

## **HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION MEETING**

City Council Chambers

July 21, 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.

### INTRODUCTIONS – ITEM 2:

President Gunderson introduced the new Community Development Director Kevin Cronin. Director Cronin thanked the Commissioners for their service, noting that Astoria has a wealth of volunteers. He described his role as Community Development Director, noting his first task would be to hire a Planner. He looked forward to working with the HLC.

### ROLL CALL – ITEM 3:

Commissioners Present: President LJ Gunderson, Commissioners Jack Osterberg, Paul Caruana, and Mac Burns.

Commissioners Excused: Michelle Dieffenbach, Kevin McHone

Staff Present: City Manager Brett Estes, Interim Planner Mike Morgan and Community Development Director Kevin Cronin.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES – ITEM 4:

President Gunderson asked if there were any changes to the minutes. There was none.

Commissioner Burns moved to approve the minutes of June 16, 2015 as presented; seconded by Commissioner Caruana. Ayes: President Gunderson, Commissioners Caruana, Osterberg, and Burns. 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):

HD15-02 Historic Designation HD15-02 by Pier 11, LLC to designate a property as a local landmark at 77 11<sup>th</sup> Street in the A-2, Aquatic Two Development Zone. This item was continued from the June 16, 2015 meeting.

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.

President Gunderson declared that Steve Allen was the accountant for her company, but she did not believe this would affect her decision. She requested a presentation of the Staff report.

Interim Planner Morgan said no formal Staff report was available, as additional information had not yet been submitted by the Applicant. He recommended the HLC decide if there was sufficient information for this application. The National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet was completed and the HLC had all information available. This hearing could be continued until August or the HLC could make a decision based on the Applicant's testimony. He showed photographs of the building via PowerPoint, noting that the building dated back to the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, like many buildings on the waterfront. Over the years, the building has

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been altered significantly. However, other buildings with significant alterations have also been designated as historic, such as Buoy Beer.

President Gunderson explained that the HLC considers future plans for a building when deciding on a historic designation. She would be willing to vote on this application if Mr. Allen and his architect could give the Commission enough information to make a decision.

Commissioner Osterberg said he had not received a Staff report or an analysis of the criteria for approval for this application. He asked Staff if any written information had been provided to the Commission that lists the criteria for approval. Interim Planner Morgan said Staff did not have enough information on which to base the Staff report. The evaluation form is the only written information that has been given to the Commission. He confirmed that the Development Code contained additional criteria that must be addressed. However, the six factors on the evaluation form follow the criteria in the Development Code. Staff has received four of the seven evaluation forms that were sent out.

President Gunderson asked if the evaluation forms satisfied the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) criteria for approving the historic designation. She noted that four forms provided a quorum and asked for the average score of the forms that were received. Interim Planner Morgan noted that any score above 35 is considered noteworthy and he would calculate the average.

Commissioner Burns asked if Staff had received more information about the application since the last meeting or if Staff was expecting to receive more information after this meeting. Interim Planner Morgan said he had been in contact with the Applicant and believed he could provide additional information at this meeting. However, he had not received any additional information.

Commissioner Osterberg asked what information Staff was waiting for. Interim Planner Morgan explained that typically, the Applicant provides a written statement describing the history of the building, the building's historical significance to the existing inventory of historic properties, and any plans for restoration or improvements to the building. Architectural drawings could also be included.

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

Steve Allen, 90850 Kennedy Road, Warrenton, said he believed he had filled out the application completely. Mr. Jensen had collected the background information on the building, including photographs, from the Heritage Museum. However, not much information was available. After the hearing in June was continued, Staff asked if he wanted to submit more information and suggested he pay someone to prepare some photographs. It was his fault the information was not available, but he was not sure how much more information he needed to submit. He did not have any plans to change the building significantly. The most significant change would be installing a deck that connects the road to the building. He planned to put stores in each of the retail spaces along the improved boardwalk with tables and umbrellas to brighten up the area and give the tenants more access to the public. He was confident that this application would be approved. However, if the Commission was reluctant to approve the historic designation, he would be happy to provide more information.

