

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION MINUTES

August 22, 2012

City Hall Council Chambers
313 Court Street
The Dalles, OR 97058
Conducted in a handicap accessible room.

CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair McNary called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

ROLL CALL

The following Commissioners were present:

Bob McNary
Dixie Parker
Pat Smith
Dennis Davis
Dixie Parker

The following Commissioners were absent: Eric Gleason

Staff present:

Dan Durow, Community Development Director
Dawn Marie Hert, Associate Planner
Carole Trautman, Administrative Secretary

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Parker to table Section number VIII (Pioneer Cemetery) due to time constraints. The motion was not seconded and did not carry.

It was moved by Davis and seconded by Smith to approve the agenda as submitted. The motion carried unanimously, Gleason was absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Smith and seconded by Davis to approve the December 28, 2011 minutes as submitted. McNary, Smith, and Davis voted in favor, Parker abstained, the motion carried. Gleason was absent.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- A. Historic Landmarks Commission Application #135-12; City of The Dalles; The City of The Dalles is applying to the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) for approval of the demolition

or expansion of the existing building to provide space for a hotel/conference center development. The building is located at 201 Washington Street, The Dalles, Oregon, and is historically known as Bloch, Miller & Company. Property is zoned “CBC” – Central Business Commercial District.

Acting Chair McNary read the rules for a public hearing. McNary asked the Commissioners if they had any ex-parte contact, conflict of interest, or bias that would hinder them from making an impartial decision in the matter. None were noted.

Acting Chair McNary opened the public hearing at 4:07 PM.

Associate Planner Hert presented the Staff Report. Hert emphasized that any development would come before the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) for a site plan review. Hert highlighted three options in making a decision: 1) approve the request; 2) suspend the request for 120 days from the date of the application; or 3) move to continue the hearing and make a decision later. Staff recommended to approve the applicant’s request, Option #1.

Commissioner Parker requested copies of the HLC applications. (Exhibits 1 and 2)

Acting Chair McNary called a recess at 4:18 PM to allow staff time to provide application copies to the Commissioners.

McNary reconvened the public hearing at 4:25 PM.

Testimony:

Proponents:

Dan Durow, City of The Dalles Community Development Director, 313 Court Street, The Dalles, Oregon, stated that the City of The Dalles, through the Columbia Gateway Urban Renewal Agency (URA/Agency) as the property owner, applied for the demolition permit. Durow stated that the City had gone through a number of attempts for the design and location of the hotel for two years. The City first diligently tried to locate the hotel project along 1st Street from Washington to Court Streets. However, there was an intervening property owner which prevented that location; and because of recent changes in State law, the intervening property could not be condemned for redevelopment purposes, Durow explained. The owner, Eric Gleason, decided not to sell—even with the promise to restore and incorporate his property into the project. Therefore, Durow said, the City looked for another location. After other attempts, the Agency ended up back at the Granada Block location, which was the intent of both the Agency and the City Council. Durow reported that the developers were looking at every opportunity to preserve and incorporate the building known as the Bloch Miller Building or Model Laundry, Durow reported, into the hotel project. There are also plans for the Washington Street Railroad Undercrossing Project to include a plaza on Washington Street. Durow explained that the Plaza would expose the façade again and the developers are working with two architectural firms on the design. Along with the design, Durow pointed out, new standards were in place, and internal configuration would dictate how the building could be used. Therefore, Durow said, the application request is a proposal to either keep the structure in place or demolish it.

Durow reiterated Hert's comment that the hotel project would be reviewed by the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) for compatibility with the Historic District, but it would also go before the Planning Commission for a Site Plan Review and the URA for the entire project. Therefore, Durow said, there will be a total of three opportunities to discuss the hotel project and the way it fits into the development effort.

Durow commented that the URA was a godsend to the Historic District. Over the past 12 years, the URA directly spent \$4,283,000 on the downtown area, Durow reported; and on the Granada Block over \$2,000,000 was invested into the historic structures. Durow stated that, in the Memorandum of Understanding for the Granada Block Project, the Granada Theater must be maintained and its historical character enhanced however possible. The hotel itself, Durow explained, will give a purpose for reuse that will make the Granada Theater successful from a financial standpoint, and it would be incorporated into the hotel activities. It would, at that point, generate its own support and no longer be supported by tax payers, Durow said. The entire intent of the hotel/conference center is to bring new money into the community, and it would create opportunities for existing businesses to survive in historic buildings and to create new businesses in historic buildings, Durow emphasized.

Durow pointed out that the Bloch Miller Building has struggled recently. The hotel project would go a long way to preserve the Historic District, and businesses could be successful on their own.

