

**MINUTES**  
**VIEUX CARRÉ COMMISSION**  
**WEDNESDAY, September 3, 2014 - 1:30 P.M.**  
**City Council Chamber, City Hall - 1300 Perdido Street**

**PRESENT:** Nicholas S. Musso, Chairman  
Daniel C. Taylor, Vice-Chairman  
Leslie S. Stokes, Secretary  
C.J. Blanda  
Patricia C. Denechaud  
Alfred "Pio" Lyons  
Michael A. Skinner

**ABSENT:** Jorge A. Henriquez

**STAFF PRESENT:** Lary P. Hesdorffer, Director; Sarah Ripple, Building Plans Examiner;  
Nicholas G. Albrecht, Building Inspector; Melissa Quigley, Assistant City  
Attorney.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** John Baus, Mary Adele Baus, Michael Buckley, Bryan Drude, Kirk  
Fabacher, Rene Fransen, Robert Freilich, Walter Gallas, Chuck Garber,  
CoCo Garrett, Albin Guillot, Susan Guillot, Anthony Johnson, Susan  
Klein, Kenneth Lobell, Meg Lousteau, Michael Martin, Myles Martin,  
David McMurphy, Patricia Meadowcroft, Sean Meenan, Cher Miller,  
Gregory Pierce, Karmen Rajamani, Robert Ripley, Bob Simms, Sandra  
Stokes, Robert Vanlangendonck, and John C. Williams.

**I. ROLL CALL**

Chairman Musso called the meeting to order at approximately 1:30 PM and, requested the roll call. Mr. Hesdorffer called the roll, noting the presence of a quorum with seven (7) members in attendance, adding that any vote will require a minimum of five (5) in favor in order to pass.

**II. REVIEW OF MINUTES from Vieux Carré Commission meeting of August 6, 2014**

Mr. Blanda moved, Mrs. Denechaud seconded, to accept the minutes of the meeting of August 6, 2014, as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

**III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

In lieu of a "normal" Chairman's Report, Mr. Musso commended the public on its interest in VCC projects and encouraged the members of the community to keep up their enthusiasm and participation in following and speaking their concerns to the Commission. Regardless of which side of an issue anyone may land, the Chairman expressed his view that hearing from the public is valuable to the VCC's process.

Secondly he spoke about what may be perceived confusion regarding the VCC's process for public hearings, especially when they pertain to larger scale projects where numerous reviews may place. He noted that this meeting marked the first VCC review of the new Café Habana project and that such projects that may be more complicated or which may elicit a greater level of public interest, there can easily be three levels of review, both at the Architecture Committee level as well as with the full VCC. Typically, there is first review by the Commission's Architecture Committee followed by VCC review. Also, there are generally three areas of concentration in the process, starting with conceptual review, proceeding with design development, and ending with final or construction document review. Additionally, there can be further reviews if other concerns must be addressed. And what is on this agenda is the Commission's first opportunity to see what has been the Architecture Committee's preliminary or conceptual review. He emphasized that depending on the project, different reviews may take place.

Thirdly, he commented on what part that the VCC plays in the overall review of these types of projects. He commented on the questions of community rights and property rights and how they are considered in reference to a proposed development. He stressed that the VCC is not the only agency involved in these reviews, especially as recommendations may affect the property development rights and how the rights of the community may also be affected. Others engaged in these considerations will be City Planning, Safety & Permits and Zoning. Each in its own way will be needed to review and deal with aspects of the project. But the VCC is not the sole entity charged with responsibilities to comment upon, affect change or even grant approvals in the process.

He then asked Asst. City Attorney, Melissa Quigley, to comment on the technical aspects of the review process and how applications are considered when dealing with exterior alterations and

changes of use. Ms. Quigley noted that the VCC and its Architecture Committee will be considering the physical alterations or changes that accompany a proposal that entails a change of use. The design elements are under the purview of the VCC while the decision-making on use itself is a function of zoning and may be subject to review by the City Planning Commission along with consideration of land, lots and resubdivision. She added that the meeting is a “public open meeting” and that the VCC will follow the open meeting laws. She noted that there are many speakers who have submitted comment cards; each speaker would be given 2 minutes to speak, and each will be timed. She urged everyone to keep their comments germane to the areas of VCC jurisdiction and consideration so that the meeting can continue to move smoothly and everyone will have an opportunity to be heard.

#### IV. DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Noting the length of the agenda, Mr. Hesdorffer, briefly commented on the recent staff change, saying that Gordon McLeod had transferred from the VCC to Councilmember Guidry’s office. He thanked him for his service of over 2½ years, including his final assistance in preparing this agenda and wished him well in his new post.

