

VIEUX CARRE COMMISSION

Mitchell J. Landrieu
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Bryan Block
DIRECTOR

Minutes of the **Vieux Carré Commission** meeting of **Wednesday, October 5, 2016 - 1:30 P.M.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Daniel C. Taylor, Vice-Chairman
Leslie S. Stokes, Secretary
C.J. Blanda
Rick Fifield
Michael A. Skinner
Patricia C. Denechaud

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Nicholas S. Musso, Chairman
Jorge A. Henriquez

STAFF PRESENT: Renée Bourgogne, Architectural Historian; Nicholas G. Albrecht, Building Plans Examiner; Erin Vogt, Building Plans Examiner; Tony Whitfield, Inspector; Melissa Quigley, Assistant City Attorney

STAFF ABSENT: Bryan D. Block, Director; Erika Gates, Inspector;

OTHERS PRESENT: Mark Thomas, Henry Hanisee, Deborah Harkins,

I. ROLL CALL

Vice chairman Taylor called the meeting to order at 1:40 PM. A quorum was established with the presence of five (5) of the eight (8) seated Commissioners present. [Ms. Stokes arrived after the roll was called.]

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES

Mr. Blanda moved, Mr. Skinner seconded, that the minutes of the Vieux Carré Commission meeting of September 7, 2016 be approved as previously circulated. The motion passed unanimously.

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Taylor gave the Chairman's report beginning with a reminder that the Foundation Gala will be Monday, Oct. 24th and invited all to attend. Mr. Taylor then noted the improvements that have been recently implemented to the review process. Mr. Taylor noted that previously a Stop Work Order (SWO) could only be lifted by the Commission and that all violations were reviewed by the Architectural Committee. Mr. Taylor noted that the Architectural Committee has also been able to allow for the final review of certain projects to be handled at the staff level. Mr. Taylor noted that these changes often take weeks off of the review process.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Bourgogne gave the following Director's Report on behalf of Mr. Block:

- While attending the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions conference in Mobile in July, Bryan met with a representative of Karcher North America, a global provider of cleaning technology. Karcher is interested in collaborating with the City of New Orleans as we prepare for the upcoming Tricentennial celebration by cleaning key historic, architectural and cultural icons at no cost to the City. We have sought reassurance from Karcher that they understand the invaluable nature of our historic fabric and that their proposed cleaning methodology must be appropriate as per the

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. They have provided ample evidence that this organization has a history and reputation for cleaning such important cultural icons and that any cleaning methods used would be approvable.

They are proposing to schedule a visit to New Orleans in mid-October, entirely at their expense, to discuss this further and to explore together if their services would indeed be of value to us.

- The Rooftop Construction Subcommittee met in the District on September 16 to observe firsthand several existing rooftop conditions. These included 231 Decatur Street (House of Blues), 521 Wilkinson Row and 932 Chartres Street. From these vantage points we were also able to see many other different rooftop configurations. The group was made aware of a considerable amount of mechanical equipment that was highly visible from these locations, as well as rooftop construction, both approved and unapproved. There will be ongoing discussion about the appropriateness of the various types of rooftop construction that was observed at upcoming meetings that have yet to be scheduled. A public notice of the next meeting will be distributed once it has been scheduled.
- The City will be implementing a publicly available bike sharing system for use by residents and visitors. It is the City's intent that the system provides an affordable and convenient transportation option within New Orleans. The City anticipates that bike share trips may tend to include short bike trips to connect to other public transport and to replace vehicle and/or pedestrian trips. The propose bike share system should cover a significant portion of the City, with much of the first phase to be located within the French Quarter. The City hopes to launch the system by summer 2017, Staff will be working with the vendor to facilitate the appropriate location of bike stations and kiosks. More information be presented to the Commission as it becomes available.

V. OLD BUSINESS

336-340 Decatur St: Henry Hanisee, applicant; Joseph C Paciera, owner; Proposal to demolish existing yellow-rated structure in preparation for construction of new four story building, per application and materials received 08/06/16.

[NOTE: This meeting marks the end of the 30 day layover period]

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff presentation with Ms. Harkins and Messrs. Hanisee and Thomas present on behalf of the application. Mr. Taylor inquired if the applicants had completed an environmental study. Ms. Harkins stated that a Phase 2 environmental study was completed in 2011 and that an environmental inspector would be present to determine the necessary scope of remediation work. Mr. Thomas stated that the report uncovered no fuel tanks but noted that some soil may be contaminated. Ms. Denechaud inquired about the remedial process if there is contaminated soil. Mr. Thomas replied that if the soil is contaminated that it would have to be removed. Mr. Taylor inquired if they have a work plan for remediation. Mr. Thomas replied that they have one and that it can be submitted to staff. Mr. Hanisee stated that they have a contract that can be extended if necessary to remediate the soil.

Mr. Skinner inquired about the parapet shown on the roof. Mr. Fifield stated that the Architectural Committee had asked that the parapet be removed at the Architectural Committee meeting.

Mr. Opotowsky, representing D B C Inc., the owner of the neighboring building, stated that they were opposed to the demolition at this time. Mr. Opotowsky cited environmental issues as a reason for not allowing the demolition at this time. He continued that the owner has only commented in the last ten days and that there are open items that they would like to resolve. Mr. Opotowsky continued that they had not seen the 2011 report and that any disturbance may disturb soil under the neighboring building. Mr. Opotowsky also stated that they were not

aware of a foundation plan, waterproofing plan, he expressed concern that there would no longer be access to the wall once the building was built, and concerns about noise, staging, and mobilization of work.