The hotel will have between 135-150 rooms, which would equate to approximately 120 to 125 new people coming into the community on a daily basis. Also, conferences would occur in the hotel/conference center, Durow stated. Taxes from the new hotel would generate new URA monies that could be used to help support other projects. Durow stated that the Agency understands the status of the building, that it no longer retains much of its original character.

Luise Langheinrich, 110 East 2nd Street, The Dalles, Oregon, stated she was in favor of this application for a possible demolition permit if the building could not be reused. The reason being, Langheinrich said, was that many of the historic buildings were in such disrepair. For local business owners, the financial hurdles would be incredible to restore some of the historic buildings, and for developers to invest in and refurbish this block would invigorate the entire downtown area. Langheinrich saw this as a wonderful project and asked the Commission to support the request for the application of the Bloch Miller Building and Recreation Building demolition permits.

Opponent:

Rick McClure, P.O. Box 147, Trout Lake, Washington, stated he is an archaeologist by profession who often visits The Dalles area and has a strong interest in the community. McClure recommended the Commission consider Option #2 to suspend the permit decision on the grounds that there was insufficient information to consider the demolition request. More specifically, McClure said, the building at the corner of 1st and Washington Streets was within the boundaries of a registered archaeological site known by the Smithsonian as 35 WS 453. The building was on file with the Oregon Historic Preservation Office as Feature 6 of the archaeological site, McClure stated. Because the building was within the archaeological site, McClure stated, the archaeological values of the property needed to be taken into consideration, and he had not heard any such considerations in the hearing testimonies. McClure cited ORS 358.920 that prohibits alterations in an archaeological site

unless that activity was been authorized by a permit. ORS 390.235 specifies the terms of the permit, McClure stated. Therefore, if no permit had been issued, it was in violation of State law to alter the property. McClure recommended the demolition permit application be suspended, pending the process. McClure contacted the State office, no permit had been filed, so it would be premature to make a decision on the demolition request, McClure said. McClure also stated that he whole heartedly supported economic development in the Historic District, but the development needs to be sensitive to the archaeological and historic records that are established in The Dalles.

Associate Planner Hert brought to the Commission's attention the letter received from the Historic Preservation League of Oregon and its concerns regarding the demolition of the Bloch Miller Building. Hert emphasized that the letter stated "consideration should be given to the demolition of non-contributing buildings 50 years of age or older on a case-by-case basis..." Hert commented the League left that guideline open ended. The League did ask that no demolition permit be issued, Hert reported.

Rick McClure stated that if a building has been listed as historic non-contributing, and the building is restored, it can be re-listed as contributing historic and be eligible for tax credits.

Rebuttal:

Associate Planner Hert stated that the comments by Mr. McClure were good, but it would be premature for the City to go to the State Archaeological Department before obtaining the HLC approval.

Director Durow stated that the URA is the property owner, and City of The Dalles has the jurisdiction on the property. The City was not informed by SHPO that the property was being considered as a special archaeological site, there had been no opportunity for the City's input into this consideration, and there had been no official notification from the State that the property had been designated as such. Durow said this was irritating, the City had only learned of this through hearsay. Through the URA, Durow reported, the City was in the process of contracting with Archaeological Investigations Northwest (AINW) that would submit a proposal soon for the cost of the first of a three-step process necessary to clear this site for development. Durow pointed out that the site needs to be cleared no matter who develops the property in the future. Durow gave a brief explanation of the three-step archaeological process. The design would need to be completed before the hotel could be constructed, so the archaeological issues would be fully addressed prior to construction.

Regarding the Historic Preservation League of Oregon letter and the accompanying report, the hotel developers have had the report for some time, and it is being considered as well as the National Historic District guidelines. The developers fully intend to build a hotel that is absolutely compatible to the Historic District and to maintain the historic integrity of the Granada Theater.

Commissioner Parker asked who applied to have that area entered into the archaeological site. Associate Planner Hert said that Dennis Griffith, State Archaeologist, advised her that Eric Gleason applied while doing archaeological work at his property. Parker asked if Gleason, therefore, applied for property that was not his own. Hert said that was true. Parker asked if any of the other property owners got noticed. Hert said that, according to Dennis Griffith, the State was allowed put a special marker on a surrounding area that had sensitive archaeology. Hert asked Griffith if the City should have been notified of the special markers, and Hert's understanding from Griffith was that the

archaeologist could place special markers without notification to property owners. Hert also indicated that Durow asked for a letter, but nothing was received. Parker asked if Gleason gave notice to the City. Hert said Gleason did give notice to the Historic Landmarks Commission while he was working on his own property.

Commissioner Davis asked for clarification on the three decision options. Associate Planner Hert replied that the Commission is designated to protect historic buildings and district properties in this area. If the Commission decides on Option #1, the demolition permit could be issued within 10 days. Option #2 provides 120 days to make a decision and possibly look at investment and/or rehabilitation opportunities. Hert commented that Davis was correct in one sense, that the HLC cannot stop the request, but it could delay the request.

