

# Minutes

## HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD

City Commission Room, City Hall

1101 Poyntz Avenue

Monday, September 24, 2012

4:00 P.M.

**Members Present:** Dixie West, Vice-Chair, Dea Brokesh, Michael Krysko, Michael Dudek, Michael Mecseri, and Angie Danner.

**Members Absent:** Patrick Schaub, Chair.

**Others Present:** Kathy Dzewaltowski, Linda Glasgow, Tim Clark, and Susan Zoeller.

**Staff Present:** Lance Evans, Senior Planner; Kevin Credit, Planner.

1. Consider the minutes for the August 27, 2012 Historic Resources Board meeting

Brokesh noted typographic corrections to the minutes. Danner moved that the minutes be approved as amended. Dudek seconded the motion, which passed on a vote of 6-0.

2. TABLED 8-27: Historic Review – Registered Property

401 Yuma Street, Bethel AME Church: ADA-Compatible Wheelchair Ramp.

Credit explained the tabled item, noting that the Code Services Department had informed staff that the Bethel AME Church had withdrawn its building permit application for the ADA ramp and removed the structure from the property. The Board then discussed potential reasons for withdrawing the permit. Dzewaltowski explained that the cost of the ramp originally listed on the building permit was close to the trigger for state tax credits, and suggested that perhaps the Church could take that into account when considering future alternatives. West agreed, saying that there should be some kind of an educational component for the Church to come out of the meeting.

The Board then discussed the placement and color of the ramp. Evans said that the Church's representative had informed him that the front door was the only one wide enough to gain compliance. Glasgow mentioned that perhaps if the metal was not so shiny bright, it would blend in better. The Board then discussed historic tax credits and the potential for non-profit organizations to gain additional benefit. Mecseri mentioned that tax credits can take a long time. West asked Evans if the Board could move to have Schaub contact the Church and inform them of potential avenues for using tax credits to help fund construction of a new ramp. Evans explained that it would probably be more appropriate for staff to contact them

and make them aware of tax credit issues. Evans then indicated that he would contact the Church, give them Dzewaltowski's contact information, and the contact of someone at SHPO for assistance with tax credits.

3. Historic Review – Contributing Structure Within Downtown Manhattan Historic District  
428 Houston Street, Ball Clinic Building (Dan Winters, DDS): Sign Permit.

Credit presented the staff review for 428 Houston. Zoeller, representative of Thomas Sign Company, said that the sign will fit between the pillars above the entrance and form a ring. Clark added that he wanted the sign to have the proportion of a ring, and that the sign does not need the backing of a box. He explained that the sign is curved on the radius, and looks like an engraved ring, with the letters visible at night.

West then asked if there were comments from the Board. Mecseri asked about the color of the sign itself. Zoeller said that the letters of the sign will be the color of brushed aluminum, with a white acrylic face behind them and LED lighting inside. Clark added that the individual letters are attached to pins that extend out from the background, adding texture.

West then asked for public comment. Glasgow asked if the current tenant, Dr. Winter, outgrows his office and sells it to someone else, would the sign be able to be reused by a future tenant? Zoeller responded that the letters of the sign would have to change out, as well as the acrylic backing, potentially. West asked if there were any other comments. No one spoke.

Dudek then moved that the Board finds that the proposal meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and will not encroach upon, damage or destroy any listed historic property or its environs. Danner seconded the motion, which passed on a vote of 6-0.

4. Historic Review – Contributing Structure Within Downtown Manhattan Historic District  
322 Houston Street, Barber Building (CivicPlus): Sign Permit.

Credit presented the staff review for 322 Houston. The Board discussed the history of the metal siding on the eastern façade of the building. West said that according to the sign guide provided by SHPO, there aren't supposed to be any plastic box signs, but that the destruction of the original east facade due to the metal siding probably means that the sign cannot damage the building. Brokesh added that the sign at Salon Brands was OK even though it was backlit. West said that there are no character-defining features left on that side of the building, so the Board should probably approve the sign because it is not obscuring any character-defining features. Danner said that the guidance given to the Board from SHPO at the previous training session seems to contradict the printed SHPO guidelines on signs.

