

Minutes
HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD
City Commission Room, City Hall
1101 Poyntz Avenue
Monday, May 20, 2019
4:00 p.m.

Members Present: Eileen Meyer; Kevin West; Jana Fallin; Cameron Tross; and Ann Kosch.

Members Absent: Craig Hager, Vice Chair.

Staff Present: Jason Hilgers, Deputy City Manager; Ben Chmiel, Planner; and John Adam, Sr. Planner.

Others Present: Ben Burton; Gavin Schmidt; Linda Glasgow; and Mel Borst.

1. Meeting Opening

Neither a chair or vice-chair member was present to call the meeting to order. As per the by-laws West moved to elect Meyer as acting chair for the meeting. Kush seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Meyer called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm with a quorum. She explained the public comment policy and opened the floor for public comments. There were no public comments.

Fallin moved to approve the April 22, 2019 meeting minutes. West seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

2. Community House Proposal.

Hilgers updated the board on the current progress of the request for proposals (RFP) to repurpose the Community House. He explained that during the three month time period, the selection committee received one proposal by Ben Burton, a local developer, would purchase and renovate the building. Renovations would abide by a restrictive covenant that included remaining on the National and State register and adhering to applicable preservation law concerning maintenance and renovation of the structure. He explained the covenant would be enforceable by the City of Manhattan. Hilgers noted the building would be sold for \$1.00 and the city would grant \$500,000 to the developer. He further explained that transferring the property to a private developer for rehabilitation would relieve the City of investing \$2-3 million for renovations and maintenance while producing revenue for the city via

employment opportunities and taxes, estimated to generate \$40,000-\$50,000 annually.

Tross asked whether the timeline presented was in relationship to the grant schedule, which Hilgers said it was not but the timeline ensured progress would be made in a timely fashion. West was concerned with the sale of the building for a single dollar plus the \$500,000 grant and asked for clarification. Hilgers explained that the City views the building as a financial burden since it does not produce any revenue and is expensive to maintain. The City would rather sell the building for a dollar and generate \$40,000 or more in revenue while maintaining the historical significance and renovating the building. Hilgers clarified that only the building, not the parking lot, will be sold. As it currently stands, the building is not ADA accessible and the current facilities are too small to offer adequate programs in. Fallin asked how the developer planned to develop while maintaining the historical significance and architecture of the building, noting she would prefer the redevelopment to include annotation of history of the building. Meyer asked for assurance that the developer had the money to carry out the redevelopment. Hilgers noted that the City would release half of the \$500,000 grant at closing and the other half at completion.

Burton presented preliminary plans to the board which included subdivision of the basement, turning it into individual office spaces. He explained how the exterior design, fireplace, doors, windows, plaster, front stairway and chamfered columns would be preserved. The top floor of the building would be converted into dwelling units. Other exterior features would be cleaned up and preserved. Burton explained how the gymnasium as a use was not designated as specifically historic and the space could be modified to a certain extent. His proposal showed the gym space repurposed as a multi-functional open space. Overall, the redeveloped building would include ten private office spaces, a common conference room, six residential one-bedroom lofts, and a multi-functional space.

Kosch noted a difference in the Corporation noted in the draft agreement and what was presented. Burton explained that it would be Switchgrass would be the developer, but they would eventually shift to an LLC including multiple partners. Kosch asked how fluid the LLC would be in terms of its members. Burton said it would be difficult to predict, but he would be open to other investors as the project progressed.

Kosch asked about the value of the Tax Credits in the project. Schmidt explained that the State Tax Credit would be worth 25% of qualified expenses (about \$400,000) while the Federal Tax Credit was equal to 20%. Schmidt estimated the project cost

after the City grant and tax credits to be about \$1.25 million from the \$2.75 million without those incentives.

Tross posed questions about accessibility and the outcome of the stage in the building. Burton said they currently have not come up with a final decision on what to do with it, though it could be used for another residential space or utilized for the multi-functional space. He added he would like to repair the lift system to allow ADA accessibility to the garden level and current gymnasium areas. Burton acknowledged incorporating more interpretive historical elements in response to Fallin's previous comments.

Kosch noted there were a lot of steps to the process and that it would be helpful to have multiple informal reviews during development of the final design in order to address issues before they were finalized. Tross explained that architects tend to stay in touch with the State during these kinds of projects to avoid such issues. Burton explained that they hadn't selected an architect, but they've worked with Anderson-Knight in the past.

Meyer opened the floor for public comment. Glasgow noted the importance of understanding the history of the building and offered to share newspaper articles relating to the history of the Community House with the Board. She also requested any photos from the Riley County Historical Society to be credited properly.

Tross emphasized that the project is preliminary and answering questions is complicated with potential changes to the design. Chmiel mentioned the final proposal would come back to the board for review and approval before a building permit could be issued.

Borst asked about the use of the public parking spaces around the building as to whether there would be any changes or impact on parking by the building. Chmiel explained that zoning downtown required no parking for the building.

Kosch said she would appreciate the developer to connect with Glasgow to educate the developer and related parties on the history of the building.

3. Minor Review Updates

Chmiel presented a sign permit issued at 205 S. 4th St. (the Sears Building) to include new signage above the entrances of the building on the west façade. The board had no questions.

4. Updates and Announcements

Chmiel announced the Manhattan YMCA/St. Mary's Hospital at 1100 Fremont Street was listed on the State register on May 4, 2019.

Chmiel also announced that the City was awarded the \$29,500 HPF grant from the State to conduct a historic survey of Aggieville and that the Commission would accept the funds on May 28th. Tross asked if the survey process could be expedited. Chmiel said there is a fairly stringent procedure that would limit how fast the project could be completed, but that the review of consultants responding to the RFP could take their timeline into consideration.

5. Adjournment

Meyer adjourned the meeting at 5:20 pm.