

## **HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION MEETING**

City Council Chambers

July 15, 2014

### CALL TO ORDER – ITEM 1:

A regular meeting of the Astoria Historic Landmarks Commission was held at the above place at the hour of 5:15 pm.

### ROLL CALL – ITEM 2:

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

Staff Present: Planner Rosemary Johnson Community Development Director Brett Estes and City Attorney Blair Henningsgaard arrived at approximately 5:48 pm.

### PRESENTATIONS – ITEM 3(a):

Dr. Harvey Historic Preservation Honorable Mention Award: 1254 Commercial (Links Outdoor) – Owners, Kyle and Julie Johnson

President Gunderson read the memorandum in the Staff report detailing the 2014 Dr. Edward Harvey Historic Preservation Award. Kyle and Julie Johnson were awarded the honorable mention award; however were not able attend the meeting to receive the plaque honoring their accomplishments.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES – ITEM 4(a):

President Gunderson asked if there were any changes to the minutes. There were none. Commissioner Stanley moved to approve the minutes of May 20, 2014 as presented; seconded by Vice President Dieffenbach. Ayes: President Gunderson, Vice President Dieffenbach, Commissioners Caruana, Osterberg, Stanley, 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 5(a):

EX 14-06 Exterior Alteration EX14-06 by Michael Nisbett to add a front porch and rear deck, replace garage door with metal rollup panel door with upper lites on an existing single family dwelling at 3525 Harrison in the R-2, Medium Density Residential zone.

President Gunderson asked if anyone objected to the jurisdiction of the Historic Landmarks Commission (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. None declared. President Gunderson requested a presentation of the Staff report.

Planner Johnson presented the Staff report and recommended approval with conditions. No correspondence has been received.

President Gunderson called for questions of Staff. Hearing none, she opened public testimony for the hearing and asked for the applicant's presentation.

Michael Nisbett, 3525 Harrison Drive, Astoria, agreed with Planner Johnson's report, noting he wanted to put a porch across the front of his house, change the garage door, and build a deck in the back. The interior has been completely modified and some work has been done to the exterior. He did receive permits for the work, but the contractor was only notified of the historic designation when applying for the permit to build the porch.

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

President Gunderson said the house was reminiscent of one she grew up in that had a low patio and a brick planter across the front. She was in favor of the application.

Commissioner McHone believed the work would be a great enhancement.

Commissioner Stanley said this was a first step into the world of post World War II houses in Astoria. He liked the idea of the low porch and believed it would enhance the neighborhood. He understood why the Applicant wanted a deck.

Commissioner Burns agreed and said the work would be a nice improvement.

Commissioner Caruana said he would encourage the use of a vinyl garage door instead of a metal door because the metal door could rust five years from now. Aesthetically, everything in the application is fine. However, metal doors do not hold up well in this area and vinyl is comparably priced.

Planner Johnson said the Applicant could get a metal garage door with coatings that do not rust. She would have to do research to find out if a vinyl door on a house of this period would be appropriate for the era. If vinyl was a material used on garage doors during the 1948 period, Staff could approve this over the counter. If vinyl was used in a later period, it would need to be approved by the HLC.

Commissioner Caruana stated the use of vinyl was not a condition for him, just a suggestion.

Vice President Dieffenbach believed the application looked good.

Commissioner Stanley moved that the Historic Landmarks Commission adopt the Findings and Conclusions contained in the Staff report and approve Exterior Alteration EX14-06 by Michael Nisbett, with conditions; seconded by Commissioner Burns. Motion passed unanimously.

Planner Johnson added fiberglass would be an acceptable material that would prevent issues with rust and Staff could approve the use of fiberglass over the counter.

Commissioner Osterberg said 10 years ago, he put vinyl over the metal doors on his house and they still look like they did when he installed them. He believed with new and improved materials, the Applicant would be safe with whatever he chose to use.

Planner Johnson said the Applicant just needed to come to City Hall for building permits. She confirmed he already had a permit for the front porch.

President Gunderson read the rules of appeal into the record.

#### ITEM 5(b):

MR 14-03      Miscellaneous Review MR14-03 by James Defeo, Astoria Coffeehouse to paint a mural on the east elevation of an existing commercial building within the Downtown National Register Historic District at 1084 Commercial in the C-4, Central Commercial zone.

President Gunderson asked if anyone objected to the jurisdiction of the Historic Landmarks Commission (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.



