

## **HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION MEETING**

City Council Chambers  
March 17, 2015

### CALL TO ORDER – ITEM 1:

A regular meeting of the Astoria Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) was held at the above place at the hour of 5:15 p.m.

### ROLL CALL – ITEM 2:

Commissioners Present: President LJ Gunderson, Vice President Michelle Dieffenbach, Commissioners Jack Osterberg, Paul Caruana, Mac Burns, and Kevin McHone.

Commissioners Excused: Thomas Stanley

Staff Present: Interim Planner Mike Morgan

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES – ITEM 3(a):

President Gunderson asked if there were any changes to the minutes of the February 17, 2015 meeting. There were none.

Commissioner McHone moved to approve the minutes of February 17, 2015 as presented; seconded by Commissioner Osterberg. Motion passed unanimously. Ayes: President Gunderson, Vice President Dieffenbach, Commissioners Caruana, Osterberg, Burns, and McHone. Nays: None.

### PUBLIC HEARINGS:

President Gunderson explained the procedures governing the conduct of public hearings to the audience and advised that the substantive review criteria were listed in the Staff report.

### ITEM 4(a):

AEP 15-01      Amendment to Existing Permit AEP15-01 by Holiday Inn Express to amend New Construction Permit NC03-01 with the addition of 20 guest rooms to the west end of the Holiday Inn Express Hotel at 204 W Marine in the C-2, Tourist Commercial zone.

President Gunderson asked if anyone objected to the jurisdiction of the HLC to hear this matter at this time. There were no objections. President Gunderson asked if any member of the HLC had a conflict of interest, or any ex parte contacts to declare.

Commissioner Burns declared that as a member of the Clatsop County Historical Society, he had served on committees with Dave Weber and Caroline Wuebben. However, he had not discussed this application with either of them and did not believe his judgment would be affected.

President Gunderson requested a presentation of the Staff report.

Interim Planner Morgan presented the Staff report. He noted that Staff did not have a Landscaping Plan; however, landscaping would be approved by the Community Development Planner prior to installation. Staff recommended approval with conditions. No correspondence has been received.

Commissioner McHone asked how long the building would be with the addition. It appeared as if the addition would add about 25 or 30 percent to the length of the building and cross over the property line. Interim Planner Morgan referred to the photograph of the west elevation, on Page 3 of the Staff report, noting that the building would not extend clear to the picket fence. A landscaping buffer would still be between the fence and the façade of the building. Staff presented the Commissioners with a site plan, which was not included in the Staff report.

Commissioner McHone noted the site plan did not show which building was being removed to make room for the parking. He asked how the streetscape would change when the building was removed. Interim Planner Morgan said the view would extend across the landscaping to the parking area and open up the vista to the river. Uniontown Park is located right in front of the bridge abutment, so the landscaping would have to be extended along Marine Drive to connect with the park. However, Staff did not have a landscaping plan yet. The building being removed is not historic; it was originally a theatre, and then a sign shop, but is now vacant. The hotel acquired the property and used the building for storage and overflow parking.

Commissioner Osterberg asked if this project would require action by any other City commissions. Interim Planner Morgan said not that he was aware of. The hotel is in the C-2 zone and the application is for an extension of an existing use. Landscaping would have to meet City standards, which requires 10 percent of the parking area be devoted to landscaping. The hotel already exceeds this standard. Commissioner Osterberg asked if the HLC was supposed to consider the landscaping or review the site plan.

President Gunderson explained the Applicant must follow City guidelines. Landscaping is generally approved administratively. As long as the Applicant meets City codes, the HLC does need to get involved. Interim Planner Morgan added that the HLC is tasked with reviewing the architectural aspects of the building.

President Gunderson opened public testimony for the public hearing and asked for the Applicant's presentation.

Caroline Wuebben, General Manager, Holiday Inn Express Hotel, 204 W Marine Drive, Astoria, said she did not have a presentation, but would try to answer the HLC's questions.

Commissioner Osterberg asked if Ms. Wuebben agreed with Staff's answers to the HLC's questions and if she had any additional comments in response to those questions.

Ms. Wuebben said she believed Interim Planner Morgan did a fine job presenting the application. The hotel has owned the River Theatre building since the hotel was built. The building has been leased out in the past, but the hotel's long-term plan was to expand the parking. The hotel will consider expanding its parking regardless of the building expansion. Taking the theatre building down will open up the vista from Marine Drive to the park and clean up the area under the bridge.

Commissioner Burns asked if the expansion would put the building under the bridge. Ms. Wuebben replied no, there is an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) easement right under the bridge. However, the building would be closer to the bridge. She added that currently, the hotel and the Parks Department maintain the park at the Maritime Memorial. The hotel is very conscious of landscaping and how the area looks because it reflects on the hotel. She has already downloaded the City's landscaping requirements, which the hotel plans to meet or exceed. She thanked the HLC for its consideration.