David Jensen, P.O. Box 6, Long Beach, WA, said he tried to find out what the building was originally used for, but could not find any information on the south elevation. Most of the photographs he found were blurry aerial photographs. However, he was certain the building provided a link between the port and the railroad. The building is in the perfect location for such a link and there is very little access out of the south side of the building. Two of the stores do have doors on the south side, but they do not fully access the Riverwalk. He would really like to make the south side a more unusual and vibrant spot. The area on the south side is a dead spot along the Riverwalk and he would like to create a veranda or terrace at floor level, which is about 30 inches up, from the Riverwalk to the face of the building. This would allow access to the storefronts. A remodel done in 1974 created access in to the building from the ends. He wanted to do a historically accurate renovation, particularly on the inside. The interior is currently covered with rough-cut cedar, which was popular in the 1970s, but has nothing to do with any historical character. He wanted to restore the building to what he imagined it once had been. Without any information on the building, he had no idea what the building once was. The structure is complete and exposed, which he planned to accentuate and use as divisions between the stores. Five stores and the wine bar would face the Riverwalk, so the general configuration of the building would remain the same. Accessibility to the tower is difficult because the stairs are narrow and he was sure they did not meet code. Therefore, he would



create another interior stairway, which would require removal of the bump out right below the tower. He did not believe the bump out was part of the original structure. He would have submitted drawings if he had realized they were necessary to establish the historic designation. The work will be a modification, not a restoration. He had drawings available.

Mr. Allen said he and Mr. Jensen were happy to provide any information the Commission wanted.

Commissioner Osterberg noted the Applicant was not obligated to propose changes to the structure in order to request historic landmark status. The request could be made for the building as is, and then changes to the building could be proposed in a separate application. However, the City does provide a process for combining a project with a historic designation. It is up to the Applicant to choose which approach to use. Since no plans for this application have been submitted to Staff, the Commission cannot take any action on proposals for building modifications. The only request currently being considered by the Commission is the historic designation. The Applicant can submit a separate application for changes to the building or request this application be continued so that plans can be submitted.

Mr. Allen confirmed he would like the historic designation on the structure as is because he did not plan to make many changes to the building. The building would look the same with a new deck that connects the river to the building.

Mr. Jensen added that Code requirements for work on a historic landmark are different from the requirements for modifying an existing building not designated as historic. Therefore, he would like the historic designation to be approved first, so that he knew which set of Code requirements to use as design criteria.

Interim Planner Morgan noted the Applicant was encouraged by Jack Applegate to apply for the historic designation in order to have more flexibility with the remodel. Once the building is designated historic, the Applicant will have to apply for an exterior alteration permit.

Commissioner Caruana believed the historic designation was contingent upon certain renovations. This building has been severely altered and one of the criteria for approval of the historic designation is that the building must be returned to its original historic condition.

Commissioner Osterberg noted this was one of the benefits of seeking approval for both the historic designation and the renovation work at the same time.

Mr. Jensen stated he was just seeking the local landmark designation at this time.

Commissioner Caruana asked how much of the building was still original.

Mr. Jensen said the west end, including the wine bar and dance studio, was an addition. The lower pitched roof that extended to 11<sup>th</sup> Street was original, but the tower was not. He found historic photographs with and without the tower and believed it was just laid on the roof. The rest of the structure, including the roof rafters and beams, are original and still in good shape. The addition, built in 1974, reflected what the structure had been. However, he was unable to determine what material was used for the original siding. He showed Commissioners historic photographs of the building.

Mr. Allen explained that Mr. Applegate had suggested he apply for the designation because the first project would include a change of use and change of occupancy when the dance studio is converted to a wine bar.

Mr. Jensen added that he would be happy to reflect any of the details shown in the historic photographs of the building. However, getting any details out of the photographs would be difficult. He was unable to determine what the building looked like in the 1930s or 1940s.

Mr. Allen said if metal siding is historic, he would use it. The building had some rot on the outside of wood that could be covered with metal siding if that contributed to its historic significance.

Mr. Jensen said as he made changes to each area of the building, he would return it to a historic look. However, he had no model to go on. He wanted to reflect the simple utilitarian look of the building.



Commissioner Caruana said if the tower was added in the 1940s it was historic to the building. Commissioner Burns agreed that the tower had become part of the character of the building. Commissioner Caruana said he filled out his evaluation form with anticipation that the building would be restored to its original look because restoration work was mentioned in the paperwork. However, since this is not the case, he felt as if he had cheated on the evaluation form. He wanted the building to be designated historic because it is significant as a pier building and elements of the building are still original. But, he did not like the fact that the historic designation would make alterations easier to complete. Even so, these buildings need to be fixed up. If the City required all of these buildings to comply with the current Code, they would just be torn down.

President Gunderson said in the three years she has served on the HLC, the Commission has never been presented with an application for which there was no information to consider. Designating this building as historic would protect it from being torn down. Commissioner Caruana agreed this particular building should not be torn down, even though it had metal siding. President Gunderson noted that the Applicant also has other buildings in town that respect their historic significance. All of his work has been done well and she believed he would try to use appropriate siding and remove what is not appropriate on this building.

