

## **HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION MEETING**

City Council Chambers

September 16, 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 p.m.

### ROLL CALL – ITEM 2:

Commissioners Present: President LJ Gunderson, Commissioners Paul Caruana, Mac Burns, and Kevin McHone.

Commissioners Excused: Vice President Dieffenbach, Commissioners Stanley and Osterberg

Staff Present: Planner Rosemary Johnson

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES – ITEM 3(a):

President Gunderson asked if there were any changes to the minutes of the July 15, 2014 meeting. There were none. Commissioner Burns moved to approve the minutes of July 15, 2014 as presented; seconded by Commissioner McHone. Ayes: President Gunderson, Commissioners Caruana, 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):

EX14-08 Exterior Alteration EX14-08 by Stephen Lakatos to install basement windows, install vertical skirting / siding on basement and foundation levels, add belt course at bottom of basement level, and change front door to an etched half lite door at 529 35th 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 called for a presentation of the Staff report.

Planner Johnson presented the Staff report and noted that while the Staff report shows the belt course on one side of the basement, Staff has recommended the belt course be installed on two sides of the basement between the foundation and basement level. Staff recommended approval with the conditions listed in the Staff report. No correspondence had been received.

President Gunderson called for questions of Staff. She asked if historic decks on the house were being replaced, noting that the proposed door would be installed over a long drop. Planner Johnson replied the decks would be replaced in the future as part of a long-range plan. The Applicant intends to restore the historic, two-story porch, but that is not part of this application because restoring the porch to match available historic photographs would only require an administrative review. The Code allows restoration of historic features based on photographs or plans as an outright approval. The door would need to be secured per building codes to prevent it from being opened until the deck is replaced.

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

Stephen Lakatos, 529 35<sup>th</sup> Street, Astoria, said Planner Johnson did an excellent job summarizing the project. The foundation is not complete; the footings have been poured and the foundation walls are ready to be poured. Logically, this is the best time to tend to the basement, which was made of bare soil, concrete, and rough-sawn wood, making it uninhabitable. The historic photograph of the house showed during Staff's presentation showed the windows and door are a different style and are of a lower quality than the outside architecture of the first and second floor. The house was close to toppling down because of the condition of the basement and foundation. He decided it would make the most sense to convert the basement into a habitable space. He would like to remain as consistent as possible with the architecture of the first floor and align the basement windows on the west and north sides with the windows on the first floor. The door is not original and is only about 26 inches wide. He would like to replace it with a solid wood door that is historically appropriate. He has every intention to redo the deck within about two years. Losing the deck removed much of the character of what otherwise is a pretty blocky and nondescript house and the deck will bring back the character of the structure. He teaches at Washington State University Vancouver and interacts with many people in Portland. Everyone he runs into knows the house. When he starts to describe where the house is located, people say they have seen it or they know of it. The house is very visible and the fact that it has been in such poor condition for so many years has not been an asset to the City. It is his intention to continue working up from the foundation to restore the first and second floors. The house has been completely rewired and the entire interior is being sheet rocked; plumbing is next. He hopes the house will move from being an eyesore to something that people can be proud of. He confirmed that the porch will look exactly as it did in the original picture, but he has not yet had a detailed discussion about this with Planner Johnson. He would like to replicate the porch, but believed building codes would require the railing to be higher.

Commissioner McHone asked if the vertical siding would still be appropriate after the deck is added. Mr. Lakatos said Planner Johnson recommended vertical siding and he believed it was a good idea. The house has a massive northwest front. The house originally had horizontal siding and was open underneath, but horizontal siding was added to the foundation level at one time. So vertical siding is not historically accurate, but he believed using vertical siding was in the spirit of the original home and what was done to the home later. Even with the deck, he would like to use vertical siding if that is acceptable.

President Gunderson called for any presentations by persons in favor of, impartial to or against the application. Hearing 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.

Commissioner Caruana said he liked the way the basement ties in with the upper floor and matches nicely. However, he wished the siding were horizontal because the vertical siding on the basement is irregular. The body of the house is large, but his personal preference is for the two floors to marry each other. Planner Johnson stated she believed horizontal siding would work just as well as vertical siding after looking at photographs for the basement level. However, the foundation should still have vertical siding.

Commissioner Caruana agreed, adding that vertical siding is typical as it hides the irregular shapes of the foundation lines on most houses.

President Gunderson and Commissioner McHone agreed that horizontal siding should be used.

Mr. Lakatos stated he would be fine using horizontal siding.

Commissioner McHone added that the look of horizontal siding is a personal preference.

Commissioner Burns agreed, he liked the horizontal siding better than the vertical siding. However, the house belongs to the Applicant and he understood that the Landmarks Commission and Staff were okay allowing the Applicant to choose which siding to use.

Commissioner McHone moved that the Historic Landmarks Commission adopt the Findings and Conclusions contained in the Staff report and approve Exterior Alteration EX14-08 by Stephen Lakatos with conditions; seconded by Commissioner Caruana. Motion passed unanimously.

President Gunderson read the rules of appeal into the record.