#### V. OLD BUSINESS

631 Decatur (Upper Pontalba Bldg.): City of New Orleans, owner; The Fudgery, Inc., tenant; John C. Williams Architects, LLC, applicant. Revised proposal to install venting system on rear courtyard elevation, per application & drawings received 06/03/14, 06/17/14, & 08/19/14, respectively.

Ms. Ripple gave the staff presentation with Mr. Williams representing the application. Mr. Musso reiterated the Committee’s recommendation for approval of the installation as presented. Mr. Skinner requested clarification regarding the location of the ventilation ductwork and was informed that the ductwork as proposed would run between the two windows. In answer to Mr. Blanda’s question, it was also stated that the existing downspout is to remain. Noting that his question might only pertain to Zoning, Robert Vanlangendonck, recapitulated the previous VCC actions regarding this project in detail, noting that the purple-rated Upper Pontalba building warrants extreme caution. He further commented that open nature of the shop will make it more of a place for entertainment rather than a confectionary and with the entire interior capable of being open to the sidewalk, allowing all noise to spill out to the exterior, he urged denial of the application.

Mr. Musso further explained that the tenant is not installing a full kitchen, the Commission cannot deny the application based on the actual use, and the confectionary use is approvable by Zoning. Mr. Lyons moved, Mrs. Denechaud seconded, to **approve** the installation of the venting system, proposed in conjunction with the *change of use* and consistent with Staff and Architectural Committee recommendation of 08/26/14. The motion failed to pass with Mr. Lyons and Mrs. Denechaud voting in favor and Mrs. Stokes and Messrs. Skinner, Blanda and Taylor voting in opposition. Without a further motion, consideration of the application ended.

1005-09 Decatur: 1005 Decatur St., LLC, owner; Kirk Fabacher, architect/applicant. Proposal to **demolish** brown-rated, one-story infill between main building and detached service-ell, in conjunction with a **change of use** from *vacant* to *residential*, per application & materials received 06/24/14. [**Note: this meeting marks the end of the 30-day layover period**]

Ms. Ripple gave the staff report with Mr. Fabacher representing the application. Requiring no further discussion, Mr. Blanda moved to **approve** the recommendations of the staff relative to the proposed demolition. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion with an amendment to also **approve** the **conceptual** design which will return to the Architectural Committee for final approval prior to the issuance of permits for the work. With Mr. Blanda’s acceptance of the amendment, the motion passed unanimously.

Various locations: City of New Orleans, owner; Daniel Lund, applicant. Proposal to install thirty-five (35) new/additional antennae on Vieux Carré sidewalks to expand the existing distributed antennae system, per application & materials received 07/23/14 & 08/19/14.

NOTE: The PowerPoint presentation did not include visual images for this application; as a consequence, the Chairman urged members of the public to review the proposed locations on the site plan at the VCC or to check for a map uploaded to the VCC web-page.

Mr. Hesdorffer reported to the Commission on the status of the project and proposed addition of thirty-five new antennae on the sidewalks of the French Quarter, with Ms. Rajamani present on behalf of the application. Following the staff’s summary, Mr. Blanda stated that the late chairman, Dr. Lupin, had asked two years prior, during the review of the Phase 2 proposal, if security cameras could be mounted on the poles and incorporated into the system. Ms. Rajamani confirmed that cameras could be incorporated depending up on the specifications of the

equipment to be used. Mr. Hesdorffer noted that there is no current City program in place for public cameras being placed on the streets. Bob Simms, chairman of the French Quarter Management District's Security Task Force said that the FQMD had long discussions to put cameras on the antenna two years prior but were unable to accomplish the project due to financial difficulties. He urged that the same cooperation would be advantageous with the current Phase 3 proposal. Mr. Taylor reiterated 08/26/14 recommendations of the Architecture Committee that any repairs or replacement of sidewalk materials, whether it happens to be brick or stone or concrete, will match the material that is disturbed as part of the antennae installation. Mr. Musso requested that the project return to the full Commission in order to present the final design to the public. Mr. Taylor moved, Mrs. Stokes seconded, grant **conceptual approval** to the proposal consistent with Architecture Committee recommendation and staff analysis and recommendations of 09/03/14, with the application to return to the Committee for final review once all design questions and locations are set. The motion passed unanimously.

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

733-35 & 737-39 Iberville: Danny Caldwell, owner; John C. Williams Architects, LLC. Proposal to modify Iberville facades, per application & materials received 04/08/14 & 08/06/14, respectfully.

