

VIEUX CARRE COMMISSION

Mitchell J. Landrieu  
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Lary P. Hesdorffer  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Minutes of the Vieux Carré Commission meeting of Wednesday, November 04, 2015 - 1:30 P.M.**

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

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Patricia C. Denechaud

**STAFF PRESENT:** Lary P. Hesdorffer, Director; Renée Bourgogne, Architectural Historian, Nicholas G. Albrecht, Building Plans Examiner; Erin Vogt, Building Plans Examiner; Erika Gates, Inspector; Melissa Quigley, Assistant City Attorney;

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Julie Ford, Landon Anderson, Brian Bockman, Robert Pell, Charles Silbernagel and Rick Meyer.

**I. ROLL CALL**

The Chairman called the meeting to order at approximately 1:37 PM and requested a roll call. Mr. Hesdorffer called roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum with five (5) seated Commissioners in attendance.

**II. REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Mr. Blanda moved to approve the minutes of the October 7th, 2015 Vieux Carré Commission meeting as circulated. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The chairman began his report by noting the passing of Mr. Charles Denechaud, III, husband of Commission Patricia Denechaud, and expressing his condolences on behalf of the Commission.

Mr. Musso then spoke to the long-time but increasing need for a transportation study of the Vieux Carré. He noted that over the past five years, issues have arisen pertaining to general parking, buses, bicycles, pedi-cabs and even regular auto usage and pedestrian patterns and the use of streets and sidewalks. He continued that there has been no comprehensive study conducted in the area for a number of years. He further encouraged those in the audience to contact their City Councilmembers in reference to this real need, an evaluation of current conditions and an in-depth study to consider the near and long-term future, and to request that such a study be undertaken.

Finally, Mr. Musso noted that the guidelines had been completed and should soon be available in a hard copy format to those who are interested in acquiring copies.

**[Mr. Skinner arrived during the Chairman's Report.]**

**IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Hesdorffer began by noting that Rick Fifield's nomination to the VCC is scheduled to be ratified at the City Council at their meeting (the next day) of November 5<sup>th</sup>. He added that Mr. Fifield is an architect and was nominated by the local chapter of the AIA (American Institute of Architects) and had been appointed by Mayor Landrieu. He further said that Mr. Fifield had been serving on the Architectural Committee for some time and that his first meeting as a commissioner is expected to be December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mr. Hesdorffer continued noting that the proposed 2016 Operating Budget had been reviewed by the City Council at a departmental budget hearing on Nov 3<sup>th</sup>. In terms of dollars, the budget stays essentially the same as the previous year. Mr. Hesdorffer then summarized many of the particular elements of accomplishment and performance undertaken by staff, Architectural Committee and VCC. He gave a brief accounting of measures and numbers that had been presented to the City Council's hearing.

#### V. OLD BUSINESS

1035 Royal St: Julie Ford, applicant; Rene R Joyce, owner; Proposal to renovate and modify elements of the courtyard and alleyway, per application & materials received 08/06/15 & 10/06/15, respectively.

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff report with Ms. Ford representing the application. Mr. Musso noted the Architectural Committee's positive reaction to the proposed work, that the detailing has been well done and that the architect has been responsive to the recommendations of the Architectural Committee.

With no further discussion necessary, Mr. Taylor moved to **approve** the application, consistent with the staff analysis and recommendations of November 4<sup>th</sup> and to have final details submitted for staff reviewed and permit issuance. Ms. Stokes seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### VI. NEW BUSINESS

822 N Rampart St: John C. Williams, applicant; North Rampart Properties LLC, owner; Proposal to renovate building in conjunction with a **change of use** from *vacant* to *commercial/residential*, per application & materials received 08/25/15 & 10/06/15, respectively.

Ms. Vogt presented the staff report with Mr. Anderson representing the application. Mr. Musso commented that, despite the building's brown rating, the façade design could be considered a "period piece," as it will retain some of the glass block as a nod to the 1940's ear design.

Mr. Blanda inquired if plans for the first floor commercial use had been submitted. Mr. Anderson explained that no specific use has been established such that the renovation calls for a "white box" treatment will be undertaken until a tenant has been named. Mr. Musso stated that the majority of leasable space would be residential, but that the Commission would typically require a lease before finalizing the **change of use**, since specific exterior alterations would need to be reviewed separately in conjunction with that use.