West then opened the meeting to public comment. Zoeller explained that this sign was up before CivicPlus placed their logo on it, and that it was an existing cabinet sign when the previous tenant, a furniture store, installed the sign. Glasgow asked if the face of the sign was made of plastic. Zoeller replied that the sign was indeed plastic on the face with an aluminum cabinet. She added that even channel letters will be made of plastic. Glasgow said that it is not fair to this Board to have contradictory information from SHPO, and she urged the Board to do the right thing even if they believe that they are going to be overturned. Dudek said that if they were putting it on the Houston Street façade, he would be much more concerned. Krysko agreed and said that if we were to pick a sign to make a stand on, this is not the right example.

Dzewaltowski then said that while she understands the point that this sign is not damaging anything important on the existing facade, it could still be inappropriate for a new infill building. She added that a sign could still have a negative impact on the district as a whole without damaging a specific building's character-defining features. Krysko said that SHPO's very specific comments on that would be that there is no way a sign could damage the environs. Glasgow then added that she thinks the issue is that there are no design guidelines, but that if the City had guidelines, they could be more specific than the environs guidelines. She then added that she urges the Board to adopt design guidelines. The Board then discussed past drafts of design guidelines and the history of implementation attempts.

Brokesh then said that she recalled some of SHPO's comments last month, based on images from the 1950s downtown, that historically all different types of signs were present, small, large, and lit. Dudek added that there is nothing wrong with diversity, size, or color of signs. The Board then revisited the discussion of the building's metal siding, and when it was installed.

Dudek then moved that the Board finds that the proposal meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and will not encroach upon, damage or destroy any listed historic property or its environs. Krysko seconded the motion, which passed on a vote of 6-0.

5. Historic Review – Environs

930 Poyntz Avenue (First Lutheran Church): Conditional Use Permit (*within the environs of: Fitz House, Women's Club House*).

Credit presented the staff review for 930 Poyntz. Brokesh asked if the daycare was planned to extend to the east side of the church, on the vacant lot. Mecseri then said that he would recuse himself from the discussion, since his daughter attends to the preschool. West said that, as the owner of the Fitz House, she can personally testify that twenty-five 1-6 year olds will not impact the historic nature of my property. Dzewaltowski said that she thought West might have mentioned the traffic or other considerations. Brokesh added that her question

would be if the neighbors would have any problems with the proposed use. The Board discussed the purview of their review, which does not include zoning considerations. West then asked if there were any additional comments. No one spoke.

Brokesh then moved that the Board finds that the proposal meets the *Standards and Guidelines for Evaluating the Effect of Projects on Environs* and will not encroach upon, damage or destroy any listed historic property or its environs. Dudek seconded the motion, which passed on a vote of 5-0 with one abstention (Michael Mecseri).

#### 6. Review 8-27 SHPO Training Session

Credit explained that this item was meant to generate a discussion of the previous SHPO training among the Board members, as well as to inform Mecseri, who had not attended the meeting. Brokesh asked about the meaning of the final bullet point on the “Notes from SHPO CLG Training: 8/27” handout, as to what the term “blindness” meant? Credit explained that the essence of that point was that the Board could acknowledge other considerations, such as economics, in an environs review; it could not make a decision based on those factors. West then asked about the first three bullet points of the handout, as to the benefit of local historic designation and the different levels of protection between the State/National Register and the local register. Credit explained that although the common perception is that State and National Register listing is more stringent than local designation, the opposite is actually true: local preservation ordinances are able to be specifically tailored to the unique features of a given community. He then described the features of the current Manhattan historic preservation ordinance, explaining that design guidelines are currently part of a property’s nomination to the Manhattan Register of Historic Places; however, only one property has ever been listed to the Manhattan register, the Coons House.