Ms. Ripple gave the staff report with Mr. Williams present on behalf of the application. Following the presentation, Mr. Blanda requested clarification on proposed exterior lighting, to which Mr. Williams restated the general scope of the proposal noting that no exterior lighting is proposed at this time. Mr. Lyons moved for **approval** consistent with staff analysis and recommendation of 09/03/14, including the Architecture Committee's recommendation of approval. Mr. Skinner seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

631 Toulouse: SU LU ETTE DE, LLC, owner; James S. Cripps, applicant. Proposal to demolish brown-rated shed building in rear courtyard, per application & materials received 06/17/14 & 07/29/14, respectively. [**Note: this meeting marks the beginning of the 30-day layover period**]

Ms. Ripple presented the staff report with Mr. Cripps representing the application. Mr. Musso asked Mr. Cripps about the findings of the exploratory demolition. Mr. Cripps explained that the thickness of the masonry wall is greater than one wythe of brick, thereby allowing him to move forward with the proposed the removal of the first wythe. Requiring no further discussion, Mr. Taylor moved, Mrs. Denechaud seconded, to **approve** the proposal to demolish the unrated, courtyard shed structure and at the same time to **waive** the 30-day layover period for consideration of the demolition. The motion passed unanimously.

716 Dauphine: White Friar South, LLC, et al, owner/applicant. Conceptual review of a proposal to remove fire escapes, replace select third floor windows & doors, and create new opening in courtyard wall, per application & materials received 07/21/14.

Ms. Ripple presented the staff report. The Chairman noted that project architect was out of town but had requested the hearing go forward despite his absence. Following the staff presentation, Mr. Skinner inquired whether the applicant has photographs or evidence of the design for the courtyard gate and its location in the garden wall. Mr. Musso commented that no photographs have surfaced yet and that exploratory demolition on the interior side of the wall may yield some evidence. Ms. Ripple also clarified that both the applicant and VCC staff have intentions of investigating further for a photograph or documentation. With no further discussion, Mr. Lyons moved, Mr. Blanda seconded, to **conceptually approve** the proposal consistent the recommendations of the staff and Architectural Committee as of 08/12/14. The motion passed unanimously.

240 Burgundy: Chateau Orleans & Co, owner; James S. Cripps, architect/applicant. Proposal to install new elevator tower & balcony, per application & materials received 07/23/14.

With the applicant having left the chamber, consideration of the application was **deferred** until later in the meeting when the applicant returned. [NOTE: When the application was readdressed later in the afternoon, the applicant had not returned to the meeting; therefore the Chair ruled that due to a lack of representation the application, the item would be **deferred** until a later meeting date.

## VII. CHANGE OF USE HEARINGS

235 N. Peters: Carlo Dematteo, LLC, owner; DBA All About New Orleans, applicant. Proposal to install signage in conjunction with a **change of use** from *restaurant* to *visitor information center*, per application & materials received 07/22/14 & 09/20/14.

Ms. Ripple gave the staff report on the proposal with Ms. Cher Miller representing the application. Mr. Musso expressed concern over the particular description of the use as a *visitor information center* noting his concern that the name suggests some official status rather than a

commercial entity. He further requested that “retail” be included in the use description. With no further discussion, Mr. Lyons moved, Mr. Blanda seconded, to **approve** the application consistent with staff recommendations of 09/03/14 and to authorize issuance of a permit for the proposed signage in conjunction with the **change of use**. The motion carried unanimously.

620 Decatur: New Jax Commercial, LLC, et al., owners; Robin Roberts, applicant. Proposal to install signage and to install new millwork and louvered vents, all in conjunction with a **change of use** from *vacant* to *restaurant*, per application & materials received 07/22/14.

Ms. Ripple made the staff presentation with Mr. Lobell representing the application. Mrs. Denechaud inquired as to whether the restaurant would only open for lunch, as noted in “hours of operation, 11AM-2PM”. Mr. Lobell explained that the facility will start as a lunch facility, possibly including dinner service as well, served with a buffet style, but that the evenings and weekends are intended to be reserved for special events and banquets. Mrs. Denechaud moved, Mr. Skinner seconded, to **approve** the proposed exterior changes as recommended by the Architecture Committee and in conjunction with the noted **change of use** from *vacant* to *restaurant*. The motion passed unanimously.

822 Barracks & 1220 Dauphine: Lauricella Bourbon Properties, LLC, owner; Barda Properties, LLC, applicant; studioMV, LLC/fl+WB, architects. Conceptual proposal to renovate buildings in conjunction with a **change of use** from *vacant* to *residential*, to convert former Maison Hospitaliere buildings to a 16-unit condominium complex, per application & materials received 08/12/14.