Commissioner Caruana liked the proposed walkway and storefronts. Unfortunately, the buildings were designed to be working buildings from the water side, not along the Riverwalk. These properties are being used from the Riverwalk now, so some concessions and alterations should be allowed to make these buildings useable for the way people live today.

Mr. Jensen said he had a track record of historic restoration on several buildings and was familiar with historic links to Astoria.

Director Cronin asked what information the Applicant received from the previous owners or if he consulted with family members of previous owners.

Mr. Allen said he never discussed the historic aspect of the property at the time he purchased it. The previous owner gave him no information at all about the property. At the time, he was most concerned with the structural integrity of the pilings.

President Gunderson noted the audience consisted of the applicants, a representative of the *Daily Astorian*, and a Commissioner's spouse; therefore, she would refrain from calling for public testimony. She called for closing remarks of Staff.

Interim Planner Morgan said the average score of the four evaluation forms was 38.5, which puts the building in the Fair to Noteworthy category. He believed this information could be used as a basis for designating the building as historic. Staff had an order ready to sign, should the Commission approve the designation.

Director Cronin reminded that the hearing could be continued. He recommended the Applicant submit a site plan, more information on existing additions to the building, and a two-page narrative about historic attributes and proposed changes to the building. The HLC would have to consider these things anyway as part of a development plan. The Applicant would just need to submit a general concept plan of what the building would look like so that Staff and the Commission would know how the retail spaces would interact with the Riverwalk.

President Gunderson closed the public testimony portion of the hearing and called for Commission discussion and deliberation.

Commissioner Caruana said the evaluation forms indicated the designation would be approved. He did not like the windows and preferred many changes to the building, but hoped any changes done would be tasteful. The building already meets the criteria, so future alterations would have to be reviewed by the HLC. Therefore, he felt comfortable designating the property as historic. He would like much of the existing structure to be preserved and appreciated the opportunity to consider future alterations.

Commissioner Burns agreed. However, he was caught off guard because this was the first request for historic designation that did not include proposed changes to the building. He agreed the building met the criteria for approval and looked forward to seeing the alterations.



Commissioner Osterberg supported Staff's recommendation for a continuance. He believed the Commission did not have enough information to make a decision. He had not received a Staff report, Staff's evaluation of the criteria, or Staff's recommendation. Criteria in addition to the historic evaluation form must be considered even though the form includes the majority of the criteria for approval. Staff has stated more information was required and expected, but this information has not been submitted. The Applicant team has some great ideas for the building and he was looking forward to receiving a plot plan, elevation drawings showing changes or the structure, or the information that Staff described earlier in the meeting. He did not believe he could, in good conscience, recommend approval of the local landmark until he received this additional information. He did not believe adequate information had been submitted yet.

Commissioner Caruana confirmed with Staff that all exterior alterations would be reviewed by the HLC if the historic designation is approved. The Applicant would benefit from the historic designation because some of the building codes for historic structures are more lenient. However, the Applicant would also give up some control of the future of the building. Currently, the Applicant could get permits to do anything they want and the HLC would have no say. He believed Commissioner Osterberg's concerns about future changes to the building would be addressed at the time the alterations are submitted to the HLC for review.

Commissioner Osterberg agreed.

Commissioner Caruana added that even though the building is not 100 percent original, enough of the building is still original that it should be preserved. Alterations could be voted on later.

Commissioner Osterberg appreciated Commissioner Caruana's perspective and agreed it was reasonable. However, he was troubled by the lack of a Staff report that evaluates the criteria and makes a recommendation.

President Gunderson respected Staff's recommendation. Usually, the evaluation forms are submitted with more information. However, the decisions are primarily based off of the evaluation forms and some of the information about proposed changes to the building. While she appreciated Commissioner Osterberg's concerns, she agreed that approving this request would preserve the building. The Commission has seen what the Applicant has done with other buildings in town, which is an indication of what he might do with this building.

Commissioner Caruana moved that the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) adopt the Findings and Conclusions based upon the information provided and the Applicant's testimony and approve Historic Designation HD15-02 by Pier 11, LLC without a Staff report; seconded by Commissioner Burns. Motion passed 3 to 1. Ayes: President Gunderson, Commissioners Caruana and Burns. Nays: Commissioner Osterberg.

President Gunderson read the rules of appeal into the record.

#### REPORTS OF OFFICERS/COMMISSIONERS – ITEM 6:

Director Cronin updated the Commission on his efforts to recruit a new City Planner. He planned to propose changes to the job description to City Council at their August 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Once the job description is approved, he would advertise the position and begin the interview process. He hoped to have the position filled in September or October.

#### ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

ATTEST:

  
Secretary

APPROVED:

  
Interim Planner