President Gunderson called for any presentations by persons in favor of, impartial to or against the application. Seeing none, she called for closing remarks of Staff. There were none. She closed the public testimony portion of the hearing and called for Commission discussion and deliberation.

Vice President Dieffenbach did not have any issues with the application, as the project complies with the criteria for approval.

Commissioner McHone did not have any issues with the design elements or elevations. He did have a minor concern about the size of the building, which would be quite massive, and wanted to hear what the other Commissioners had to say about the size.

Commissioner Caruana agreed the building would be quite massive. However, he was fine with the design. He wanted to see a picture of the building being torn down, but believed the view corridor would be better. If the building is not historic and in poor condition, it should be torn down. A clear site plan or street view of the building would be helpful.

President Gunderson noted those photographs are usually included in the Staff report.



Commissioner Burns said the HLC has approved the building's design once before. The addition is more of the same, so he was okay with the request.

Commissioner Osterberg agreed and added that the criteria are the same as when the building was originally approved. The existing building does not closely match the architectural designs of other buildings in the area. However, the addition will be an exact match of the existing building. The addition will have the same setbacks and other design characteristics of the site. Therefore, he recommended approval of the request.

President Gunderson believed opening up another vista would make the community happy.

Interim Planner Morgan noted that on Page 4 of the Staff report, a photograph of the back side of the sign shop shows how much area would be opened up when the building is removed. President Gunderson responded the HLC preferred a photograph of the front to the building.

Commissioner McHone asked if Condition 3 regarding landscaping was within the purview of the HLC. President Gunderson said the condition should be included as a condition of approval. Commissioner Osterberg added that Staff did include findings for this condition on Page 10, Paragraph C (a) of the Staff report. Therefore, he agreed the condition was appropriate.

President Gunderson said the hotel has maintained all of the landscaping very well and she had no doubt that would continue. Commissioner Osterberg hoped the landscaping requirements would lead to some continuity between the site's private landscaping and the public park's landscaping. A seamless transition from one landscape to the other would be nice.

Commissioner McHone moved that the Historic Landmarks Commission adopt the Findings and Conclusions contained in the Staff report and approve the Amendment to Existing Permit AEP15-01 by Holiday Inn Express, with conditions; seconded by Commissioner Burns. Motion passed unanimously.

President Gunderson read the rules of appeal into the record.

#### REPORTS OF OFFICERS – ITEM 5:

There were no reports.

#### OLD BUSINESS – ITEM 6(a):

Oregon Heritage All-Star Community Application – Planner Johnson has included the completed application.

President Gunderson explained the application was for a special designation by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The designation will provide Astoria with more grant opportunities in addition to the recognition.

#### MISCELLANEOUS – ITEM 7:

##### ITEM 7(a): HLC Packets – Electronic Option

Interim Planner Morgan asked if the HLC preferred to receive agenda packets via email. The packets are already in digital format, so emailing them would not be a burden on Staff. The electronic copies could be accessed on an iPad.

President Gunderson said she did not have a preference. However, she did not want to receive both an electronic and a hard copy. In February, she printed the electronic copy that was emailed and then she received a hard copy in the mail, which was a waste of paper.

Vice President Dieffenbach said she found it difficult to use the iPad during a meeting because she must flip back and forth between the pages. She was okay with receiving the packet via email, but wanted a paper copy at the meeting.

Commissioner McHone preferred to receive both an electronic and paper copy.

Commissioner Burns preferred email.

Commissioner Osterberg preferred a paper copy of the packet on 8" by 11" paper. He liked having the exact same format that was available to the public and the public will most commonly refer to page numbers on the paper copy. He understood the public could review the packets electronically on the City's website. However, people rely on paper copies.

Interim Planner Morgan said Staff could refrain from emailing, allowing Commissioners to view and download the packet from the City's website. However, President Gunderson believed receiving the packet via email prompts Commissioners to look at the document. Interim Planner Morgan said Staff would email the packet to all of the Commissioners and mail a paper copy seven days in advance of each meeting. Some jurisdictions have switched to total electronic communications, but this does not always work when looking at plans.

Commissioner Osterberg agreed that reviewing architectural plans on a screen was difficult. He preferred to rely on 11" by 17" or 20" by 24" paper for architectural and detailed site plans.

President Gunderson suggested the process be left as is, email and mail the agenda packets. Several Commissioners stated they were only receiving emails that contained a link to the packet on the City's website, but were not receiving the packet attached to an email. President Gunderson directed Staff to make sure all of the Commissioners were receiving the packet as an attachment to an email. Interim Planner Morgan confirmed this would not be a problem.

ITEM 7(b): HLC Member List – An updated member list is attached for Commission use.

President Gunderson asked all of the Commissioners to review the updated member list and make any necessary changes or corrections.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

ATTEST:

  
Secretary

APPROVED:

  
Interim Planner