

VIEUX CARRE COMMISSION

Mitchell J. Landrieu  
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Bryan Block  
DIRECTOR

Minutes of the **Vieux Carré Commission** meeting of **Wednesday, November 2, 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  
Patricia C. Denechaud  
Jorge A. Henriquez

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:**

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

**STAFF ABSENT:** Erika Gates, Inspector;

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Kirk Fabacher, John Williams, Meg Lousteau

**I. ROLL CALL**

Chairman Musso called the meeting to order at 1:28 PM. A quorum was established with the presence of seven (7) of the eight (8) seated Commissioners present. [Mr. Henriquez arrived after the roll was called.]

**II. REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Mr. Taylor moved, Ms. Denechaud seconded, that the minutes of the Vieux Carré Commission meeting of October 5, 2016 be approved as previously circulated. The motion passed unanimously.

**III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Mr. Musso, noting the short length of the agenda, elected not to present a report.

**IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Block formally introduced Mr. Whitfield as the VCC's newest field inspector.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**823 Decatur St:** Pro Signs & Graphics, applicant; 823 Decatur LLC, owner; Designation of an existing projecting blades sign to be a Historic Sign at Tujague's Restaurant, per application & materials received 10/12/16.

Ms. Vogt gave the staff presentation despite a lack of representation on behalf of the application, at the applicant's request. Mr. Musso stated that Archtiectural Committee review would be necessary if any changes were to be made to the sign. With no further discussion

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necessary, Mr. Taylor moved to **approve** the Classic Sign designation, consistent with staff recommendation. Ms. Denechaud seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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## VI. APPEALS AND VIOLATIONS

**409 Bourbon St:** Jennifer Rowe, applicant; Nova Aurelia Holdings, LLC, owner; Proposal to make repairs, correct violations, and retain work done without permits, per application & materials received 04/25/16 & 08/29/16. **[Notice of Violation sent 11/13/14]**

**[Mr. Henriquez arrived prior to the staff report]**

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff presentation with Mr. Fabacher present on behalf of the application. Mr. Musso noted that 20 tons of air conditioning for 2,200 sq. ft. was unheard of but that he would leave the topic open for discussion. Mr. Taylor noted that if such a large unit is desired that it should be located in the courtyard.

Mr. Fabacher noted that the unit was actually 15 tons and that a 3<sup>rd</sup> party verified that that size unit was required for this installation. Mr. Fabacher continued noting that the owner feels he will lose business if he can't keep the doors open.

Mr. Fifield inquired how the design of this mechanical system with open doors compares to the Energy Code Requirement of Louisiana. Mr. Fabacher replied that he was not involved in the initial design of the mechanical system and that it was common practice on Bourbon Street for businesses to operate with open doors.

Mr. Musso noted that there was no rationale to installing the equipment on the roof.

Mr. Taylor moved to **defer** the application to discuss with the owner the possibility of relocating the equipment to grade in the courtyard and installing air curtains. Mr. Musso noted that it was likely expensive to run the equipment almost constantly and that the suggested solution may be much more efficient. Mr. Fifield amended the motion requiring the applicant to return to the next meeting and suggesting alternate proposals be made in the meantime. Mr. Taylor accepted the amendment to his motion. Mr. Fabacher inquired if this item would be returning to the Architectural Committee. Messrs. Taylor and Musso responded that it would be returning to the Architectural Committee. The motion was seconded by Ms. Stokes and passed unanimously.

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**411 Bourbon St:** John Williams, applicant, Cajun 411 LLC, owner: Appeal of Architectural Committee denial of proposal to modify previously approved plans with the addition of a third floor to an existing building, per application & materials received 10/11/16 & 10/25/16, respectively.

Mr. Albrecht gave the staff presentation with Mr. Williams present on behalf of the application. Mr. Musso noted that his concerns included the density and increase loading on the site, the scale and proportion of the proposed addition, and the placement of mechanical equipment. Mr. Skinner stated that he was completely against rooftop additions and this proposal of camel backing new construction on a historic building.

Mr. Taylor inquired if there was any historic precedence for this proposal. Mr. Williams stated that there was an addition down the block that was similar. Mr. Williams continued that it was an issue of use and the change of use, noting that the previously existing business was the "worst." Mr. Williams continued that the addition adds space and the ability for the restaurant to work and that because of the functionality of the restaurant and the requirements to keep things interior forces things up. Mr. Williams concluded that it would not be visible from Bourbon St. Mr. Block responded that he understands the visibility will be limited from Bourbon St. but there are other vantage points that will have visibility.

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Mr. Musso noted that the Commission cannot take in to account the financial success of a proposed business. Mr. Williams responded that the Commission can consider issues beyond architecture. Mr. Williams continued that the owner took away a business that could have made more money, that there are intricacies to how many seats can fit in the space, that the needs for more space were recognized after approval was given for the two-story design. Mr. Williams again noted that it won't be seen from Bourbon St. and stated that he would be happy to make this an attractive building.

Mr. Taylor inquired if Mr. Williams was stating that if the office space isn't there that the business will fail. Mr. Williams replied that there is also dry storage in the space. Mr. Taylor inquired how many total seats were in the restaurant. Mr. Williams replied it was more than 100.

Meg Lousteau, in the audience representing VCPORA, stated that programs should not dictate what the VCC allows. Ms. Lousteau continued that any business would want more space and that if the proposed business will not work in the space that should have been considered before the building was purchased.

Mr. Skinner moved for **deferral** of the application. Mr. Fifield requested that the motion include the staff recommendations for a model and the context to better understand the effect on this section of the Vieux Carré. Mr. Fifield continued requesting that the applicant provide examples of two-story additions on 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings. Mr. Musso added a request to include the seats in the bar and restaurant in the floor plans. Mr. Blanda seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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**VII. RATIFICATION** of Architectural Committee and Staff actions since the Wednesday, October 05, 2016 VCC meeting.

Mr. Taylor moved to ratify the actions of the Architectural Committee and staff since the October 05, 2016 VCC meeting. The motion, seconded by Ms. Stokes, passed unanimously.

With no additional business to discuss, Mr. Taylor moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Stokes seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:03 PM.