costs that the city may have to pay. He also stated that they had received good feedback from the meeting that occurred in May with State Representative Joe DeRose regarding the nomination, adding that they were going to pursue the CLG grant in September and November in order to have a contractor for the following year.

Commissioner Woehr asked whether the intent was to pursue the districts or individual properties.

Associate Planner Kearns explained that they were currently looking at districts as they had a larger impact and encompassed 190 properties, noting that the preliminary bid from the contractor had exceeded \$25,000, the maximum grant award. He added that they may pursue individual properties after the district process, to which Commissioner Woehr stated that they may already have enough data for those properties. Associate Planner Kearns agreed that a lot of the primary work had been done on the individual properties, adding that Tim Heggland, the contractor who had done the survey, would likely be able to provide the best price for both district and individual property resources. Lastly, he added that the commission wanted to pursue nomination of districts first when it was first brought up as an item over a year ago.

Commissioner Woehr stated that at a previous meeting that had been held at the library and annex there had been a push for explaining the tax benefits of having an area designated historic, but the downside was that if people did not apply for those tax credits, then there was no control over the property and they could do what they wished. In addition, they were not told that if the city moved to make a local historic district after being under the national register, that they would then come under all guidelines. He expressed concern over suddenly having an overload of people coming to the commission with requests because they can't make changes to their home without prior approval.

Aldersperson Ryan stated a lot of those projects could be approved by staff, adding that there were a lot of positive benefits to being designated such as being able to protect the character of a neighborhood. Commissioner Woehr agreed that there were pros and cons.

Associate Planner Kearns explained that he had asked Joe DeRose whether it was wise to apply for local designation at the same time or after. He explained that Mr. DeRose stated that we would spark a lot of concerns from potential districts and those around the potential districts, adding that his recommendation had been not to pursue local designation unless it was sparked from the property owners from the nationally recognized districts. Mr. Kearns went on to state that he would recommend locally designating a district only if all the property owners were on board.

Chairperson Beveridge mentioned that Clark Street had been acquired due to having the owners come forward, adding that they had only dealt with a couple of their properties every year.

Commissioner Siebert asked what percentage of the property owners would have to come forward, to which Associate Planner Kearns stated that Mr. DeRose recommended a high majority, preferably almost every single property owner.

Commissioner Siebert asked whether the property owners would be contacted to see if they would be interested.

Associate Planner Kearns stated that local designation would not be pursued, and that they would only do so if the property owners came forward. He added that he had made the option aware of having an owner individually pursue nomination on a national and state historic register without being in a district.

Commissioner Siebert clarified his question in wanting to know if the property owners would be contacted in some way to inform them of the option of becoming locally designated.

Associate Planner Kearns stated that they would not identify local designation in order to avoid confusion as Mr. DeRose had suggested the focus stay on the state and national register as there would be no negative impacts on property owners, but that they would still have large tax credit benefits available. He added that once those credits were applied for however, they would have to follow the Secretary for Interior Standards. Going back to his initial point, Mr. Kearns explained that simply saying a property owner could pursue local designation could spark concern for people into thinking that the city may be the one leading the case for local designation. In turn, that could potentially scare owners into not wanting to be designated on the state and national register. Lastly, he recommended not pursuing local designation unless instituted by a large majority.

Aldersperson Ryan asked why the city would not want to pursue local designation in order to place protections on the homes when there were property owners doing renovations and essentially wiping away historic character from their homes.

Commissioner Woehr stated that it was like exercising eminent domain, to which Commissioner Siebert stated it was part of being in a historic district. Commissioner Woehr agreed, but also stated that those property owners were not currently in a historic district.

Aldersperson Ryan referenced Clark Street as an example where a majority of the owners came forward and wanted to be in it, to which Commissioner Woehr reaffirmed that it had been a majority.

Commissioner Debauche mentioned that he had been told by realtors that people either wanted to live in Plover or in the Downtown area of Stevens Point within a historic home, but that there were too few of them available.

Chairperson Beveridge suggested contacting the realtors and telling them to make it a requirement to disclose when it is historic, to which Commissioner Siebert asked if it was possible to send a letter out to new owners notifying them of the historic district and its requirements

Associate Planner Kearns suggested potentially partnering with the Assessor's office in automatically contacting owners when a property sold or ownership changed. He added that they had sent out letters to all property owners within the districts several times over the past few years.

Chairperson Beveridge stated that timing would be an issue, as the buying process was already emotional and if they were not told upfront, they most likely would never know about being in a historic district.

Associate Planner Kearns reported that McDonalds Title had appealed their request for the installation of brick, mentioning that it would go to council within the month. Lastly, he asked if a 4:00 PM meeting time would work better as 4:30 PM was in the middle of the hour.

**General agreement for a 4:00 PM meeting start.**

4. Adjourn.

**Meeting adjourned at 5:28 PM.**