Ms. Ripple gave the staff report on the proposal with Mr. McMurphy in attendance on behalf of the application. Before beginning general discussion, Mr. Hesdorffer read the VCC’s approved language of what constitutes “conceptual approval” in considering both the Maison Hospitaliere proposal, and the Café Habana proposal which followed on the agenda, since both involve “conceptual” proposals. Having heard the staff report Mrs. Denechaud noted that much more review and refinement would take place prior to final approval, supported the Architecture Committee’s recommendation and moved to grant **conceptual approval** to the proposal. Mr. Blanda seconded the motion. Chairman Musso then opened the discussion to the public.

Michael Buckley, 1226 Dauphine, expressed concerns over the height and size of the expanded new third floor living space with terrace additions and so forth. He stated that the 1220 Dauphine building currently blends into the neighborhood but the new additions would greatly increase the structure’s mass and visual obtrusiveness. Mr. Taylor replied that the Committee has similar concerns regarding the mass and effect of proposed changes and that they will be addressed in further reviews.

John Baus, whose family owns 831 Gov. Nicholls, expressed concern regarding loss of privacy based on the size and locations of the side additions proposed for the 1220 Dauphine building, noting that the balconies would be within a few feet of the property line and stated the opinion that the design does not conform to guidelines.

Mary Adele Baus, 831 Gov. Nicholls, reiterated Mr. Baus’ concerns, particularly regarding the new balcony additions along their common property line.

With no further discussion, the Chair referred to the previously made motion to grant **conceptual approval** to the proposal. The motion passed unanimously.

[Noting the next application with numerous speakers was expected to be lengthy, the Chairman declared a 10 minute recess.]

1036 & 1040 Esplanade: Esplanade Nola, LLC, owner; Myles Martin, applicant. Conceptual proposal to renovate structures, in conjunction with a **change of use** from *vacant* to *restaurant*, per online application & materials received 08/12/14.

Ms. Ripple presented the staff report in reference to both properties. Mr. Meenan spoke briefly noting his pride in the project and appreciation in working with the Architecture Committee.

Afterward, the following speakers addressed the Commission offering statements that included general observations as well as both negative criticism and positive recommendations, and requests that consideration of the project be deferred: Susan Klein, 1020 St Louis; Walter Gallas, LA Landmarks Society; CoCo Garrett, French Quarter Citizens; Meg Lousteau, VCPORA; Rene Fransen, 1026 Esplanade; Michael Martin, 2458 Gen Collins; Gregory Pierce, 1017 Esplanade; Albin Guillot, 1130 Dauphine; Susan Guillot, 1130 Dauphine; Chuck Garber, 1032 Esplanade; Anthony Johnson; Bryan Drude, French Quarter Advocates; Robert Ripley, 1041 Esplanade; Sandra Stokes, Advocacy Chair - LA Landmarks Society; Patricia Meadowcroft, 1308 Chartres; and Robert Freilich, 1240 Lesepps.

The Chair then turned to commissioners for additional questions or comments. Mr. Blanda asked about the type of restaurant proposed and whether the project would involve tax credits. Mr. Meenan replied that it would be a standard restaurant (per definition in the City's zoning code) and that he was working with the State Historic Preservation Office in reference to qualifying his project for tax credits.

Mr. Lyons noted that critical comments about the incomplete nature of the early plans before the VCC. He explained that the normal way for such projects is that they begin with schematic development of concepts and evolve with added details and specific changes through to a final design. He noted that these are carefully reviewed by a professional staff and architects on the Commission and that the project, in its conceptual form without fully developed detail, is as it should be for the current stage of review.

Mr. Taylor then moved to grant **approval** of the conceptual design consistent with the staff analysis and recommendation of 09/03/14 and Architecture Committee action of 08/26/14. Mr. Lyons seconded the motion, which passed with Mesdames Denechaud and Stokes and Messrs. Lyons, Musso and Taylor in favor. Messrs. Blanda and Skinner voted in opposition.

#### VIII. APPEALS & VIOLATIONS

912 Orleans: Michael J. & Patricia K. Burdine, owners; L.K. Harmon, architect/applicant. Appeal of Architecture Committee **denial** to install fourth (4) light fixture as part of façade lighting scheme, per materials received 05/06/14. [**Notice of Violation** received **04/05/14**]

Staff noted that the applicant, on behalf of the owner, had requested that this item be withdrawn from the agenda and rescheduled for the next Vieux Carré Commission meeting to be held on October 1, 2014.

#### IX. RATIFICATION of Architectural Committee and Staff actions since the Vieux Carré Commission meeting of August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Mrs. Stokes moved, Mr. Blanda seconded, to ratify the actions taken by the Architectural Committee and Staff since the Vieux Carré Commission meeting of August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The motion passed unanimously.

With no other business to be considered, Mr. Lyons moved for adjournment. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:50 PM.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leslie Stokes, Secretary

NOTE: These minutes are a summary of actions taken and are not a verbatim transcription of the meeting.