



Division of Development Administration and Review

City of Pittsburgh, Department of City Planning

200 Ross Street, Third Floor

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219

Minutes of the Meeting of February 3, 2010

Beginning at 12:30 PM

200 Ross Street

First Floor Hearing Room

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

In Attendance:

<u>Members</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Others</u>
Michael Stern	Katherine Molnar	Jerome Jackson
Noor Ismail		Evelyn Jones
Ernie Hogan		Steve Burkett
Linda McClellan		Alida Baker
Arthur Sheffield		John DeSantis
John Jennings		Angelique Bamberg
		Charles McClain
		Patrick Hasset

Old Business

Nominations Report: There are two buildings in the nomination process. Ms. Molnar reported that the Paramount Pictures Film Exchange received 8 out of 9 votes in support; it is now going through legislation. The Iron City Brewery would be heard today for Historic Review Commission designation.

New Business

Approval of Minutes: In regards to the December 2009 and January 2010 HRC minutes, Mr. Serrao moved to approve the minutes, Ms. Ismail seconded the motion, all members voted in favor.

Certificates of Appropriateness: Molnar directed the commissioners to the Certificates of Appropriateness. In regards to the January 2010 Certificates of Appropriateness, Mr. Hogan moved to approve, Mr. Serrao seconded the motion, all voted in favor.

Other: Ms. Molnar called upon Mr. Stanely Lowe of the Manchester Citizens Corporation for a neighborhood update. Mr. Lowe reported that the MCC was in the process of restoring two buildings. BBI had given the MCC a list of 84 buildings that were to be demolished, and 172 total that are threatened. Mr. Lowe stated that he believes the HRC to be responsible for the well-being of the cities' 13 historic districts, and he asks that there be a mitigation strategy enacted. He wants to engage in a joint discussion between the HRC, BBI, and MCC. Mr. Stern and Mr. Hogan said they were both happy to participate in this exchange. Mr. Hogan said he was willing to volunteer his time to helping neighborhoods to create effective strategic planning skills. Mr. Stern pointed out that there are three initiatives currently in action within the city: the MCC communities' plan, the creation of the cities' comprehensive preservation plan, and the mayor's new commission on vacant properties. Ms. Ismail then asked Mr. Lowe for clarification on MCC's partnership with PHLF. Mr. Lowe answered that this partnership had been enacted in January of 2009 to look at preservation issues in Manchester, and provide MCC with financial strategies, technical assistance, and labor. Ms. Ismail then asked for an update on 1218 Franklin. Mr. Lowe said PHLF stated they would put up resources for this project, but MCC responded that all of the 172 buildings should be focused upon, not this single building. Ms. Ismail reminded Mr. Lowe that there had been miscommunication between the involved parties, and that there were still plans missing in MCC's proposal. Ms. Molnar said the missing documents were that the property owner was willing to work with MCC, a timeline for the proposed project, and an explanation of the source of funding. Mr. Stern requests that all parties involved set up a meeting and report the results at the next HRC meeting. He

also reminds Mr. Lowe to re-submit his proposal with the additional documents. Mr. Jennings adds that all buildings on BBI's demolition list are in the worst condition possible, and pose as a health and safety threat. Mr. Stern closes the discussion, and says the item will be brought back to the table at the next meeting.

Applications for Economic Hardship: None

Upcoming Demolitions:

- None

Adjourn: Mr. Hogan motioned to adjourn, Ms. McClellan seconded the motion, all voted in favor.

Discussion on hearing items follows on the attached pages.

OWNER: City of Pittsburgh	WARD:22 nd	APPLICATION RECEIVED:
	LOT & BLOCK: 8-B-150	SITE VISITS:
APPLICANT: City of Pittsburgh	INSPECTOR:Mark Sanders	CERTIFICATES OF APP.: 00-000
	COUNCIL DISTRICT:	
	ZONING CLASSIFICATION:P	
	ARCH. RATING:	
NATIONAL REGISTER:	LISTED..... <input type="checkbox"/>	ELIGIBLE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Proposed Changes:
Demolition of the Pedestrian Bridge Span

Discussion:

1. Ms. Molnar introduced the application and said that the Department of Public Works has proposed the demolition of the bridge due to its viability, and the high risk of safety associated with it. She reviewed the bridges’ location in the Allegheny Commons Park, explaining that it crossed over a railroad.
2. Pat Hassett, Assistant Director of the DPW, who is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the cities’ bridges, introduced himself and joined the table. He explained that an agreement had been reached with the railroad company, and plans had been created for the construction of a new bridge in accordance with the railroad company’s clearance requirements. The existing embankments on which the bridge sits have been inspected for safety and they have determined them as not reusable.
3. Alida Baker, a representative of the public, thanks the mayor’s office and HRC for recognizing the historical significance of the bridge and allowing for a replacement bridge to be constructed. She then says she is in support of the motion.
4. John DeSantis, also of the public, added that if demolition is approved, close consideration will be paid to the replacement of all entities of the bridge, and that they are done in a fashion that is historically appropriate. Then asks that rather than approving demolition, for the HRC to consider renovation of the bridge. He proposes that the concrete “cheek walls” and embankments be re-used and that the steel deck is restored. He provides a list of 292 bridges in the U.S. that are undergoing restoration.
5. Mr. Hassett says that the deck is integral to the cheek walls and the biggest concern is the timeline and issue of safety.
6. Mr. Hogan asks if it is possible to remove the deck and restore the cheek walls.
7. Mr. Hassett calls upon the DPW structural engineer, Chuck McClain, who says that the railroad company would not give them even ¼ inch to reinforce the walls, and the walls would undoubtedly need to be reinforced to undergo this process.
8. Ms. McClellan asks what documentation rights the railroad has. Mr. McClain says that the railroad owns the track (58 foot path) through the park.