President Gunderson declared that Mr. Defeo was a tenant in one of her residential properties. She also serves on the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association (ADHDA) Board of Directors, which is supportive of murals in the downtown area. She did not believe this would affect her decision.

Vice President Dieffenbach declared that she was working on the arcade located on the corner block where part of the mural would be painted, but did not believe she would benefit financially.

President Gunderson requested a presentation of the Staff report.

Planner Johnson presented the Staff report and recommended approval with conditions. No correspondence has been received.

President Gunderson called for questions of Staff. Hearing none, she opened public testimony for the hearing and called for the Applicant's presentation.

James Defeo stated from the audience that he had no presentation as Planner Johnson's report was fine.

Commissioner Osterberg asked the Applicant how the proposed mural relates to the historic nature of the Historic District.

James Defeo, 243 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Astoria, replied he was more concerned that the wall facing 11<sup>th</sup> Street was blank, which is different from everything else on the street. The building has three large garage doors with black framing, so the artist did a deconstructed version of the garage doors. The mural complements the rest of the building without being too colorful. He confirmed that the mural was an artist's conception of the lines of the building and garage doors. The design will be geometric and look a bit three-dimensional.

Commissioner Burns asked how much the mural would contrast with the businesses in the neighborhood.

Mr. Defeo said the mural would have just four colors, black, white, grey, and a few blocks of orange. The blocks will be painted solid colors and have a very clean look.

Commissioner Osterberg asked if any other part of the building would be repainted and if any aspect of the mural would relate to that repainting.

Mr. Defeo said he did not know what other property owners planned to do with their facades along Commercial. He had wanted to paint the mural since before the property owner next to him took over the space. The intent is to have a stand-alone mural that will not wrap around the building. The background of the mural will be painted the same shade of white as other areas within the design.

Commissioner Caruana asked if the Applicant had received any feedback from the ADHDA.

Mr. Defeo replied that the ADHDA was excited and many people have been talking about the mural.

President Gunderson called for any presentations by persons in favor of the application.

Dulcye Taylor, 1287 Commercial Street, Astoria, said she supported public art and believed the 1000 block of Commercial was unique because there are many colors along the block. Only one storefront has been painted one color. The mural will be unique and will attract people. The mural might not be historic, but she believed it was perfect for the neighborhood.

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

Vice President Dieffenbach believed the building was in the only block in Astoria where the mural would be appropriate. The mural was not her style, but she believed it worked with the character of the block. The mural is

not permanent and can be painted over if the character of the neighborhood changes. She believed it would add some variety and spice to downtown.

Commissioner Caruana said he liked the mural. At one time, that block of 11<sup>th</sup> Street was the back door to the businesses on Commercial. He likes art that attracts a broad range of people and the mural celebrates the industrial and mechanical side of the properties where trucks used to roll in and out. The mural is a bit of an aggressive graphic, but so is the street.

Commissioner McHone believed the mural will be great and he would vote to approve of the application.

Commissioner Stanley believed the area around 11<sup>th</sup> and Commercial is becoming a unique and hip village. The mural seems to fit in with the ambiance.

Commissioner Burns agreed with the previous comments; the mural worked in the neighborhood and complements the colors on the street.

Commissioner Osterberg disagreed, somewhat. He was troubled by the mural's design and ability to meet the criteria. The mural is a stand-alone piece unrelated to the architecture of the building or other design elements found along the street. He recognized that others may have a different viewpoint. He supported public art and agreed that the mural is an art piece. The mural will not necessarily have a negative impact to historic structures in the surrounding National Historic District. However, he did not understand how the mural met Criterion A that it be appropriate in terms of color, scale, location, and design. Staff has drawn the conclusion that the mural is appropriate to the immediate surrounding area of just the storefronts along the one block section of the street. He understood, but was not sure he agreed. Cubism is over 100 years old and other abstract art is at least 80 years old. Therefore, the design of the mural is not new. However, he was still troubled with how well the mural coordinates or is appropriate with the surrounding historic character of the area.

President Gunderson appreciated Commissioner Osterberg's comments, noting that she would not have chosen that design. However, she believed this mural reflected the direction the block is going. She just returned from a trip to Canada where she visited several different downtown historic districts. All of the downtown historic districts had murals that were free expressions of art. Some of the murals encouraged people to write on them and they reminded her of the block this mural would be in. She supported the application.

