

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Minutes
February 23, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: Alderman Jan Michalski, Don Jensen, Sue Dyke O'Day,
Merike Phillips and Tom Schleif

STAFF PRESENT: Mike Maki and Jeffrey B. Labahn

Other present included: Alderman Haugaard and Martha Swartz

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Don Jensen and roll was taken.

A motion was made by Alderman Michalski and seconded by Ms. Phillips to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2011 meeting as written. The motion passed unanimously. (Ayes 5; Nays 0)

1. Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

A motion was made by Alderman Michalski and seconded by Ms. Phillips to nominate Don Jensen for Chairperson. Nominations were closed. The motion passed unanimously. (Ayes 5; Nays 0)

A motion was made by Ms. Phillips and seconded by Ms. O'Day to nominate Tom Schleif for Vice-Chairperson. Nominations were closed. The motion passed unanimously. (Ayes 5; Nays 0)

2. Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition of Elks Club at 5706 Eighth Avenue. (District #2 - formerly District #2) PUBLIC HEARING

Mike Maki, Community Development Specialist showed a powerpoint presentation and gave information to inform the public of the present condition of the Elks Club. At this time, Staff recommends deferral on the Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the building.

Public hearing opened.

Jennifer Heim, 6110 3rd Avenue, supports the deferral of the demolition. An empty lot is worse than an empty building. Ms. Heim suggests the City look into adapted re-use of the property.

Mayor Bosman explained that the City has been offered some funding and is now in the position to proceed toward demolition of the building. The condition of this building has drastically deteriorated over the years. These funds are available now and may not be available in 1 or 2 years. Mayor Bosman noted that it will take a lot of money just to make the building weather-tight, furthermore to do the repairs. The condition of this building has affected the TID Districts. People continue to break into the building, do damage and there has been a fire there. Mayor Bosman said he does support saving buildings, but realistically this one is beyond saving.

John Fox, 4803 7th Avenue, supports the deferral of the demolition. Mr. Fox suggests that the City should acquire the property and then sell it with some incentives. The

damage to the building can be fixed. Mr. Fox said the City has not hired a structural engineer to deem the building unsafe. The City should initiate an RFP.

Kristine Roemer, 420 57th Street #311, supports the deferral of the demolition. Ms. Roemer has a Petition with 80 signatures of people who want to save the Elks Club building. This building should be renovated and it could be the anchor of the downtown. The demolition should at least wait until the review of the Downtown Plan. Ms. Roemer talked with Nick from the Lakota Group and he supports the saving of this building. We need time to organize our resources and find ways to utilize the building. Ms. Roemer suggested fixing the roof and boarding the windows. Then form an interest citizens group to look at ways to save the building. This could be a culinary school.

John Christensen, 5607 13th Avenue, owner of the building, does not like the public taking "jabs" at the administration. The Christensen family purchased the building in 1991 and concentrated their business on banquets and weddings. They had then leased the building to another party who defaulted on the lease. After that time, the structure has deteriorated. Mayor Bosman does not want to demolish this building, but with the drastic deterioration, it does not make financial sense to do the repairs. Mr. Christensen said that the family needs a final date, they don't want to prolong this matter any more. Mr. Christensen said he is willing to compromise and wait 120 days, but then move forward and begin the demolition.

Ray Forgianni, 8731 45th Avenue, supports the deferral of the demolition until the Downtown Plan is completed. This will allow time for an outside consultant to review the situation.

Lou Rugani, 3526 29th Avenue, supports the deferral of the demolition and the process of an RFP to find ideas to save the building.

Jessica Shauman, 6405 96th Avenue, supports the deferral of the demolition. Ms. Shauman is an event planner and would like to try to possibly utilize this building.

Cheryl Johnston, 6843 45th Avenue, supports the deferral of the demolition. The City should pool their resources. This building could be an outreach center that would be open to the community.

Public hearing closed.

Mr. Maki said that Staff is recommending a 60 day deferral to allow time for a Developer to come forward with and offer and a business plan. Mr. Maki said there have been other suggestions brought forward tonight, but it is very hard to attract a developer in this economic climate. There are numerous other buildings in the downtown area that also need attention before they become more deteriorated and these buildings are more affordable.

Mr. Jensen said just to clarify, Staff is recommending that we defer action tonight. Mr. Maki said yes, but the Mayor is asking that the Commission vote on the request to raze the building tonight.

