

Minutes
HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD
City Commission Room, City Hall
1101 Poyntz Avenue
Monday, February 24, 2020
4:00 p.m.

Members Present: Kevin West, Chair; Eileen Meyer, Vice-chair; Ann Kosch; Tom Hanson, Renee Erickson, Jana Fallin, and Cameron Tross.

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Ben Chmiel, Planner; John Adam, Senior Planner

Public Present: Linda Glasgow, Riley County Historical Museum

1. MEETING OPENING

West called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Staff performed rollcall and confirmed a quorum. West opened the floor to public comments: there were none.

In review of the January minutes, Erickson requested the language for the “visible archival storage units sealed with humidity control and lighting” to describe the UPD CIP item could be added to the minutes. Chmiel said he would add the language.

Fallin moved to approve the January 27, 2020 minutes as amended. Hanson seconded. Motion carried 6–0–1, with West abstaining.

2. 2021-2025 CIP REQUESTS

Chmiel presented the 2021-2025 CIP requests and reaffirmed he would change the language of the display case to “visible archival storage units sealed with humidity controls and lighting”. Kosch suggested the Board add CIP projects to the 2024-25 years. The Board agreed that they should add the Ward 6 and Westwood Survey to the CIP 2024 year and Lee Elementary neighborhood to year 2025. While acknowledging time limitations, Kosch recommended the Board review the list of historical properties owned by the City more often, which could be used to produce future CIP requests.

West opened the floor for public comment: there were none.

Tross moved the Board recommend approval of the 2021-2025 CIP requests with modifications to projects in year 2024-25 to include Ward 6 and Westwood for year 2024 and Lee Elementary neighborhood for year 2025. Kosch seconded. Motion carried 7–0–0.

3. HRB BYLAWS

Chmiel presented the proposed amendments to the Historical Resources Board bylaws. Items discussed were incorporation of the public comment policy, clarified term limits, and resident requirements. Chmiel said in order to modify language for the term limits and residency requirement, the Board would have to modify the ordinance that established the Historical Resources Board. He said it could be done but would be a lengthier process. Tross asked how the HRB compares to other Boards in regard to term limits. Chmiel said some Boards have term limits

while others do not and likewise, some Boards also have residency requirements, while others do not. Kosch said she was interested how ownership could be clarified to allow owners or representatives of a business owner to sit on the Board. Kosch recommended leaving the term limits and residency requirements until a future date. West agreed that those are currently non-issues but would like to get the bylaws adjusted. Kosch noted a grammatical error. Kosch motioned for the Board to approve the public comment policy portion of the bylaws and to indefinitely table discussion on term limits and residency requirements. Hanson seconded. Motion carried 7–0–0.

4. RILEY COUNTY FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH ACQUISITION

Chmiel recapped the Board's discussion at the previous meeting on the County's potential plan to acquire the First Christian Church Building in order to demolish it with the intent of constructing a parking lot. Chmiel said he had a conversation with the County Counselor who could not confirm the ultimate plans for disposal of the property, but did indicate the County's intention of drawing up a contract for the acquisition. Chmiel suggested the Board could hold a vote of resolution to state their concerns about the situation.

Fallin said she believed it would look like a missing tooth from the perspective of Poyntz. She also believed the lot would be too small to yield any significant number of spaces. Tross concurred that there is a rhythm to building masses downtown and that parking lots really disrupt that rhythm and hamper development. He was against such a large property so close to Poyntz being converted to surface parking. He further asserted there were many lots downtown empty throughout the day which could be redeveloped. Fallin asked where the historic district was in relation to the church property. Chmiel confirmed it was bordering, but just outside the district. Kosch said she could imagine the County wanting the building for more office space. She also said she'd never had issues finding parking around the building when accessing the facilities. Erickson pointed out all the barren environment already used for parking in the area. She felt removing historic buildings to perpetuate that environment would be detrimental to downtown. West speculated if the county also had plans to redevelop their current office space. Chmiel wasn't aware of any plans to do so. Tross asked about existing parking lots immediately adjacent to city property. Chmiel pointed out the large municipal lot across the street was owned by the City, and the County owned the lot on the corner across from that, as well as behind the courthouse. He also pointed out the large availability of street parking in the area. West asked if there were any recourse for county property proposals within a historic district. Chmiel said the City had no jurisdiction since they do not issue building permits to the county. Fallin noted the church expected to save the stain glass windows. Tross said he would find a replacement structure such as an office building or a parking garage more acceptable than just a parking lot. Fallin suggested the Board should go on record as being against a proposal to demolish the building for a parking lot. Erickson concurred. Chmiel noted that the building would be eligible for tax credits for rehab or repurposing were the building listed or the district boundary amended to include it. He noted the County could sell the tax credits to tax-paying entities.

West asked for public comment on the proposal: there were none.

Tross sympathized with the County's needs for parking, but thought a parking garage would be a better solution. Erikson pointed out the city-owned lot next to the Community House could be more utilized and there was a usually empty lot next to the old Ray's Apple Market. Tross re-emphasized that he was not necessarily against the church demolition, but did not want to see a flat, barren environment perpetuated downtown. Erickson pointed out that their existing lot could be converted to a garage if a garage were an option. West affirmed the Board's position against the demolition of the church for construction of a flat parking lot.

Fallin moved to resolve that the Board stand opposed to the demolition of the church building and replacing it with a parking lot. Meyer seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

5. MINOR REVIEW UPDATES

Chmiel presented a permit for a wall sign issued to Catholic Charities at 222 South 4th Street. There were no comments.

6. UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chmiel noted that the Pioneer Log Cabin in City Park was successfully listed on the National Register of historic places. Linda Glasgow wanted to inform the Board that there would be an advocacy event on March 4. Friends of Historical Preservation would begin at 9:00am at the State House and May 14 would be the Historic Summit at the Manhattan Public Library. The theme would be Historic farmsteads of Riley County.

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no future agenda items to discuss.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 5:05pm. The next meeting would be held Monday, March 23, 2020.