Commissioner Smith commented that she believed it was questionable to demolish the Bloch Miller Building when the Commission did not know what was going in there. Smith stated she supported Option #2.

Commissioner Parker asked if the developers had to be committed to the hotel project before demolishing the building. Hert responded that the current developers had every intention to preserve the building, but the building would need to go through many steps to determine whether or not it could be preserved. However, Hert said, the developers could obtain a demolition permit and tear the building down without further review from the HLC.

Commissioner Davis commented that the wording in Option #1 was vague and did not have meaning. Associate Planner Hert stated that the positive aspect about this demolition permit request was that the City of The Dalles had jurisdiction over the property, and the City would hire historic professionals of a higher caliber than those used in other demolition projects.

Acting Chair McNary closed the public hearing at 5:07 PM.

Deliberation:

Commissioner Smith asked where the historic pictures would be stored. Associate Planner Hert stated that in the recent past the City stored pictures of the Joseph G. Wilson Building and the Sunshine Mill property in the City Planning Department and the public library.

After further discussion, it was moved by Acting Chair McNary and seconded by Smith to approve Option #2 as presented in the Staff Report.

Commissioner Davis asked for clarification on Option #2. Associate Planner Hert stated that the HLC would have 120 days from the date of the demolition permit application to make a decision, and no matter what, a demolition permit could be issued on December 6, 2012. Commissioner Parker commented that during the 120 day period the HLC could establish the HLC's opinion on the demolition. Parker commented that she supported anything that promoted the downtown area.

Commissioner Davis asked if the City would include the process in Option #1 if the HLC approved Options #2 or #3. Associate Planner Hert affirmed she would uphold the requirements given in Option

#1 if the Commission chose Options 2 or 3.

With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously, Gleason was absent.

- B. **Historic Landmarks Commission Application #136-12**; City of The Dalles; The City of The Dalles is applying to the Historic Landmarks Commission for approval of the demolition of the entire existing building to provide space for a hotel complex development. The building is located at 213 East 2nd Street, The Dalles, Oregon, and is historically known as The Recreation. Property is zoned “CBC”—Central Business District.

Acting Chair McNary opened the public hearing at 5:16 PM.

Associate Planner Hert presented the Staff Report. Staff recommended approval of the demolition permit request. Hert explained that there were questions on portions of the original building—there could have possibly been evidence of a theater within The Recreation. Eric Gleason had indicated that in the past there were records of two theaters in the historic area, The Empress and the Grand Theaters, Hert said. Hert reported that the Staff toured the building and found there was a saloon that existed at that site, but neither of the two theaters. Hert presented pictures of the staff’s tour (Exhibit 3). Hert explained that, in the front where the Panda sign now exists, records showed various uses of that building in Sanborn maps from the early 1900s to 1960s including a saloon, sales, and later The Recreation.

Director Durow further clarified that The Recreation was built in 1946 to the west of this building and at some point the saloon building was incorporated. Durow stated there were three separate buildings in all. Hert stated that building is over 50 years old and could be re-evaluated, but all of the alterations over the years had disqualified the façade. Hert also stated that the pictures might show there were now only portions of the saloon in existence. Hert stated the façade may have either been reduced, or there was a fire at some point that may have destroyed the entire building. All cornices and iron were removed, Hert commented.

Associate Planner Hert showed pictures of the interior brick area of The Recreation that could possibly be considered historic (Exhibit 4). Hert also showed pictures of the original Empress Theater that indicated it appeared there was nothing remaining of the original Empress (Exhibit 5).

Acting Chair McNary asked what was known about the back entrance of The Recreation. Associate Planner Hert said the only information provided came from the Sanborn maps. McNary asked if there was a possibility of another basement existing under the existing basement. Hert answered that she did not know.

Proponents:

Dan Durow, Community Development Director, 313 Court Street, The Dalles, Oregon explained the reasoning behind the 120-day rule. Durow stated that the City of The Dalles created the Historic Landmarks Commission to give a voice, the City created the URA with the primary goal of preserving the historic buildings, and the City created the National Historic District.

Director Durow explained that the current intent of the developers was to reuse the Recreation area because of the location that has been selected. In addition, Durow said, a portion of the alley would be vacated so there could be a connection between 1st and 2nd Streets.

Roger Nichols, 1617 Oregon Street, The Dalles, Oregon, speaking as a citizen of The Dalles, encouraged the Commission not to wait 120 days. Nichols said he understood the importance of archaeological preservation, but only if there was good reason. Nichols told the Commission to “go for it” and move on—hold onto the things that were important. He supported improving the community.