ITEM 4(a):

NC14-02      New Construction NC14-02 by Palmberg Development & Construction LLC to construct an approximate 2,300 square foot, two story, single family dwelling adjacent to structures designated as historic at 1150 Kensington in the R-1 zone.

President Gunderson asked if anyone objected to the jurisdiction of the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) to hear this matter at this time. Cordie Riddle, 1149 Jerome, Astoria, stated she objected to the project. Staff asked if Ms. Riddle was objecting to the ability of the HLC to consider the application or if she was objecting to project itself. Ms. Riddle stated she objected to the project. President Gunderson advised that her objection would be heard in a few minutes. There were no objections to the jurisdiction. 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 she knows Jason Palmberg, but has not dealt with him for business purposes or discussed this project with him. She did not believe this would affect her decision in any way.

President Gunderson called for a presentation of the Staff report.

Planner Johnson presented the Staff report. One piece of correspondence was received, a letter discussing the elevations and differences in height, which will be addressed during approval of the applications for building permits. The visible portion of the foundation may increase a bit, but foundations are generally not part of any major portion of the house. Usually, foundation heights vary, and this project may vary from approximately one to seven feet, depending on the elevations. Staff recommends approval with the conditions listed in the Staff report.

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

Jason Palmberg, 1790 SE 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Astoria, said he spent some time with a realtor trying to choose a house plan. The plan he has chosen is a standard Suntlet Plan and he spoke with Planner Johnson about how to finish the house. Obviously, the cultured stone around the front of the house is not Craftsman style. Therefore, he did some quick modifications to what the house would look like. He has built a handful of houses at Mill Pond. He eliminated the bump out for the fireplace because the look was not compatible and extended into the setback. He tried to choose a house that did not look very tall compared to the houses behind it. The back of the house does not have a full second story. He offered to answer questions.

President Gunderson and Commissioner Burns said they were happy the Applicant eliminated the stone.

President Gunderson called for any presentations by persons in favor of, impartial to or against the application.

Cordie Riddle, 1149 Jerome, Astoria, spoke in opposition to the application, stating she had a letter written by Dave Ambrose who lives at 1179 Jerome, Astoria, noting the first sentence on Page 3 refers to the proposed residence being located on the level area of a sloped lot. This portion of the lot is visibly not level from east to west. The lot slopes at least five feet from west to east as assessed from the adjacent landowner's property.

President Gunderson explained that the HLC had a copy of the letter, which they have reviewed. Ms. Riddle said she was concerned about flooding issues. The property below the Applicant's property already has problems and creek beds are present. She wanted to know how building on the lot would help the situation. There was water in the area in August and all of the houses below the Applicant's property have problems with flooding. The clear cut will not make the issues easier on any of the neighbors. This issue will reduce property values. She wanted to know who would be responsible if flooding issues should occur.

President Gunderson clarified the role of the HLC is to ensure that the project design blends in with the historic neighborhood.

Ms. Riddle stated that the HLC did not listen to her before about issues with other projects, so she thought she would attend the meeting to see if she could speak about her concerns again, but evidently, this is a done deal.



President Gunderson asked if Ms. Riddle had spoken to the HLC in the past. Ms. Riddle said she spoke at the last City Council meeting about the placement of the house, but not about the design of the house.

President Gunderson explained that the HLC only deals with the design and noted Ms. Riddle's concerns have to do with building codes. The HLC cares about Ms. Riddle's concerns, but those concerns are outside the scope of what the Commission is tasked to do. Planner Johnson added that Ms. Riddle's concerns would be addressed by the Building Inspector and the City Engineer when the building plans are reviewed.

Ms. Riddle indicated she understood and said she had no problems with making sure the house was pretty.

Rick Winters, 1150 Jerome, Astoria, asked how it was possible for the house to be built at 1150 Kensington when Kensington does not exist in this location. Planner Johnson explained that when the City was platted, the streets were platted on maps and exist as rights-of-way. Any right-of-way on a platted map can be improved as a street, driveway, or public access. Therefore, Kensington does exist on the map, but is simply unimproved at this time. As development occurs, the streets are improved by the developer, not the City, to provide access to the development. She clarified that the street was never improved because there has never been development in that area. Any unimproved platted streets in the City could remain unimproved for a myriad of reasons.

Planner Johnson explained that platting a right-of-way allows that street to be built. However, the building of that street depends on developers who would want to build and pay for the street. The City allows a substandard street, which is equivalent to a driveway, within a right-of-way, if a house does not have access to an improved street, with the condition that a fire suppression system is required in the house as a concession for building a substandard street. Driveways exist all over town at the dead ends of streets and this situation is not uncommon. She added that she or the City Engineer could answer further questions about the street. The City Engineer and Building Inspector can address questions about the water and drainage issues; they are already aware of these issues. She said Ms. Riddle is welcome to come to City Hall to speak to the City Engineer and Building Inspector.

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

President Gunderson believed the design was within the guidelines of the neighborhood. She appreciated that the height and pitch of the roof had been taken into consideration by the applicant.