The Board then discussed the possibility of adopting design guidelines for the downtown, and the feasibility of involving current historic property owners. Evans then explained that this discussion really involved two items – the first issue to be decided would be whether or not the Board will be given the responsibility to perform all aspects of state law review, a duty currently performed by SHPO. After the last meeting, SHPO had sent a letter to the City to begin the discussion of whether or not SHPO would perform all state law reviews, or whether they would move to the City. Evans then added that the decision would have to be made by the City Commission, and it would be at least December before a work session is scheduled. The second issue, once the Commission had decided whether or not the City would take over state law review responsibilities, would be how to proceed with nominating more properties to the local register and/or adopting design guidelines, especially for the downtown area. The Board then discussed potential strategies for presenting information on the benefits of state law review and design guidelines, future meetings with important stakeholder such as Downtown Manhattan Incorporated, and how to begin to focus on the

other important duties of the Board, outlined in the ordinance, such as education and outreach.

West then asked how the Board might encourage people to apply for local historic designation. The Board then discussed the feasibility of drafting letters and sending them to historic property owners, as well as ways to frame the benefits of local designation. Mecseri asked whether the Board could work to bring design guidelines to the forefront. Credit explained that under the current historic preservation ordinance, members of the Board could develop nominations to the local historic register that would include design guidelines for each property or district. Evans then explained that the issue of the Board taking over state law review would probably have to be resolved before design guidelines would become the focus of the Board's discussions, although it could depend on how the Board wanted to proceed.

The Board then shifted discussion to the process of adopting design guidelines. The Board discussed the fact that design guidelines had been developed for the North and South end redevelopment areas, but never adopted for the historic downtown. West suggested that the Board read the historic preservation ordinance before the next meeting, and also become acquainted with the other functions of the Board. Brokesh mentioned that she would like to see the Board help to develop a list of pros for local designation. West said that she wanted to think about ways to inform public about getting on local register. She also said that setting up a meeting to explain benefits of being on local register to the public would probably be the best way to inform historic property owners about local designation, perhaps in the City Commission chambers. Dzewaltowski added that the Board could use In Touch to notify members of the public of the meeting, and also that Schaub could write an editorial letter to the Manhattan Mercury explaining the local ordinance and the benefits of designation. The Board then discussed the possibility of using SHPO grant money to prepare local register nominations.

#### 7. Code Violation Report

None.

#### 8. Administrative Review Summary

- A. 1205 Windsong Lane: Interior Remodel/Building Addition (*within the environs of: Samuel D. Houston House*).
- B. 907 Leavenworth Street: Interior Remodel/Building Addition (*within the environs of: Ulrich House, Women's Club House*).

Credit provided an overview of the administrative reviews conducted by staff for the month of September.

9. Announcements and Updates

- A. 1446 Laramie Appeal Hearing changed to October 2, 2012
- B. Community House discussion – scheduling.

Evans discussed the change in schedule for the 1446 Laramie Appeal Hearing. The Board discussed the fact that the Board would not be represented officially at the hearing, but that the members could speak as individual citizens. Brokesh said that she had seen a picture which showed the historical pedestrian connection between campus and the Laramie neighborhood, and discussed the feasibility of obtaining a copy of the picture to bring to the hearing. Glasgow expressed her desire to have a neutral party as a part of the hearing process to testify as to the structural condition of the building. Dzewaltowski mentioned that the purpose of the hearing was technically to ascertain whether the applicant needed relief from the regulations due to economic hardship, not to review the historic features of the neighborhood, so the benefit of discussing those aspects may be limited.

Credit then discussed a request received from Bonnie Lynn-Sherow to do a presentation on the history of the Community House, as well as a discussion about its potential future uses. He also said that the director of Parks and Recreation, Curt Loupe, would want to be present at the meeting at which this discussion occurred, so that a useful discussion could take place. West said that it sounded good and asked if it would be possible to put it on the agenda for next time. Credit said yes.

10. Upcoming Meetings:

- Monday, October 22, 2012

11. Adjourn.