

Community Development Department

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MINUTES HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION JULY 14, 2021 at 6:00 pm CITY HALL TRAINING ROOM

HPC Members Present: Jayne Hoffman, Heidi Heinze, Mark Anderson, Pam Friede, Julie Huebel, Ben Plunkett

HPC Members Absent: Denton Anderson

Staff Present: Brandt Johnson

Others Present: Ben Fochs

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting convened at 6:03 p.m.

HPC MEMBER VOLUNTEER HOUR REPORT

3 hours – Hoffman assisted with research towards the property at 700 S. Main.

1 hour – Plunkett met with Ben Fochs to get community input on the power plant.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 9, 2021

M/Hoffman, S/Plunkett – motion carried 6-0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 16, 2021

Heinze requested revisions to the minutes from the June 16, 2021 meeting.

The first requested revision was on page 1, first paragraph under the power plant discussion item, “Simply stated, the building is not safe for people to be in.” to be changed to “Access is restricted to qualified personnel.”

The second requested revision was on page 1, second paragraph under the power plant discussion item, “this is direction from the City Administrator and has not been written down.” to be changed to “this is direction from the City Administrator and is not official policy.”

The third requested revision was on page 2, fourth paragraph under the power plant discussion item, “The intent of the MOU was to have avoid confrontation between HPC and City Council.” This sentence was requested to be taken out. The group discussed if this was indeed said or conveyed by Scot at the meeting that night. It was determined that Scot did not say or meant to convey it in this manner as the minutes reflected.

M/Friede, S/M. Anderson – motion carried 6-0

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ben Fochs said it is a little disturbing that the City is spending money to put art murals on the old power plant and spending money on the substation panels. The utility has not spent money on removing trash from the building and that the new building has no future use on the site.

Heinze talked about their logo being used on apparel and what their budget for apparel was.

The group wanted to thank Brandy Howe for her time and service with the Historic Preservation Commission

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Power Plant

Heinze asked the group if they wanted to go with landmarking the power plant or amend the MOU to take out the landmarking language. Maybe there is a desire to modify the MOU to essentially take out the 2nd page of the MOU which discusses the landmarking of the power plant. Friede said she wants to keep the landmarking language in the draft MOU. Huebel asked if the power plant qualifies for the landmarking and Heinze explained that it does and went over the qualifications and requirements for a building to be nominated for landmarking.

Hoffman wanted to clarify what Scot said at the June 16, 2021 meeting and if the group goes through with a landmark nomination then an MOU would not be done which Heinze said was correct. Huebel said she recalled that there were some suggestions to include in the MOU from Scot that were interesting.

Mark Anderson said that having an MOU with the City would mean that the HPC would be more involved in the process if the City decided to do something with the power plant. The MOU could also address other issues that may come up and would again provide the HPC a spot at the table to discuss the future of the power plant.

Plunkett asked what the value of the power plant would be if the HPC garnered support from other groups to see if it could be landmarked. Plunkett also mentioned that it might be helpful to have conversations with what the goals might be from having an MOU, what to do with the site as there might be some time for the group to set a vision for the site to meet the goals expressed. It may be helpful for the group to have a larger discussion about what that site might look like 10-20 years down the road and the impact it could have on the City as a whole.

Brandt Johnson relayed to the group that he was told by Amy Peterson that they were received two inquiries to redevelop the power plant site and that those developers were turned down because of staffing issues in the Community Development department. The group had a conversation about how future inquiries for the property could be known to the commission. Plunkett said that he could talk to Scot at his next one on one meeting about it.

The group discussed about revamping and discussing the MOU for the next meeting in Aug.

2. WHS CLG Grant

Heinze said the group is going to ask Jason to come to River Falls. Brandt will check to see if they can pay him to come out since they feel it is important for him to come up instead of being here virtually.

3. The Glen interpretive sign

Mark Anderson showed the group potential designs of the interpretive sign.

The group talked about bringing discussion of this to the park advisory board at their next meeting.

CALENDAR

Next Historic Preservation Commission meeting Aug. 11, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

Heinze called for adjournment at approximately 7:18 P.M.