Commissioner McHone agreed, adding that consideration of the rear slope of the roof to minimize the impact of the view from the neighbors on Jerome Street was a nice touch. He agreed with Staff's recommendations.

Commissioner Burns agreed, adding that he also liked the garage door.

Commissioner Caruana said he was fine with the design, especially Staff's recommendations. However, it is difficult to get a picture of how the siding will look. He liked what the Applicant had done in Mill Pond with siding choices to break up the houses and give them some charm. Therefore, he hoped that upon final review of siding selections for this house, the Applicant would choose something similar to what the HLC is used to seeing from him.

Commissioner Burns moved that the Historic Landmarks Commission adopt the Findings and Conclusions contained in the Staff report and approve New Construction NC14-02 by Palmberg Development & Construction LLC, with conditions; seconded by Commissioner McHone. Motion passed unanimously.

President Gunderson read the rules of appeal into the record.

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

##### ITEM 6(a): Certified Local Government (CLG) Program Review

President Gunderson reported that she, Rosemary Johnson, and Sherri Williams attended a State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO's) CLG four-year review which was conducted in August 2014. Many positive things were said about the programs that Planner Johnson has started. She noted Planner Johnson has kept the



Historic Preservation Program on track and goes above and beyond in all of her work. Sitting through the audit was great because SHPO said the HLC has exceeded all of the requirements. She read comments made by the SHPO representative during the review, which indicated Astoria has a model program. SHPO recommended a representative visit the person replacing Planner Johnson to help get them up to speed and ensure the same level of customer service. The SHPO representative liked Astoria's recently updated historic review processes, so much so that she is recommending other cities use the same processes.

Planner Johnson said the results of the review are a reflection of the HLC's decisions and professionalism. It was good for President Gunderson to hear the questions asked at the review about how Astoria's program and Commission work. It is also good for the Historic Landmarks Commission to hear how well SHPO believes they are doing. The programs are not possible without a strong Commission to support the Staff.

#### ITEM 6(b): Oregon Heritage All-Star Community Application

President Gunderson noted that the Oregon Heritage All-Star Community Application was also discussed during the CLG review. The SHPO representative was adamant that Astoria apply for the designation because the City has already met many of the requirements. Staff requested assistance from the HLC to prepare an application for the designation because Planner Johnson has many other projects to finish before she retires. To complete the application, information from many different areas must be gathered and President Gunderson believed the Commissioners could help put the application together.

Planner Johnson said when the program began in 2012, SHPO encouraged Astoria to apply. Therefore, she received approval from City Council to proceed with the application. The designation will open up opportunities for grants and will indicate to the State that Astoria is operating at a high level of historic preservation / heritage. The designation applies to the City as a whole and all of its programs for historic preservation, which is why the application takes so much time to complete. She explained how she believed Astoria complied with all 20 of the eligibility requirements, noting that compliance with just 15 are necessary to receive the designation. She had started to collect information about the various historic organizations and events in Astoria, but she did not have enough time to finish gathering all the details. She hoped each Commissioner would contact some of the agencies to collect hard copies of the necessary information. The application describes what and how much information is necessary to comply with each of the eligibility requirements. Once all the information has been collected, she would put the application package together and send it to the State. She hoped to have all of the materials by mid-November 2014 so she could submit the application before she leaves in January 2015.

Commissioner Burns said he had the time to assist and offered to contact the Historical Society, Maritime Museum, and the College. He offered to review the application and determine what items he could complete and then let the HLC know what other items needed their assistance.

The HLC and Staff discussed how to answer questions on the application and talked about some of businesses, organizations, and events in Astoria that could be included. Planner Johnson listed some specific organizations that she believed should be contacted. Commissioners decided to communicate with each other and Staff through email as they decide who would contact each group and divide tasks. President Gunderson noted that Historical Society Board members could help gather information as well.

Planner Johnson believed that only about three or four cities in Oregon have this designation.

Kent Easom and Rachel Jensen, who were in the audience, offered to help gather information for the application.

#### ITEM 6(c): Certified Local Government (CLG) Workshop

Planner Johnson said the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) would conduct a CLG Workshop on October 1, 2014 in McMinnville in conjunction with the Oregon Main Street Conference. HLC members are encouraged to attend. She gave an overview of the Workshop. She noted that the City will pay for the HLC member's attendance including travel money and they should to contact Sherri Williams at the City if they planned to attend.

President Gunderson said she and Kent Easom planned to attend all three days of both events. Planner Johnson added that she would only be attending the CLG workshop.

STATUS REPORTS – ITEM 7:

Planner Johnson has included status report photographs of the following: NC13-01 for 636 14th Street, NC13-02 for 636 14th Street, HD13-03 for 1 8th Street aka 2 7th Street, MR13-01 for 1598 Duane, EX13-04 for 96 W Commercial, HD12-01 for 1004-1008 Commercial, HD12-02 for 1254 Commercial, EX11-05 for 646 16th Street, NC11-06 for 1153 Duane. All projects are complete or near completion and conditions have been met. These status report photographs are for Commission information.


ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

ATTEST:

  
Secretary

APPROVED:

  
City Manager