Mr. Taylor addressed the concerns regarding the requested density increase and whether a positive recommendation should be forwarded to the Board of Zoning Adjustments. Voicing his own opinion, Mr. Taylor stated that the single, additional residential unit on N. Rampart is appealing. Mr. Hesdorffer interjected that the property also meets the provision requiring an FAR of 3 or greater. Mr. Musso also said that of all addresses, N. Rampart could easily handle additional residential units. Mr. Skinner asked if the applicant was required to provide parking. Mr. Hesdorffer answered, stating that parking is a consideration of Zoning, which may be discussed by the VCC, but that no on-site is required by the CZO.

Mr. Blanda inquired if the property has any alleyway access. Mr. Anderson answered there is none; that the side walls are built on the property lines. Mr. Blanda then asked how light would reach the interior spaces of the units. Mr. Musso explained, pointing out that light-wells will allow natural light to the interior of the building and currently window-less spaces. He added that the Architectural Committee had considered the skylights/light-wells as viable solutions to conditions where windows cannot be added.

Ms. Stokes asked if the unused curb cut would be removed. Mr. Anderson explained that the recently installed curb cut would be eliminated and the curb restored. Mr. Taylor moved to adopt the staff recommendation to grant **conceptual approval**, including forwarding a positive recommendation to the Board of Zoning Appeals to support the project with the proposed increase in density. Mr. Blanda seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Anderson inquired if the project would need further review by either the Committee or the Commission. Mr. Musso responded that final construction documents would need to be reviewed by the Committee, but further review may not be required by the Commission.

904 Dauphine St: Robert Pell, applicant; Guy L Williams, owner; Proposal to eliminate commercial cut corner and vitrine windows and install new ground floor millwork, per revised application & materials received 09/08/15 & 10/13/15, respectively.

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff report with Mr. Pell representing the application. Mr. Musso added that the Architectural Committee felt comfortable with this building either retaining its commercial elements or being renovated including the return to its original residential configuration.

Mr. Skinner inquired when the corner entry would have been created. Mr. Hesdorffer replied that it was likely that the corner entry would have been added around 1900. Mr. Blanda asked if the building was a single-family residence. Mr. Pell responded that the building had previously been a single-family residence with a single commercial space. He added that the commercial space is vacant and will now be absorbed into the single-family residence.

Mr. Taylor moved to **approve** the application, consistent with the staff analysis and recommendations of November 4<sup>th</sup>, with the applicant to return to the Architectural Committee with final drawings for review prior to issuance of a permit. Mr. Skinner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## VII. APPEALS AND VIOLATIONS

333 Chartres St: Charles Silbernagel, applicant; Judith Kenyon, Four JLM, LLC, Perot Real Estate Holdings, LLC, Y & P Properties, LLC, Heather K Andrews, Blakely Limited, LLC, owners; Appeal of Architectural Committee denial of proposal to construct new stair penthouse and build new rooftop deck, per application & materials received 05/03/15 & 09/24/15, respectively.

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff report with Messrs. Silbernagel and Meyer representing the application. Mr. Taylor commented on the Architectural Committee's concerns about the rooftop addition being too prominent and visible, both from the street as well as other buildings.

Mr. Musso noted that the VCC also has a role in supporting the provisions in the CZO. Mr. Skinner stated he has previously made his position clear in reference to opposing similar proposals for building additions that exceed the building height limits.

Mr. Silbernagel replied that the rooftop addition was applied for prior to the new CZO going into effect and that the stair penthouse would blend in with the adjacent wall surface. Mr. Silbernagel added that, regarding views from the Louisiana Supreme Court building, only judges were allowed in third floor offices, so the most obvious views would be limited to them.

Mr. Skinner moved to **deny** the applicant's appeal to construct the stair penthouse and rooftop deck. Mr. Henriquez seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Following the vote, Mr. Silbernagel asked when a confirmation letter would be sent. It was explained by Mr. Hesdorffer that once minutes are prepared, a confirmation letter would be sent and that an appeal can be filed with the Clerk of the Council within 30 days of the date/postmark of that letter.

300 Bourbon St: John C. Williams, applicant; Royal Sonesta Inc, owner; Appeal of Architectural Committee denial of proposal to remove exiting slate roofing and install new metal standing seam roofing, per application & materials received 09/29/15.

The item was deferred at the applicant's request.

## VIII. RATIFICATION of Architectural Committee and Staff actions since the Wednesday, October 07, 2015 VCC meeting.

Mr. Taylor moved, Ms. Stokes seconded, to ratify the actions taken by the Architectural Committee and Staff since the Vieux Carré Commission meeting of October 7th, 2015. The motion passed unanimously.

With no further business to be considered, Mr. Taylor moved for adjournment. The motion, seconded by Ms. Stokes, passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:25 PM.

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

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