Commissioner McHone said the art could be considered a reflection of the residents, not necessarily the heritage or the architecture.

Planner Johnson confirmed for Commissioner Osterberg that this and any mural could be painted over at any time without review by the HLC. Property owners must keep murals maintained, but the owner or artist could paint over it at any time. President Gunderson added that if the property owner wanted a different design, the design would need to be reviewed by the HLC.

Commissioner Caruana moved that the Historic Landmarks Commission adopt the Findings and Conclusions contained in the Staff report and approve Miscellaneous Review MR14-03 by James Defeo, Astoria Coffeehouse, with conditions; seconded by Commissioner Stanley. Motion passed 6 - 1. Ayes: President Gunderson, Vice President Dieffenbach, Commissioners Caruana, Stanley, Burns, and McHone. Nays: Commissioner Osterberg.

President Gunderson read the rules of appeal into the record.

City Attorney Henningsgaard arrived at approximately 5:48 pm with Director Estes arriving shortly thereafter.

#### ITEM 5(c):

EX 14-07      Exterior Alteration EX14-07 by Monica Hartney, Adobe Connections LLC to add 2 windows on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor south elevation; add one window 2<sup>nd</sup> floor dormer north elevation; move paired windows on rear; add double doors & 5' x 10' porch on 1<sup>st</sup> floor, rear; add double doors & 4' x 7.5' balcony on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, rear at 813 14<sup>th</sup> in the R-3, High Density Residential zone.



President Gunderson asked if anyone objected to the jurisdiction of the Historic Landmarks Commission (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. None declared. President Gunderson requested a presentation of the Staff report.

Planner Johnson presented the Staff report and recommended approval with conditions. No correspondence has been received. She confirmed that the HLC has reviewed this property before.

President Gunderson opened public testimony for the hearing and asked for the applicant's presentation. The Applicant did not provide a presentation. President Gunderson called for any presentations by persons in favor of, impartial to or against the application. Hearing none, she called for closing remarks from Staff. There were none. She closed the public testimony portion of the hearing and called for Commission discussion and deliberation.

Commissioner McHone said he remembered looking at this house in the past and this application is very different from the last one. He believed the proposed work would make the house look very nice.

Commissioner Burns believed all of the proposed enhancements were positive and he wholeheartedly supported the application.

Commissioner Osterberg agreed and believed all of the proposed changes were appropriate for the architecture of the house and met the criteria for approval. He noted it was nice that the Applicant would be removing two windows that are not appropriate and replacing them with something better.

Vice President Dieffenbach agreed.

Commissioner Stanley said he appreciated the form and function. All of the proposed changes will create a good balance and add functionality.

President Gunderson also agreed. This is the third application for this house that the HLC has reviewed since she has been on the Commission. The house has been given many facelifts, but this one is a good one.

Commissioner Osterberg moved that the Historic Landmarks Commission adopt the Findings and Conclusions contained in the Staff report and approve Exterior Alteration EX14-07 by Monica Hartney, with conditions; seconded by Commissioner Burns. Motion passed unanimously.

President Gunderson read the rules of appeal into the record.

#### REPORTS OF OFFICERS/COMMISSIONERS – ITEM 6(a):

##### Historic Preservation Renovation Grant

Planner Johnson explained that this grant will be a pass-through grant and Astoria has offered such grants twice in the past. The program has already been advertised and about 450 residential and commercial properties are eligible. She reviewed the guidelines of the grant, which were included in the Staff report. She will send an email to each Commissioner and the State Historic Preservation Office, outlining a synopsis of each application with a deadline to respond. If she receives no response by the deadline, she will approve the application. Commissioners should contact her prior to the deadline with any questions or concerns about a particular application. Applications can be reviewed by the HLC if there are any issues. She confirmed that the program information had already been sent to the ADHDA.

Planner Johnson announced that she would be retiring on September 1, 2014.

The Commissioners congratulated Planner Johnson and expressed their appreciation for her work.

Community Development Director Estes said Staff would be developing a hiring process that will take into consideration the functions of the Community Development Department. Staff will need someone to fill the position temporarily until a new planner is hired. He has spoken with Planner Johnson about the possibility of her

working part time after her retirement until the position is filled. Planner Johnson has been with the City for 35 years and 27 of those years have been in the Planning Department. A timeframe for hiring a new planner is yet to be determined.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm.

ATTEST:

  
Secretary

APPROVED:

  
Community Development Director/  
Assistant City Manager