Ms. Harkins responded that a letter had been sent to the listed address of the owner and that a packet of information was hand delivered to the property.

Mr. Williams stated that the owner had asked him to step in and that they want to make sure things happen correctly. Mr. Williams stated that there were issues with remediation and other issues that need to be worked out.

Mr. Skinner moved for **approval** of the demolition contingent upon developed plans for the environmental work, HVAC, and work related to the common wall. Ms. Denechaud seconded the motion. Mr. Fifield inquired if it was Mr. Skinner's intention to have the Architectural Committee review these documents. Mr. Skinner replied that yes that was his intention. Ms. Quigley clarified that the Architectural Committee would review the environmental, HVAC, and common wall documentation prior to the issuance of the demolition permit.

Mr. Taylor stated that the applicants need to provide the requested documentation to be reviewed by the Architectural Committee and stated that it would be beneficial to develop a plan with the neighbor.

The vote was called and the motion for **approval** passed unanimously.

907-17 Governor Nicholls St: John C. Williams, applicant; 913 Governor Nicholls LLC, owner; Proposal to renovate existing building, demolish existing parking structure, and construct new three story building in conjunction with proposed resubdivision with 1211-15 Dauphine St, per application & materials received 04/13/16 & 09/29/16.

Prior to the presentation of the staff report, Mr. Taylor noted that the application had been deferred to the Architectural Committee at the July Commission meeting, but had not yet returned to the Committee for further review.

Ms. Vogt presented the staff report with Messrs. Williams and Burgos present on behalf of the application. Mr. Taylor stated that the Commission had requested a proposal that is not contingent upon a resubdivision for Architectural Committee review before returning to the Commission.

After hearing comments from the public, Mr. Fifield moved to defer the application to the Architectural Committee, per the previous Commission ruling. Ms. Denechaud seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

1211-15 Dauphine St: John C. Williams, applicant; 913 Governor Nicholls LLC, owner; Proposal to demolish existing parking structure, and construct new three story building in conjunction with proposed resubdivision with 907-17 Gov. Nicholls St, per application & materials received 04/13/16 & 09/29/16.

See minutes for 907-17 Governor Nicholls.

724 St Philip St: Harry Baker Smith Architects, applicant; Minacore Investments LLC, owner; Proposal to renovate buildings including reconstruction and additions to partially demolished structure, per application & revised materials received 05/09/16 & 9/30/16, respectively.

The item was deferred prior to the hearing.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1036 N Rampart St: Corbett Scott, applicant; Itamar Levy, owner; Proposal to install rooftop mechanical equipment and screening, in conjunction with a **change of use** from *vacant* to *restaurant*, per application & materials received 07/06/16 & 09/20/16, respectively.

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff presentation with Mr. Scott present on behalf of the application. Mr. Taylor noted that the applicant has been cooperative working through the Architectural Committee and that they came in with several proposals for screening. Mr. Taylor stated that the Architectural Committee decided that it was best to go with no screening for the mechanical equipment.

Mr. Fifield moved for **conceptual approval** of the application with the application to return to the Architectural Committee for final review. Mr. Skinner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

616-624 Royal St, 630 Royal St, 622-624 St. Peter St: Barry Fox, applicant; Mendel S Rau, owner; Proposal to construct rooftop addition to link 630 Royal St. to 616-624 Royal St. via 622-624 St. Peter, per application & materials received 07/18/16 & 08/04/16.

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff presentation with Mr. Fox present on behalf of the application. Mr. Taylor stated that the AC was quite satisfied with the progress of the proposal.

Mr. Blanda inquired about the purpose of the addition and if it will be to allow for individuals to walk from one building to the other. Mr. Fox replied that the plan is to interconnect the buildings and that approvals have been granted by the zoning department and the Preservation Resource Center (who holds an exterior easement on two the properties involved). Mr. Fox continued that the addition is on the brown-rated portions of the properties and that they want to provide access between 630 Royal to 616-618 Royal and 622-624 Royal.

Mr. Blanda inquired if the upper floors are to be part of the antique store with no apartments. Mr. Fox replied that the buildings will be entirely mercantile with no apartments. Mr. Fifield inquired if there will be no residential units in the complex. Mr. Fox noted that two residential units remain and noted that there had been a previously reviewed proposal for 622 Royal that included ground floor mercantile and apartments above.

Mr. Blanda inquired if the existing seventeen units are to be eliminated. Mr. Fox stated that was correct. Mr. Blanda inquired if the complex will host the antique store in all of the commercial parts of the complex. Mr. Fox stated that was correct.

Mr. Skinner moved for conceptual approval of the proposal. The motion, seconded by Ms. Denechaud, passed with affirmative votes from Stokes, Fifield, Skinner, and Denechaud. Mr. Blanda voted in opposition.

717 Ursulines Ave: Steve Finegan, applicant; Louisiana Historic Holdings LLC, owner; Proposal to renovate main building and dependency, and to construct a new pool house in rear courtyard, in conjunction with a **change of use** from *vacant* to *residential*, per application & materials received 07/18/16 & 09/19/16, respectively.

Ms. Vogt presented the staff report with Messrs. Finegan and Newsham present on behalf of the application. With no discussion necessary, Ms. Denechaud moved to **approve** the proposal. Mr. Fifield seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VII. RATIFICATION of Architectural Committee and Staff actions since the Wednesday, September 07, 2016 VCC meeting.

Ms. Stokes moved to ratify the actions of the Architectural Committee and staff since the September 07, 2016 VCC meeting. The motion, seconded by Mr. Blanda, passed unanimously.

With no additional business to discuss, Mr. Skinner moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Blanda seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:47 PM.