9. Mr. Hogan asks if the bridge meets the current railroad requirements. Mr. DeSantis interjects that if a bridge is replaced it must meet the railroad’s federal clearance requirements. If an existing bridge is restored, the clearance requirements must not be met.
10. Mr. Stern asks if the bridge is in any condition that it would collapse in the intermittance. Mr. Hassett says no, only piecemeal may fall from the bridge. Mr. McClain says we have no way of knowing how the bridge was constructed and they would need to see drawings for restoration. Also says no engineer would go on the deck , one would have to do the evaluation from the railroad. Mr. Hassett says they would then have to go back to the railroad for approval which could take until the summer months. Ms. Baker says the PHLF put her in contact with Tod Wilson, who specializes in historic bridge restoration, and he has cultivated some drawings for the bridge.
11. Mr. Hogan says the HRC is responsible for protecting all the historic resources of the city, and Mr. DeSantis has pointed out that this is one of only three in the park. Mr. Stern disagrees, saying that there are many other historic elements in the park, including the landscape, and it is also HRC’s job to determine the viability of structures.
12. Ms. Molnar adds that there are exceptions to historic designations: if BBI or Allegheny County Health Department deems a structure to be unsafe they can put in a request for demolition and if HRC is opposed, they have 90 days to reach a new solution. Mr. Jennings adds that BBI actually has no jurisdiction over bridges.
13. Ms. Ismail proposed to go forward with recommendations as proposed by staff.

MOTION:

Mr. Stern.....Motioned that in light of the Mayor’s January 4, 2010 letter supporting the Allegheny Commons Initiative’s future efforts to reconstruct the pedestrian bridge, and committing the City to work with the community to plan and implement a replacement bridge,

I move to approve the demolition of the Allegheny Commons Pedestrian Bridge span, abutments and associated stairs and walls flanking the bridge contingent on the following conditions:

1. That the Department of Public Works secure, prior to issuing the demolition authorization, a permanent aerial easement over the railroad tracks for the reconstruction of the bridge in the future , and
2. That after the demolition, the City remediate the site, grading to existing slopes and planting with grass to match the surrounding landscaping and provide and install railing to match existing railing.

Mr. Hogan Seconded the motion.

All members Voted in favor.

OWNER: NORTH OF FORBES INC P.O.BOX 38112 PITTSBURGH, PA 15238	WARD: 16 th LOT & BLOCK: 12-G-22 INSPECTOR:..... Pat Brown	APPLICATION RECEIVED: 1/19/2010 SITE VISITS: CERTIFICATES OF APP.: 00-000
APPLICANT: Schell Games 2313 E Carson Street Pittsburgh, PA 15203	COUNCIL DISTRICT: ZONING CLASSIFICATION:.....LNC ARCH. RATING:	
NATIONAL REGISTER:	LISTED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ELIGIBLE..... <input type="checkbox"/>

Proposed Changes:
Installation of new awning

Discussion:

- Ms. Molnar introduced the application, explaining that the applicant, Schell Games, occupied the second floor the building and the proposed awning would replace an existing one overtop of the main entrance to their store.
- Steve Burkett, owner of the sign company who will construct the awning explained that the existing awning would be removed and replaced with an awning of red umbrella fabric. Mr. Stern asked for clarification that the entirety of the existing structure would be removed. Mr. Burkett said this was true.
- Mr. Stern then asked if the renderings were shared with the South Side local development company. Mr. Burkett answered, “No”.
- Mr. Jennings asked why the choice in orange color. Mr. Burkett said this was the same color used in the company’s logo.
- Mr. Stern then asked if he or the business owner considered wrapping the existing structure. Jake Witherell of Schell Games said they did not consider wrapping it because the structure is no in good condition. He then explained that the awning was designed to resemble the existing awnings on the building, but has since been told those awnings will be removed.
- Ms. Molnar said she has not approved any awnings for the rest of the building. Joyce Ramirez, representative of the Department of Public Welfare who will be occupying the rest of the building mid-February says there have not yet been any formal plans for removal of existing awnings or installation of new awnings.
- Mr. Stern says he does not think the proposed awning is appropriate for its place in this historic district in terms of color, overall size and scale, and the sharp angle of the awning. He suggested communicating with the SSLDC for further instruction.

MOTION:

Mr. Stern Moved to decline the proposal for the new awning.

Mr. Hogan Seconds the motion.

All members..... Voted in favor.

Discussion:

1. Ms. Molnar introduced the application. Molnar reminded the members that the nomination was received in November, 2009, the preliminary hearing before the HRC was in December 2009, and the public hearing was in January 2010. She described the nomination process from this point forward, and directed HRC members to the timeline in the packet for reviewing the nomination. She gave the HRC members another copy of the nomination form, and outlined the history of the site, the description of the property, and identified areas of significance.
2. Ms. Molnar explained the HRC today is charged with making a recommendation to City Council to either recommend or not recommend historic designation.

MOTION:

Mr. Stern.....Moved to recommend the Iron City Brewery for historic designation

Mr. Sheffield.....Seconded the motion.

All members.....Voted in favor.