

VIEUX CARRE COMMISSION

Mitchell J. Landrieu
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Bryan Block
DIRECTOR

Minutes of the Vieux Carré Commission meeting of Wednesday, February 1st, 2017 - 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
Jorge A. Henriquez

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Patricia C. Denechaud

STAFF PRESENT: Bryan D. Block, Director; Renée Bourgogne, Architectural Historian;
Erin Vogt, Building Plans Examiner; Melissa Quigley, Assistant City
Attorney; John Manning, Intern

STAFF ABSENT: Nicholas G. Albrecht, Building Plans Examiner; Erika Gates, Inspector;
Tony Whitfield, Inspector;

OTHERS PRESENT: Amy Garrett, Justin Hughes, Sarah Norman, Meg Lousteau

I. ROLL CALL

Chairman Musso called the meeting to order at approximately 1:36 PM. A quorum was established with the presence of seven (7) of the eight (8) seated Commissioners present.

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES

Mr. Taylor moved, Mr. Blanda seconded, that the minutes of the Vieux Carré Commission meeting of January 4th, 2017 be approved as previously circulated. The motion passed unanimously.

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Musso commended the Mayor's Office for initiating a multi-departmental effort to address safety concerns in the French Quarter, including law enforcement, lighting, and security cameras. He reiterated that a comprehensive transportation plan of the Vieux Carré would be beneficial and provide data that would be useful to many departments, noting the recent efforts by the Mayor's Office to close streets and install temporary vehicular barriers during high-traffic events.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Block gave the following Director's Report:

- As part of the Administration's ongoing French Quarter Public Safety & Improvement Strategy, the Staff has created the "Security Cameras in the Vieux Carré" handout which is in your packet. This is taken directly from the VCC design guidelines, boiled down to the very basics, to make it easier for applicants to quickly and more readily understand precisely what types of cameras are recommended and how to properly mount them on their buildings; this will also be uploaded to the VCC website. A short list of recommended cameras is currently being vetted with the City's Homeland Security staff. Our goal is to encourage the installation of high quality security cameras which comply with our guidelines in type and location. We have also streamlined the application process so that these cameras can be easily and quickly permitted. We will also be issuing an easy-to use guide on how

private property owners can improve their exterior lighting through implementation of VCC lighting guidelines.

- The Department of Public Works is currently refurbishing all existing French Quarter street lamps and retrofitting them with LED bulbs. Currently the 200-300 blocks of Bourbon Street have been completed as a pilot program. I have requested detailed information on the entire program but I have not received the information as of yet, which will be forwarded to the Commission upon receipt. New lamps will be installed in certain locations where they are missing including along the pedestrian mall of St. Peters Street and St. Ann Street at Jackson Square. All existing lamps around the historic fence of the square are currently being refurbished and upgraded with the new lamps, as well. I will forward a full report as soon as I receive it.
- As previously discussed, the bike share program will be conducting a temporary demonstration of the program in February. Here are the details of that event:
 - 35 bicycles, all white with only program promo branding (as shown in the PowerPoint slides)
 - 6 stations with 6-10 racks each; NO panels or kiosks; no anchoring to street
 - Operational February 10th through 23rd with installation a couple days before and removal on the 24th.
 - 4 stations will be in downtown, 2 in the French Quarter

For the French Quarter they have identified Barracks at Decatur and Bienville at Decatur. No parking spaces will be removed. Images of these locations are shown in the slides.

This will be a valuable opportunity to inform feedback as we discuss and evaluate permanent locations with all parties in the months following Mardi Gras.

- Our field inspectors have noticed an increase in the prevalence of illegal “sandwich board” signage and merchandising, as well as tables and chairs being located outside of businesses along the public right of way. As this is in violation of the City Code, VCC staff is informing business owners in person whenever such moveable items in violation are discovered and requiring that the items be removed immediately. There has also been an increase in the discovery of businesses illegally blocking off sections of public parking with cones and signage claiming such areas to be private or drop-off zones. These are being reported to the Department of Public Works for immediate removal, as well.

Mr. Block introduced the newest staff intern, John Manning, who is a second year student of Tulane Law School.

Mr. Musso asked Mr. Block if the Department of Public Works intended to re-lamp all of the public fixtures in the Vieux Carré, to which Mr. Block answered yes. Mr. Musso asked if the previously existing street lamps would be reinstalled. Mr. Block stated that he would pass along additional information about new, reinstalled and replaced street lamps once he has received this data from Public Works. Mr. Musso noted that many of the public light fixtures were removed from sidewalks in the district when widespread sidewalk repairs were being completed prior to the most recent Super Bowl.

V. NEW BUSINESS

211 Royal St & 217-219 Royal: John Guarnieri, applicant; Royal Condominium Developments LLC, owner; Proposal to remove brown-rated courtyard infill, restore elements of the original first floor façade, and construct light wells, in conjunction with a **change of use** from *vacant* to *commercial/residential*, per application & materials received 12/07/16 & 01/17/17, respectively.

Ms. Bourgogne presented the staff report with Ms. Garrett, Ms. Norman, and Mr. Hughes present on behalf of the application. Mr. Musso stated that the project was approvable, with a recommendation to be provided for the BZA. Mr. Blanda inquired about the size of the units. Ms. Garrett stated that all the units are between 800 to 1200 square feet. Mr. Blanda asked if the building would be commercial or residential use. Ms. Garrett answered that it would be mixed use. Mr. Blanda clarified that he was asking if the building would be used for short term rental. Ms. Garrett stated that no, they would not be used for short term rental, and that the apartments would be leased. Mr. Musso noted that the renovation was using state tax credits, and short term rental would be prevented by default.

Mr. Taylor moved to **conceptually approve** the proposal, consistent with staff recommendations. Ms. Stokes seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

826 Bourbon St: Charles Berg, applicant; Mark W Seale, Jessica L Foreman, owner; Proposal to install two (2) new dormers on rear roof, per application & materials received 11/01/16 & 01/31/17, respectively.

At Mr. Berg's request, Ms. Vogt presented the staff report in his absence. With no discussion necessary, Mr. Taylor moved to approve the proposal, consistent with staff recommendations. Mr. Skinner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

I. RATIFICATION of Architectural Committee and Staff actions since the Wednesday, January 04, 2017 VCC meeting.

Mr. Taylor moved to ratify the Architectural Committee and Staff actions since the Wednesday, January 04, 2017 meeting. The motion, seconded by Ms. Stokes, passed unanimously.

With no other business to discuss, Mr. Taylor moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Skinner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:15 PM.