

West Seneca Historical Commission Meeting Minutes for April 2024

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 P.M. by Chairperson Paul Lang.

Fire Safety Notifications were stated.

Roll Call:

Paul Lang – Present

Ray Ball – Present

Fran D’Amico – Present

Michael Siuta – Present

Dave Schultz – Absent (medical/awaiting formal resignation)

Julian Adams, Historic Director Carmina Wood Design, Guest

3 students and 1 resident were also present

Motion by Mr. Ball, seconded by Ms. D’Amico to waive the reading of both the March 6th and March 13th meeting minutes. Minutes approved.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Final review of proposed demolition legislation;

The cumbersome wording in 3.5 of the draft legislation was removed. Everything else was left as agreed upon during the work session.

- Town feedback from draft submission

The draft legislation was forwarded to the Building and Code Department, Town Attorney, Supervisor Dickson, and Deputy Supervisor Greenan. The only one to respond was the Town Building Inspector.

Their responses were as follows:

- Concerned about the process/timing
- Is there a way to generate a town wide map indicating the areas of historical significance or show buildings that are already on the national registry – this will give inspectors a centralized location to review areas while processing demolition applications.
- Concerned about the proposed \$250 processing fee - This fee seems steep compared to the normal processing fee which could run \$100 - \$150 for a standard demolition
- Can the fee be a no fee demolition permit if the demolition is approved

Mr. Lang responded that the reason the Commission is pushing for this is because they do not have a comprehensive town list. Compiling a list like this is time consuming and costly. The commission is also trying to protect something a bit more specified and special, rather than just a regular building/structure.

Mr. Lang stated he was concerned no one else responded other than Mr. Schieber. He wanted to be ready to move forward with the process. Mr. Ball commented that the mechanical questions or logistics of the legislation can be handled down the road. Mr. Lang stated that a lot of the reviews can be handled administratively through a designated person on the board, such as the Architect.

Mr. Lang would like the Commission to go over the legislation and applications. If they are all in agreement on how things are written, he would like to proceed with the next steps.

Julian Adams questioned if Consent Agendas had been discussed. Many communities have a lot of work coming to the Commission and have a designated person that uses a certain criteria to screen submissions. All submission decisions need to be documented and then brought before the Commission at the next meeting to be discussed. Having this is a way to keep the process going and not clog up the town's work. Mr. Siuta questioned who the screener would be – they would be designated by the Commission. Mr. Adams suggested making a small worksheet for this process - this is the purpose of the demolition application.

- Review of proposed legislation

Motion by Mr. Ball, seconded by Ms. D'Amico, to approve and move forward with the legislation document – Passed

- Review of proposed demolition application
 - The \$250 fee is required for this application as a lot of leg work needs to be done to determine the status, however the fee will be returned to the applicant if demolition is approved
 - If the demolition is denied, in theory the Commission is or will be listing the property or structure as historic
 - The demolition could be a significant impact, so the higher fee is warranted

Motion by Ms. D'Amico, seconded by Mr. Siuta, to approve and move forward with the demolition document - Passed

2. Final review of proposed landmark application;

- Review of proposed landmark application
 - The \$50 fee is required to list something that is not in jeopardy of being demolished

Motion by Mr. Ball, seconded by Ms. D'Amico, to approve the landmark application, pending the change in the title to Landmark Application and change of the fee to \$50 – Passed

3. Status of 2544 Clinton Street Update – Review / Landmark Test Review

- No changes or notice of any pending demolition permits or advancements tied to the project
- The Commission is using this property as an example to run through the applications and make sure that everything is in working order
- A demolition request would have been received from the developer in advance of their ownership - the demolition application would be used in this process
- When an application comes in the Commission will need to do a bit of research to double check the property is at least 50 years old
- Who does the research – when the application is received the Commission has Forty-Five days to do research and give an answer
- The Commission needs to do some cross referencing to verify information given on the application
- The Commission will probably make the motion to prevent the demolition and then fill out their own Landmark Application on this property
- Since the Commission is doing a self-nomination, they need to do their own research on the property – current owners have already done their own research and turned it into SHPO
- The people proposing the development of this property said that they were open to keeping the center portion of the main building – what does that do to the setting – the setting is important, all 22 acres cannot be kept – what you want to see is the wall, the house and the lawn
- If the Commission was to self-nominate this property as it sits today, they are nominating 22 acres, including the wall, and the setting
- Hypothetically, if this property was to be landmarked the Commission makes the recommendation to the Town Board, they then need to approve it, and then go before the planning board which will then kick it to the Commission to review it as it has been landmarked as historical

- If a property is nominated, does the owner get any tax break or benefit – there is a deferral for a certain time period which can be an incentive
- Concerned about the time and process for the research – there is no budget for this at the time but will be needed in the future

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NEW BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

4. Chairperson's Report: Review of Board membership

- Preservation Studios has received everything needed to advance – Mr. Lang will double check and make sure everything was received from Ms. Greenan
- The Preservation Conference for the CLG training is coming up – Ms. D'Amico is planning to attend. Mr. Lang and Mr. Adams will be there as well
- Mr. Lang is planning to speak with SHPO, while at the conference, regarding applying for grants – this will help fund the completion of surveys
- A CLG survey is being forwarded to the Commission members to participate in – answers from the survey will help put together a CLG handbook

5. Guest – Julian Adams, Historic Director Carmina Wood Design

ISSUES OF THE PUBLIC

None

COMMUNICATIONS BY BOARD MEMBERS

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 P.M.