

## 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, April 1, 2015.

**DRAFT**

- COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Nicholas S. Musso, Chairman  
Daniel C. Taylor, Vice-Chairman  
Leslie S. Stokes, Secretary  
C.J. Blanda  
Jorge A. Henriquez  
Michael A. Skinner
- COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Patricia C. Denechaud
- STAFF PRESENT:** Lary P. Hesdorffer, Director; Nicholas G. Albrecht, Building Plans Examiners; Erin Vogt, Building Plans Examiner; Erika Gates, Inspector; Melissa Quigley, Assistant City Attorney.
- OTHERS PRESENT:** Sergio Cabrera, Joseph Caillouet, Joseph Casler, Richard Choate, David Coons, Bev Fulk, Carol Gniady, Susan Guillot, Christopher Kane, Meg Lousteau, & Kathleen Manning

### AGENDA

#### I. ROLL CALL

Chairman Musso called the meeting to order at 1:36 PM. The Director called the roll, noting the presence of a quorum with six (6) of the seven (7) seated Commissioners in attendance. He added that four (4) positive votes are needed in order to pass any action.

#### II. REVIEW OF MINUTES- Vieux Carré Commission meeting of March 4, 2015

Mr. Taylor moved, Ms. Stokes seconded, to accept the minutes of the Vieux Carré Commission meeting of March 4, 2015, as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

#### III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Musso stated he wanted to clarify information noted in the previous chairman's report in March when he requested public comment, both pro and con, regarding the impact of festivals in the French Quarter. Mr. Musso asked that any comments or recommendations be made directly to him or to the Director through the VCC office. He also noted that there would be comments regarding the construction of the Rampart streetcar line under Other Business, at the end of the meeting.

#### IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Hesdorffer began the director's report with the announcement that the Department of Sanitation was going to begin the installation of solar powered trash cans/compactors. He noted that the "Big Belly" trash cans were previously reviewed and approved by the Commission at the 11/20/2012 meeting.

Secondly, he noted the departure of Architectural Historian Sarah Ripple from the VCC staff. Ms. Ripple has moved on to work for the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Finally, Mr. Hesdorffer noted that the new VCC Design Guidelines are nearly complete. The process was last undertaken in 1986 and the new guidelines, which have been totally underwritten by funding from the VCC Foundation, will be presented in a public meeting on April 8<sup>th</sup>. He encouraged any and all interested to review the draft materials online and to attend the hearing for discussion of the new volume and how they can be useful. He added that the finished product is still to be formally presented to the VCC for approval and adoption.

#### V. NEW BUSINESS

816 Orleans Ave: Charles Berg, applicant; Pamela A Fortner, 816 Orleans LLC, owner; Proposal to demolish deteriorated courtyard infill, per application & drawings received 12/09/14 & 03/12/15, respectively. **[NOTE: this meeting marks the beginning of the 30-day layover period.]**

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff report on the proposal, although no applicant was in attendance to represent the project. Mr. Taylor asked if additional plans had been submitted to VCC staff. Mr. Albrecht indicated nothing new had been submitted. Mr. Hesdorffer explained that the idea for hearing the application without a representative is to allow the 30-day layover period to begin, with the knowledge that no final decision would be made on the proposed demolition until the rest of the project

plans had been completed, reviewed and recommended for some action to be taken. Mr. Taylor moved for **approval** of the beginning of the 30-day layover period relative to the proposed demolition of the courtyard infill and consistent with staff analysis and recommendations of April 1, 2015. Ms. Stokes seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

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#### VI. CHANGE OF USE HEARINGS

608 Bienville St: Joseph Caillouet, applicant; Monteleone Real Estate III LLC, owner; Proposal to modify ground floor openings and install new sign in conjunction with a **change of use** from *vacant* to *retail*, per application & materials received 02/24/15, 03/12/15, and 03/18/15, respectively.

Mr. Albrecht presented the report with Mr. Caillouet in attendance on behalf of the application. With no discussion necessary, Mr. Taylor moved for **approval** the proposed modifications, consistent with the staff analysis and recommendations of April 1, 2015. The motion, seconded by Mr. Blanda, passed unanimously.

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234-36 Royal St: Joseph Lantz, applicant; New Hotel Monteleone Inc, owner; Proposal to alter exterior, removing existing vitrine & installing French doors, in conjunction with a **change of use** from *bank* to *hotel accessory use*, per application & materials received 03/10/15.

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff report with Mr. Choate representing the application. With no discussion necessary, Mr. Taylor moved for **approval** consistent with the staff analysis and recommendations of April 1, 2015. Ms. Stokes seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

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#### VII. APPEALS AND VIOLATIONS

1000 Toulouse St: R. Volker Waterproofing, LLC, applicant; Hudson S Rogers, owner; Proposal to drill through hard plaster to facilitate removal by hand, per application received 12/11/14. [STOP WORK ORDER issued 11/21/14]

Without anyone present on behalf of the application, Mr. Hesdorffer explained that although the VCC has deferred this proposal before to allow someone to be present, the property owner, Mr. Rodgers, has written to the VCC (sent to the VCC Foundation) stating he would be unable to attend the meeting and informing the Commission that he is taking legal action against Mr. Volker, the contractor, in regard to violation. Hearing this, Mr. Taylor moved to **defer** taking any action on the matter until a representative could be present. Mr. Henriquez seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

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727 Iberville St: American Restaurant, Inc, applicant; 730 Bienville Partners Ltd, owner; Appeal of Architectural Committee denial of proposal to retain hanging neon sign installed without benefit of VCC review or approval, per application received 12/31/14 and appeal letter received 02/20/2015. [Notice of Violation received 10/8/2014]

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff report regarding the sign violation with Ms. Manning in attendance representing the application. Ms. Manning stated that she was hoping to have Mr. Mark Klaybarr present, the contractor who she said had installed an earlier sign in 2002, but that he was unable to attend the meeting because of a project across the lake. Mr. Musso stated that he would be fine with deferring the matter again if Ms. Manning wanted to wait until the installer was present, though he believes that the current sign will not be allowed.