Opponent:

Rick McClure, PO Box 147, Trout Lake, Washington, recommended suspending the demolition permit for 120 days pending a determination on the existence of remains of the original façade. McClure urged the Commission to consider what is compatible infill, because he was uncertain if the hotel sketch was compatible to the Historic District.

McClure commented that, archaeologically speaking, the boundaries of the site were indefinite. McClure said there was a possibility that there are archaeological sites under The Recreation building’s footprint.

Rebuttal:

Director Durow reported that, in the demolition process, the City would agree to document any significant archaeological findings, and the City could direct the contractor to consider that in their proposal.

Regarding the sketch of the hotel project, Durow clarified that it was just a sketch, and the developers had every intent to make the façade compatible to the Historic District.

Director Durow also reassured the Commission that AINW would include in their study The Recreation Building and the portion of the alley that would be vacated. Durow emphasized that the City had every intent to be in compliance to archaeological laws that were in place for protection and recovery.

Acting Chair McNary closed the public hearing at 5:47 PM.

Commissioner Davis stated that he was convinced that the archaeological work was going to be done properly by the City, and that hopefully the Commission was not criticizing the City. Davis went on to say that he saw a potential for use of the Bloch Miller Building. Regarding the architect’s rendering of the hotel project, Davis understood it was drawn up quickly, but what was circulated did not look historic.

Director Durow indicated that the intent of the URA and the City was to demolish The Recreation soon, but not to proceed on the Bloch Miller Building demolition until the City gets the go ahead from the developers.

After further discussion, it was moved by Parker and seconded by Davis to approve Option #1 presented in the Staff Report that allowed for the issuance of a demolition permit for The Recreation Building. The motion carried unanimously, Gleason was absent.

RESOLUTIONS

A. HLC Resolution #125-12 for HLC #135-12

It was moved by Parker and seconded by Smith to approve HLC Resolution #125-12 suspending the application request for the demolition permit for a period up to 120 days from the date of the original application in the interest of preserving historical values and to determine if a program could be established to maintain and restore the structure as set forth in Option #2 of the Staff Report. The motion carried unanimously, Gleason was absent.

B. HLC Resolution #126-12 for HLC #136-12

It was moved by Parker and seconded by Davis to approve HLC Resolution #126-12 approving the request for a demolition permit, including the conditions of approval, as set forth in Option #1 of the Staff Report. The motion carried unanimously, Gleason was absent.

PIONEER CEMETERY

Associate Planner Hert reported of a miscommunication regarding the clean up day prior to a Memorial Day ceremony. Slash piles were left in the cemetery on Memorial Day, and ceremony participants complained. Staff apologized for the mishap and explained it would not happen again, Hert said.

Acting Chair McNary reported that efforts were being made to clear an area on the east side of the cemetery fence, but some neighbors complained about the tree trimming because the trees provided shade. Associate Planner Hert stated she contacted the neighbors and advised them they will be contacted prior to future tree trimming efforts.

Associate Planner Hert advised the Commission that there were some funds left over from last fiscal year that could be used for landscaping maintenance. Hert thanked McNary for his fence installation efforts.

STAFF/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Associate Planner Hert reported on the Historic Interpretive Sign grant. The project cost is \$23,000, and the grant award was \$11,500. The project includes three historical panels to be located near the City Festival Area and dock that will provide information on Rock Fort and Native American history.

Associate Planner Hert introduced Garrett Chrostek, Administrative Fellow for the City of The Dalles. Chrostek's grant work will include the acquisition of additional sign panels. Grant guidelines state the project must meet HLC approval, Hert reported. After further discussion, the Commission decided to set up a public lunch meeting in the future to review the materials and make a decision. Hert advised that the next phase of the sign project would be the installation of QR codes. Commissioner Parker asked if the QR codes could be added to the existing signs. Hert said she would check into it.

Commissioner Parker commented on the Lions Club removing the roof off the monument at Thompson Park and asked if there were any plans to move the monument. Associate Planner Hert reported that it was determined that the current location was not working, and the wooden structure would be torn down. Plans were to dismantle, complete, and relocate the monument, Hert said, and proposed actions would go before the Commission.

Director Durow advised that the Community Development Department was granted a contract for a Resource Assistance for Rural Environment (RARE) Planner. Some of the assigned tasks would include creating a vertical housing development zone downtown for second (and above) floors in downtown buildings. Another task would include a Residential Rehabilitation Repair program, working in conjunction with Mid-Columbia Housing program, which would be designed to rehabilitate and refurbish homes in the community. Incentives would be in place for both programs.

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING

September 26, 2012

ADJOURNMENT

Acting Chair McNary adjourned the meeting at 6:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Carole Trautman, Administrative Secretary.



Eric Gleason, Chair
Historic Landmarks Commission