Alderman Michalski said is that correct, there has been no structural analysis done? Mr. Maki said no analysis was done and there is not one scheduled. There is no funding. Alderman Michalski asked if there are any liens or tax delinquencies that the City may forgive? Jeffrey B. Labahn, Director, said there are a number of encumbrances on the

property. Some are private and some are owed to the County, in addition to those owed to the City.

A motion was made by Alderman Michalski and seconded by Ms. O'Day to defer the demolition of the building for 120 days.

Ms. Phillips said there were many important points made here tonight. Ms. Phillips suggest that the following items be moved forward:

- Staff to work with the current owner and the Mayor's office to start the process turning the property over to the City.
- Can the KABA funds be changed from demolition money into funding for some of the repairs.
- Contact the State to obtain names of individuals who could prepare a Historic Structure report.
- Wait until the completion of the Downtown Study before moving forward with the demolition.

Ms. Phillips would like to amend the motion to the the defer the demolition until the Downtown Study is completed, even if it goes beyond 120 days.

Mr. Jensen said he would support the deferral for 60 days, then after a review we can extend it if we need to. This will spur people into action if they have a short period of time to get something started.

Ms. O'Day said she wants the extension until the Downtown Study is completed.

Alderman Michalski said the 120 days gives people ample time to get their information together. The 60 days is not enough time, 120 days is more realistic.

Mr. Schleif said he supports the 120 day deferral.

Ms. Phillips said we need the City to support us to get a Developer. The City will need to forgive some of the liens and the City should recruit people from different areas than we can.

Ms. O'Day said the building has been available for purchase for a long time already.

Mr. Maki said there are various ideas you are suggesting, but we have no money designated for this project. We have a very limited market, no authority from the Common Council to move forward and no funds for a structural analysis. The funds to raze the building are only offered for a limited time.

Mr. Jensen said it is very unlikely that any proposal will be locked up within 60 days, but we can always extend the deferral at the end of 60 days. That way we can check the progress in 60 days.

Ms. O'Day asked how long are the funds available for the raze?

Mr. Jensen re-opened the public hearing to ask Mayor Bosman.

Mayor Bosman said there is no guarantee after 60 days if the funds will be available. After that time if we have to raze the building it will be at the taxpayer's expense.

Mr. Christensen said previously a person from Green Bay was interested in the property with the intent to turn it into an assisted living facility. They may have done a structural analysis at that time. Mr. Christensen will contact Mr. Maki with details.

Mr. Fox said it is very important that a structural analysis be done on this building.

Public hearing closed.

On the motion to defer demolition for 120 days. The motion passed. (Ayes 4; Nays 1)

**3. Kenosha High School (Reuther) Lighting. (District #2 - formerly District #2)
Informational item**

Mr. Maki said Kenosha Unified is looking for a letter of support to purchase the light fixtures for the Kenosha High School.

A motion was made by Alderman Michalski and seconded by Mr. Schleif to provide a letter of support. The motion passed unanimously. (Ayes 5; Nays 0)

4. Amend Bylaws - Name Change from City Development and Neighborhood Services & Inspections to Community Development and Inspections.

A motion to approve the Bylaws as amended was made by Alderman Michalski and seconded by Ms. Phillips. The motion passed unanimously. (Ayes 5; Nays 0)

5. Amend Rules - Name Change from City Development and Neighborhood Services & Inspections to Community Development and Inspections.

A motion to approve the Rules as amended was made by Alderman Michalski and seconded by Ms. Phillips. The motion passed unanimously. (Ayes 5; Nays 0)

Public Comments

John Fox said thank you to the Commission for deferring the demolition. Mr. Fox said the City is also making changes to the Park System and the restroom building in Eichelman Park. They are proposing to demolish this building. This is another historic structure that should be saved. Mr. Fox suggested that Commission look into this matter.

Commissioner Comments

Ms. Phillips said the Commission should make a directive to the City to have the Elks Club building turned over to them. Mr. Maki said there are tax liens involved and the County would have to agree to that.

Staff Comments

The next meeting is scheduled for March 29, 2012.

A motion was made by Alderman Michalski and seconded by Ms. Phillips to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. (Ayes 5; Nays 0) The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Meeting Minutes Prepared by: Kay Schueffner, Community Development & Inspections