With that understanding, Mr. Taylor moved to again **defer** the application. Mr. Blanda seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

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513 Conti St: Lacey Wotring, applicant; The 307 Company LLC, owner; Appeal of Architectural Committee denial of proposal to construct new façade gallery, per application & drawings received 12/17/14.

At the applicant's request, prior to the meeting, this application was deferred to a later meeting.

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500 Burgundy St: Digna Aguilar, applicant; 937 St Louis LLC, owner; Appeal of Architecture Committee denial of proposal to paint exposed, natural brick, per application received 01/30/15.

At the applicant's request, prior to the meeting, this application was deferred to a later meeting.

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601 Chartres St: JBJ Construction, LLC, applicant; Apasra Properties, LLC, owner; Proposal to correct violations for work done without benefit of VCC approval by reinstalling exterior doors to match previously existing and removing iron gate installed without benefit of VCC review or approval, per application received 02/23/15. [Notice of Violation received 05/23/14]

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff presentation. Although no one was present on behalf of the application, Mr. Musso noted that since the application was to correct violations, the Commission could either lift the SWO so that a permit for the proposed corrective work could be issued or that the SWO could remain in place until a comprehensive plan was submitted that addressed *all violations*.

Mr. Taylor stated he would like to move the work forward and lift the SWO with other violations to be worked out at staff level. Mr. Taylor moved to **approve** the application to reinstall appropriate doors and to remove the iron gate, as submitted, and to lift the SWO. Ms. Stokes seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

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#### VIII. **OTHER BUSINESS**

Proposed Text Amendment to Article 2, Section 2.2 Definitions of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to create a new definition of “Cigar Bar” and to Article 8, Section 8.5.5 Conditional Uses of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to classify “Cigar Bar” as a conditional use in the VCC-2 Vieux Carré Commercial District – proposal being considered by the City Planning Commission.

The Director explained that the issue before the VCC pertained to a directive from the City Council to the City Planning Commission (CPC) to create a new definition for the term “Cigar Bar” to be added as a Conditional Use to the CZO in reference to the VCC-2 zoning district. There was an explanation pertaining to the CPC procedures, given by Principal City Planner Stephen Kroll, who outlined the CPC’s timeframe for consideration, as well as additional comments by Christopher Kane, speaking on behalf of Mr. Cabrera who is the operator of La Habana Cigar Bar on Toulouse St. Other speakers included Joseph Casler, Susan Guillot, Meg Lousteau, and Carol Gniady. Following this discussion, Mr. Taylor moved that the VCC would prefer to see more precise language relative to the specific text change before taking action, but if time does not allow that, then the VCC is unwilling to make a recommendation over concerns that cigar bars could proliferate in the VCC-2 zone, thereby deferring any specific recommendation to the CPC. Ms. Stokes seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

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Proposed Resubdivision of Properties associated with the hotel development at 111 Iberville, resulting in new lots C1, C2 & C3 per materials received 03/27/15 – proposal being considered by the City Planning Commission.

Mr. Hesdorffer introduced the proposed resubdivision consideration, noting that the topic deals with what has been refined as the expected footprint for the 111 Iberville site and the additional square footage to be taken from associated adjacent lots, under the same ownership and which will result in the final lot on which the new hotel development will stand. He added that the conceptual approval for the design of the hotel accessory addition has already been established, but that the final dimensions and outline of the resulting lot will be reflected in the final construction plans. The Chairman spoke of the need to clarify that the expanded lot as well as the expanded structure or building volume outside the current envelope of 111 Iberville would be dedicated to accessory hotel uses only and would not include any guest rooms, following the provisos that allow 111 Iberville to be converted to a hotel under current VCS-1 zoning. Following this discussion, Mr. Taylor moved that the VCC favorable support the proposed resubdivision as per the materials received 03/27/15, under consideration by the CPC with the provisos that (1) the owners will not undertake any subsequent or additional re-subdivisions to expand the site footprint and (2) that the expanded land area and the planned additional building volume, beyond the current envelope of the historic structure at 111 Iberville, will be used only for accessory uses and not additional guest room space beyond the existing building envelope. The motion, seconded by Mr. Blanda, passed unanimously.

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#### Discussion of the N. Rampart Streetcar construction

Per her request prior to the meeting, the Chairman called upon Ms. Lousteau who addressed the Commission regarding vibrations being felt along the N. Rampart corridor, and beyond, and noting her serious concerns over the ongoing construction and heavy equipment being used in relation to the N. Rampart streetcar line construction. Mr. Hesdorffer, per the Chairman’s request, noted that since no representative from RTA was present to respond, any inquiries or comments may be directed to Patrice Bell Mercadel, the Director of Marketing and Communications for the RTA. Her contact information was shown via the power-point display for the public to be advised.

#### IX. **RATIFICATION** of Architectural Committee and Staff actions since the Wednesday, March 04, 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 March 4, 2015. The motion passed unanimously.

With no further business to be considered, Mr. Taylor moved for adjournment. The motion, seconded by Mr. Blanda, passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:20 PM.

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

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