

VIEUX CARRE COMMISSION

Mitchell J. Landrieu
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Bryan Block
DIRECTOR

Minutes of the **Vieux Carré Commission** meeting of **Wednesday, July 06, 2016 - 1:30 P.M.**

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Leslie S. Stokes, Secretary, Patricia C. Denechaud

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

STAFF ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: John Williams, Carlos Garcia III, Cesar Burgos, Bev Falk, Cynthia Frizzell,
David Blair, Pat Kahn, Tina Tiernan, Jon Huffman, Jenna Burke, Lee
Walker, Heidi Raines, Bob Mortenson

I. ROLL CALL

Chairman Musso called the meeting to order at approximately 1:31 PM. Mr. Block called the roll, noting the presence of a quorum with six (6) of the eight (8) seated Commissioners present.

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES

Mr. Blanda moved, Mr. Taylor seconded, that the minutes of the Vieux Carré Commission meeting of June 1, 2016 be approved as previously circulated. The motion passed unanimously.

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Musso began the Chairman's report noting that elections for VCC officers would be held at the next meeting of the Vieux Carré Commission.

Mr. Musso also noted the previously discussed air rights discussion.

Mr. Musso concluded his report stating that the rooftop utilization sub-committee will soon hold their first meeting and invited members of the public to submit questions or comments regarding this issue.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Block gave his report as follows:

- We are currently interviewing candidates to fill a vacant Building Inspector position. This will provide us more presence within the District on a daily basis ensuring better enforcement of violations and compliance with Guideline standards. Additional information including the required qualifications for the position can be found at <http://www.nola.gov/civil-service/jobs> searching for "Building Inspector".

- The applicants for the retention of inappropriate signage located in the windows at 221-225 Bourbon Street (Hustler Club) have appealed the Commission's May 04, 2016, decision of "denial" to the City Council. This is currently scheduled to be heard on July 14, 2016.
- There is an unusual number of new construction projects being proposed for the French Quarter, as well as several proposed additions. This is, of course, a positive indication of the economic health of the District. The Staff and Architecture Committee are working diligently to ensure that the proposed new construction is appropriate and sensitive to the historic context. All such projects are reviewed by our Architecture Committee. AC meetings are open to the public. The Staff sends out all agendas to our extensive email list of interested parties. If you would like to receive agendas to upcoming meetings please contact the Staff. We welcome input from all concerned.
- The Staff would like to share success stories along and along with the public and Commission, showing where properties have responded positively to violation citations.
 - 517-519 Bienville Street had been cited for deterioration of exterior wall material, roof supports and windows and ineffective waterproofing causing vegetation growth.
 - 940 Bourbon Street had been cited for conducting work without permits, demolition by neglect and dangerous deterioration of exterior wall material.
 - 704-710 St Peter Street was issued a notice of violation for the inappropriate merchandising of products on the exterior of the building which is a violation of the City Code.

We will continue to share additional successes at future meetings.

V. NEW BUSINESS

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 & 06/20/16.

Ms. Vogt gave the staff presentation with Mr. Williams, Mr. Garcia and Mr. Burgos present on behalf of the application. Mr. Musso reminded the Commission that 907-17 Gov. Nicholls and 1211-15 Dauphine were legally separate parcels, and would need to be voted on separately.

Pat Kahn addressed the Commission, stating that he appreciated the appearance of the new building proposed at 1211-15 Dauphine and found it to be a positive addition to the block.

David Blair stated that he supported the increased density, believing that additional residents would make the area safer.

Bob Mortenson was concerned with the additional density that would be allowed if the properties were re-subdivided, as well as the massing proposed for 1211-15 Dauphine.

Heidi Raines stated that the Architectural Committee had asked for further study, and that she had not seen that addressed.

Jenna Burke of Vieux Carré Property Owners, Residents and Associates commented that her organization has also been apprehensive about the proposed density and has consistently objected to re-subdivision, stating that small lots are a part of the tout ensemble of the Quarter. She was also leery of the impact the buildings would have upon Cabrini Park.

John Hoffman stated that he did not find the additional density to be an issue, and felt that the proposed wall along Cabrini Park could be addressed.

Both Mr. Skinner and Mr. Blanda asked the applicant about the proposed density, and how the additional units would affect the existing building. Mr. Williams stated that the project at 907-17 Gov. Nicholls would pursue tax credits, and that the combined units would have over 30% open space. Mr. Block clarified that

Mr. Williams' open space calculation was contingent upon the proposed resubdivision.

Mr. Taylor voiced concern over re-subdividing a prominent key lot, and noted that the configuration and massing of the proposal would have to be very different if the parcels are not re-subdivided. Mr. Burgos stated that he wished to satisfy all density requirements and move forward with the resubdivision. Mr. Block asked if Mr. Williams had a hearing date scheduled with the Board of Zoning Appeals; Mr. Williams responded that he did not. Mr. Burgos asked the Commission if the project could be considered as two separate lots. Mr. Taylor stated that the architect should propose a design for the buildings that is not contingent upon the resubdivision.

Mr. Fifield observed that the site plan was being heavily driven by the proposed parking spaces, which influenced the height of the rear building and exterior stair locations. Mr. Musso agreed that several elements of the design needed to be resolved before the Commission could move forward.

Mr. Skinner moved to **defer** the application for 907-17 Gov. Nicholls, and return it to the Architectural Committee for further review. Mr. Taylor 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 & 06/20/16.

[See minutes for 907-17 Gov. Nicholls, above]

Mr. Skinner moved to **defer** the application for 1211-15 Dauphine St, and return it to the Architectural Committee for further review. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VI. CHANGE OF USE HEARINGS

500-504 Bourbon St: Ashraf Awadalla, applicant; Sol Owens, owner; Proposal to install new hood vent and air intake in conjunction with a **change of use** from *retail* to *restaurant*, per application & materials received 05/11/16 & 06/22/16, respectively.

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff presentation with Mr. Williams present on behalf of the applicant. With no discussion necessary Mr. Taylor moved to **approve** the proposal consistent with the staff analysis. Mr. Skinner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

1000-08 Saint Ann St, 731 Burgundy St: James Cripps, applicant; Pauline Properties, LLC, owner; Proposal to renovate building in conjunction with a **change of use** from *vacant* to *residential*, per application & materials received 03/24/16 & 06/13/16, respectively.

Ms. Vogt gave the staff presentation with Mr. Cripps present on behalf of the applicant. With no discussion necessary Mr. Taylor moved to **conceptually approve** the proposal consistent with the staff analysis and recommendation. Mr. Blanda seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

230 Chartres St: John C. Williams, applicant; 230 Chartres LLC, owner; Proposal to renovate building, including the installation of rooftop mechanical equipment, in conjunction with **change of use** from *commercial (retail)* to *mixed (commercial retail/specialty restaurant)* per application & materials received 05/17/16.

Ms. Vogt gave the staff presentation with Mr. Williams present on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Blanda asked if Mr. Williams' client intended to remove the fire escape. Mr. Williams responded that the building owner would have to approve the removal. Mr. Taylor moved to **conceptually approve** the proposal consistent with the staff analysis and recommendation. Mr. Blanda seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VII. RATIFICATION of Architectural Committee and Staff actions since the Wednesday, June 01, 2016 VCC meeting.

Mr. Taylor moved to ratify the action of the Architectural Committee and Staff since the June 01, 2016 meeting. Mr. Skinner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

With no additional business to discuss Mr. Taylor moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion, seconded by Mr. Skinner, passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:28 PM.