

**Minutes**  
**HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD**  
City Commission Room, City Hall  
1101 Poyntz Avenue  
Monday, February 22, 2021  
4:00 p.m.

<b>Member</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Kevin West, Chair	X	
Eileen Meyer, Vice-Chair	X	
Jana Fallin (arrived 4:06pm)	X	
Tom Hanson	X	
Troy Henningson	X	
Tanner James	X	
Bethany Pingel	X	

**Staff Present:** Ben Chmiel, Planner.

**Public Present:** 6

**1. MEETING OPENING**

West called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. Staff performed roll call and confirmed a quorum. There were no comments from the public unrelated to items on the agenda. Hanson moved to approve the minutes from the February 8, 2021 special meeting. Henningson seconded. Motion carried 5-0-1.

**2. MAJOR REVIEW: 120 N. 4TH STREET (COMMUNITY HOUSE) AMENDMENT**

Chmiel presented the request to amend an earlier approved request for the rehabilitation and alteration of the interior of the Community House. Chmiel briefly described the history of the building and its physical changes over time. The proposed amendment was to alter the design of the main floor open space for offices, classroom space, and a bathroom. The space was historically a gym, ballroom, and community space. The added office space would be effectively two stories with the second floor being a mezzanine that did not connect with the current ceiling made of primarily metal and transparent glass. Chmiel explained how the structure only made contact with the eastern wall while the north and south walls were unobstructed. He described how the amendment addressed the Secretary of the Interior Standards, specifically noting how standards 1, 2, & 9 were the most relevant and satisfied by the proposal. Staff recommended approval of the amendment.

Applicant Ben Burton (2017 Vanesta PL, Ste. 110) presented more on the proposed design. Burton also shared a photo of the property with the original entrance and door that would be mimicked with a new installation in the near future. Burton stated the proposed design had a significantly reduced footprint from a previously requested amendment to allow for an additional apartment, denied by HRB. The new bathrooms and office space would utilize about 26 percent of the existing floor space. Burton further explained how the windows that would have been blocked in the previous design are now accessible in the open space. Burton gave several examples of similar successful installations in historic buildings in the past. Burton stated that the tenant of the space would be Turbine Training Center, a company that

trains pilots, which would use the office space for its employees and classroom space for training. He said they owned three simulators which are completely removable and fall within the capacity of the structure to support their weight.

Project Historic Consultant, Brenda Spencer (10150 Onaga Rd, Wamego) stated the owners of the property consulted the state historical society on the project and submitted plans for a preliminary review with the National Park Service in 2019, noting the current design was based on their recommendations. She also stated the only way for this project to be financially successful was with the ability to secure state and federal historic tax credits. Spencer continued to define rehabilitation and pointed out that some amount of change to a property is expected with rehabilitation projects and this change was needed to keep buildings such as this one well used and maintained. She stated the proposed additions preserved the historic elements of the building while ensuring the property would continue to be usable and relevant. She reiterated the design allows visibility through the new structure and mobility around the structure so as to maintain visibility of the historic size of the space.

West opened the floor for public comment.

Kathy Dzewaltowski, 100 S. Delaware Ave advised the board to look at this project on its own merit and not in comparison to the previous application. She stated she was happy that this proposed project would not use a significant amount of floor space and that the north and south walls were still open. She stated the use of glass was also beneficial for providing a perception of open space. She expressed concerns about the partial height walls potentially creating a requirement that more floor space be used, and the potential for cobwebs and dust buildup between the ceiling of the mezzanine and the ceiling of the community space. Dzewaltowski also expressed concern about potential access issues for handicapped individuals. Finally, she expressed concern about whether the rehabilitation could potentially result in the removal of the building from the historic registry.

Fallin expressed that she was happy to move forward with this project, but would also encourage the community space still be publicly available and usable as an event space. Burton stated that there is a lounge in the building that could be used for small gatherings and if community groups wanted to utilize/reserve the space they can reach out and discuss use of that space. Meyer echoed Fallin's comment.

James asked if the tenant approved of the glass walls. Burton stated they did approve of the glass walls and have been part of the design process.

West stated that he believes this proposal is a large improvement over the previous one and is a good balance of utilizing the space effectively and preserving the historical characteristics of the property.

Pingel recognized the willingness of the applicant to take feedback from the community and HRB and stated that she liked the direction the project was heading.

Meyer moved finds that the proposal met the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as reviewed in accordance with K.S.A. 75-2724 and would not damage or destroy any historic property included in the national register of historic places or the state register of historic places. Fallin seconded. Motion carried 7-0-0.

### **3. 2022-2026 CIP REQUESTS**

Chmiel stated the Board's CIP requests needed to be formalized at the meeting to take to the City Commission.

West stated the current prioritization of projects were based on a previous discussion in which the main determining factor for prioritization was the areas that were developing the most rapidly. West encourage discussion about whether the projects were still in the correct order of prioritization. Members of HRB generally agreed to move the West City Park Historic Resources Survey up in prioritization due to the relative potential for redevelopment in the area.

Pingel moved to accept the CIP recommendations with the exception of moving the West City Park project to the second spot on the prioritization list. Hanson seconded. Motion carried 7-0-0.

#### **4. WORK SESSION**

Chmiel stated that the City was approached by Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) to put up historic markers and interpretive signage on Linear Trail. Chmiel also stated that in conducting research about guidelines for signage, he found draft guidelines created by HRB from 2008, but it did not seem the HRB ever formally adopted the guidelines.

West asked if signage guidelines would have to go to the City Commission for approval. Chmiel did not believe they would need to be approved by the Commission. Chmiel also stated if signage guidelines were adopted by HRB, signage applications would likely go to HRB for approval and that he was hoping for an informal approval of the current signage request from DAR.

Melanie Horton, representative from DAR, presented some additional information about the proposed signage. Much of the interpretive language on the signage is from working with a doctor of anthropology at Kansas State University, the Discovery Center, and other local organizations. She stated the signage follows examples from around town and at the Discovery Center as to not be out of place.

The members of HRB were in general support of allowing the signage to move forward.

Chmiel stated the proposed signage did not conform to the draft sign regulations that were found but the signage did have precedent with other signage around town, which seemed more important. West stated that it would be beneficial to discuss the regulations further as a future agenda item.

#### **5. UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chmiel explained how the City had been in discussions with the Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance (MRCPA) to collaborate on future Historic Preservation Fund grants in terms of funding and management of the grants. West asked if separate grant requests came from both the City and MRCPA would there be the potential to do two projects in a year. Chmiel stated that it would be possible but unlikely as grant funding is typically intentionally distributed to different communities

#### **6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

West noted further discussion of signage standards should occur at a future meeting.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

West adjourned the meeting at 5:07 pm. The next meeting would be held March 22, 2021 in City Hall.