

VIEUX CARRE COMMISSION

LaToya Cantrell
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Bryan Block
DIRECTOR

NOTE: The below minutes are a summary of actions taken. They are not a verbatim transcription of the meeting.

Minutes of the Vieux Carré Commission meeting of Wednesday, April 19, 2023– 11:00 pm.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Stephen Bergeron, Toni DiMaggio, Julio Guichard, Angela King, Gabriel Virdure,

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: LaVerne Toombs, Robert Pearson, Heather Veneziano

STAFF PRESENT: Bryan Block, Director; Renee Bourgogne, Deputy Director; Nicholas Albrecht, Senior Building Plans Examiner; Marguerite Roberts, Inspector; Tommie Milliner, Deputy City Attorney

STAFF ABSENT: Erin Vogt, Senior Building Plans Examiner; Nora Goddard, Inspector

OTHERS PRESENT:

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Block called the roll. Commissioners Bergeron, DiMaggio, Guichard, Virdure and King were present. Commissioners Pearson, Veneziano, and Toombs were noted as absent. The five Commissioners in attendance constituted a quorum.

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES

Ms. Virdure made the motion for the approval of the minutes as previously distributed. Mr. Guichard seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

III. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Mr. Bergeron gave an update on Madame John's Legacy and asked people to stay engaged. He then thanked everyone for the last year, it was his one-year anniversary, and thanked staff and the public for their hard work.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Block noted that the Architectural Design Committee for Madame John's Legacy recommended that the building be completed as it exists. He continued that a temporary wood fence wall would be constructed and that he was not sure of the funding for the project. Mr. Guichard noted that the museum board voted to take funds to pay for the study.

Mr. Block said the work may be more aggressive than just restoring the building to its current form. He continued that there was concern with the structural engineer working for the architect and maintaining an unbiased opinion.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1226 Chartres St: 23-08332-VCGEN; Zach Smith Consulting & Design, applicant; 1216 Chartres LLC, owner; Proposal to construct new electrical closet on side elevation of main building, per application & materials received 03/28/2023.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=967491>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report. There was no one present on behalf of the application.

Ms. Virdure inquired as to the condition of the wall. Ms. Bourgogne stated that it was in good condition. Ms. DiMaggio asked if there was a detail as to how the roof would attach. Mr. Albrecht stated no, but that he would be happy to get that as it was very important. Ms. Bourgogne reiterated that that the idea was conceptual approval with details at staff. Ms. DiMaggio then stated that the hardware should be minimal, not painted out but not decorative. Ms. Bourgogne stated that staff could handle this.

There was no public comment.

Ms. Virdure made the motion for conceptual approval with the details at the staff level including the hardware. Ms. King seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

1220 Chartres St: 23-08412-VCGEN; Zach Smith Consulting & Design, applicant; 1216 Chartres LLC, owner; Proposal to construct new electrical closet on side elevation of main building, per application & materials received 03/29/2023.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=967491>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report. There was no one present on behalf of the application.

Ms. DiMaggio and Ms. Viridure reiterated their concern over certain details.

There was no public comment.

Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for conceptual approval with the details at the staff level. Mr. Guichard seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

VI. APPEALS AND VIOLATIONS

625 Dauphine St: 21-33678-VCGEN; Kirk Garrett, applicant; 625 Dauphine Street LLC, owner; Appeal of Architecture Committee denial of proposal to retain gas lights and other lighting installed without benefit of VCC review or approval, per application & materials received 12/09/2021 & 10/05/2022, respectively.

<https://onestopapp.nola.gov/Documents.aspx?ObjLabel=Permit&ID=909250>

Mr. Albrecht read the staff report with Mr. Zimmer present on behalf of the application.

Mr. Zimmer stated the following: you are relying on pictures. We have submitted invoices of what the property owners have done, they converted electric to gas. Gas would be more appropriate as that is what was available at the time period.

Ms. DiMaggio stated the following: it is important to note that the type of fixtures on the front elevation have nothing to do with if gas was available during the time period. The fact is they are not appropriate here. That is the point, they would not have been appropriate at this location on this structure during any period. This is about best preservation practices. We are not here to create a false history. We are here to preserve these buildings through best practices.

Ms. Viridure asked staff what the number was. Mr. Albrecht stated "12 converted and 15 new, by my count." Mr. Block stated that staff recommend that those 12 could be retained. Mr. Zimmer asked where Mr. Albrecht got those numbers. Mr. Albrecht stated "the listing photos." Mr. Block stated that it wasn't about excessive lighting, it was about inappropriate fixtures. He went on to say that staff was happy to help with security lighting or landscape lighting just not decorative in nature. Ms. DiMaggio asked if there was any situation where the applicant would could work out a retention and removal plan. Mr. Zimmer stated that his clients were open to whatever was possible and that they thought that converting was OK. Ms. DiMaggio stated that the applicant needed to propose something to staff and staff would be happy to work with them. She went on to say that staff had suggested 12 as ok but I agree with staff, the 3 on the front are NOT OK- these would set a bad precedent and a present a false history. Mr. Zimmer stated that he would be happy to go to his client with this. Mr. Block reiterated that staff needed a clear proposal and some compromise. Ms. Bourgogne asked the Commission to please include a time frame in their motion as this had been ongoing for quite some time.

There was no public comment.

Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for deferral with the applicant to make a proposal to be approved at the ARC and not to return to the commission unless necessary, within 30 days. Ms. Viridure seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

905 Royal St: 23-04489-VCPNT; Nine O Five Royal, applicant; Nine O Five Apt House Hotel Inc, owner; Seeking a hardship regarding current violations with proposal to not address violations under current ownership with the property currently for sale, per application received 02/23/2023.

There was no one present on behalf of the application.

Ms. DiMaggio made the motion for the deferral until the next meeting with notification that failure to

appear would result in denial.

Ms. Viridure seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

VII. RATIFICATION of Architectural Committee and Staff actions since the Wednesday, March 22, 2023 VCC meeting.

Ms. Viridure made the motion to ratify Architecture Committee and Staff actions. Mr. Guichard seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

At approximately 1:12 PM Mr. Guichard made the motion for adjournment. Ms. DiMaggio seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.