

VIEUX CARRE COMMISSION

Mitchell J. Landrieu
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Bryan D. Block
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Minutes of the **Vieux Carré Commission** meeting of **Wednesday, February 03, 2016 - 1:30 P.M.**

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Patricia C. Denechaud
Jorge A. Henriquez

STAFF PRESENT: Bryan D. Block, Interim Director; Renée Bourgogne, Architectural Historian; Nicholas G. Albrecht, Building Plans Examiner; Erin Vogt, Building Plans Examiner; Melissa Quigley, Assistant City Attorney

STAFF ABSENT: Erika Gates, Inspector;

OTHERS PRESENT: Ralph Long, Scott Ferguson, Randy Opotowsky

I. ROLL CALL

Chairman Musso called the meeting to order at approximately 1:31 PM. Interim director Block called roll, noting the presence of a quorum with five (5) of the eight (8) seated Commissioners present. [NOTE: Ms. Stokes was not present at the start of the meeting but later arrived as noted in the minutes.]

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES

Mr. Skinner moved, Mr. Blanda seconded, that the minutes of the Vieux Carré Commission meeting of January 3, 2016 be approved as previously circulated. The motion passed unanimously.

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Musso reiterated his desire for a comprehensive transportation study of the Vieux Carré but noting the small audience stated he would go into more detail at a later meeting.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT - 2015 VCC Attendance Report

Mr. Block expressed gratitude to the staff and the Commission for helping to make it an easy transition into his new position.

The Commission reviewed the attendance report as distributed. Mr. Musso noted that the overall attendance was good save for Ms. Denechaud who had personal issues to attend to throughout 2015.

V. NEW BUSINESS

200 Decatur St: Ralph Long, applicant; 200 Levee Street LLC, owner; Proposal to renovate building including restoring openings and restoring roofed balcony on Decatur and Iberville elevations, per application & materials received 06/30/15 & 01/19/16, respectively.

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff report although no one was present on behalf of the application. Mr. Musso noted that the Architectural Committee has gone over this proposal and that there has been good cooperation from the applicant.

With no discussion necessary, Mr. Taylor moved for **conceptual approval** consistent with the staff analysis and recommendation. Mr. Skinner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

616-618 Royal & 622-624 Royal: M S Rau Antiques, LLC, applicant/owner; Proposal to subdivide two lots of record into a single lot of record, under consideration by the City Planning Commission, per application & materials received 12/21/15.

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff report with Mr. Opotowsky present on behalf of the application.

[NOTE: Ms. Stoke arrived during the staff report.]

Mr. Musso noted the email from Leah Tubbs that requested deferral based on the exterior easement on one of the properties. Mr. Musso noted that he thought that was a critical element and an issue that should be looked at.

Mr. Opotowsky stated that he was on the PRC board and that a façade easement stays in place regardless of a re-subdivision. He continued that there was a sale deadline of March 14th that was contingent on the re-subdivision. Mr. Opotowsky continued that currently there is no future development plans for this building or other buildings besides unifying the two buildings into one lot.

Mr. Musso inquired about the longest of the current lease holders. Mr. Opotowsky responded that currently the longest lease is for an additional 11 months.

Mr. Fifield noted that by bringing the building into the larger property the applicants may be obliged to bring elements of the building into modern code compliance. Mr. Opotowsky stated that if any work was required they would make the necessary applications to receive approval from the VCC.

Mr. Blanda expressed his concern of losing seventeen residential units and four commercial units and being left with only one commercial unit. Mr. Blanda asked why the current business needs to expand further. Mr. Opotowsky responded that there are several enterprises that occupy entire squares, citing a few hotels as examples. Mr. Blanda stated that there is a need for more residences in the French Quarter.

Mr. Opotowsky stated that they do not know what plans are regarding the future of the residences and that the intention is to unify the ground floor businesses.

Mr. Taylor inquired if the applicants were aware of the façade easement. Mr. Opotowsky stated that he was not aware of the easement but that he is familiar with the easement program.

Mr. Musso stated that there was apprehension about the proposal including questions of density, future direction of the properties, and the easement.

Mr. Skinner stated that he doesn't have enough information to make a motion regarding the exterior easement. Mr. Opotowsky gave a brief summary of what the easement would mean for

the property.

Mr. Musso stated that there are questions on the merit of the proposal as well as the easement. Mr. Taylor stated that the application came a little unprepared and that there are lots of unanswered questions.

Mr. Fifield moved to **defer** the matter regarding the intent to re-subdivide the properties. Ms. Stokes seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

1128 Decatur St: Toni DiMaggio, applicant; Capricorn Ventures LLC, owner; Proposal to remove balcony and construct gallery on Decatur elevation, per application & materials received 12/23/15.

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff report although no one was present on behalf of the application. Mr. Musso noted that this application had been discussed in some detail with the Architectural Committee and that the applicant has been cooperating with recommendations of the Committee.

With no discussion necessary, Mr. Taylor moved for **conceptual approval** consistent with the staff analysis and recommendation. Ms. Stokes seconded the motion, which passed with affirmative votes from Messrs. Taylor, Fifield, Skinner, and Ms. Stokes. Mr. Blanda did not vote.

VI. RATIFICATION of Architectural Committee and Staff actions sine the Wednesday, January 06, 2016 VCC meeting.

Mr. Taylor moved, Mr. Blanda seconded, to ratify the actions taken by the Architectural Committee and Staff since the Vieux Carré Commission meeting of January 3rd, 2016. The motion passed unanimously.

With no further business to be considered, Mr. Taylor moved for adjournment. The motion, seconded by Mr. Skinner, passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:03 PM.