



CITY OF WHEELING HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

City County Building 1500 Chapline Street Wheeling, West Virginia 26003
phone: (304) 234-3702 web: WheelingWV.gov/historic-landmarks-commission

September 3, 2021

Wheeling Planning Commission-Report to Council

Mayor and Members of City Council,

The City of Wheeling Historic Landmarks Commission held its meeting on September 2, 2021. Following is the action taken at the meeting of interest to City Council.

Demolition Review – 87/89 33rd Street

The property consists of a brick side-by-side duplex listed as a contributing structure in the South Wheeling Historic District that has a recently-added metal commercial building integrated across the rear. Vossen Realty Co., L.L.C. (the "Applicant") purchased the property on October 22, 2020, for a reported consideration of \$32,000. The Applicant wishes to demolish the contributing brick structure for additional parking leaving the metal commercial structure (non-contributing) at the rear.

The demolition permit application was first read at the May 6, 2021, meeting and scheduled for a public hearing on the June 3, 2021, Landmarks Commission meeting. At the public hearing, the following people spoke in opposition: John Byrd, 3705 Eoff Street; Ken Sexton, South Wheeling Preservation Alliance. Commissioner Sweeny asked the Applicant if it had investigated or applied for loans or grants available to rehabilitate the contributing brick structure? When the Applicant answered in the negative, the matter was tabled until the next meeting of the Commission so that the Applicant could review the financial assistance opportunities available through Wheeling Heritage and so that staff member Connelly could look into alternative parking options via a right of way abandonment behind the building.

At the July 1 meeting of the Landmarks Commission, Commissioner Sweeny advised that a meeting with the Applicant had not yet occurred, and the matter was tabled to the August Landmarks Commission meeting. Mr. Vossen left the August 5, 2021, meeting prior to his agenda item being called due to an emergency. At the August meeting, however, Jeanne Finstein of the Friends of Wheeling and Ginger Kabala of the South Wheeling Preservation Alliance, were present and spoke in opposition to the demolition request. The Commission tabled the matter to the September 2, 2021, Landmarks Commission meeting to permit the Applicant to advise whether the availability of funding assistance and alternatives for parking would obviate the Applicant's desire to demolish the contributing structures. Mr. Vossen did not attend the September 2, 2021, meeting; however, the Applicant sent correspondence advising he is still exploring restoration options, but would like a vote on the matter to have the option to demolish the structure. Subsequent to the meeting the applicant filed additional materials stating that the demolition contract would be \$18,000 and the estimate to rehabilitate the brick contributing structure into apartments would be more than \$200,000.

Chairman Kaiser reviewed the three options outlined in Article 173.13.f with regard to any demolition permit request: (1) approve the permit as the only reasonable alternative for the



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building; (2) delay the application for up to 120 days to allow the applicant, commission or other parties investigate reasonable uses for the structure; or (3) deny the application because the applicant failed to completely and truthfully answer the questions on the application or at the public hearing. The Commission determined that the first and third options were not applicable. The Commissioners engaged in a thorough discussion of the purpose and intent of the ordinance and their role. Having not heard from the Applicant's principal (Mr. Vossen) in-person since July 1, 2021, the Landmarks Commission upon motion duly made and seconded voted unanimously to delay the application until the November meeting of the Landmarks Commission (November 4, 2021) to see if other reasonable alternatives exist. *The original motion was to delay the request until the October meeting (October 7, 2021) meeting, however several members advised they would not be available to attend that meeting, and it was questionable as to whether a quorum would be available for the conduct of business.*

As outlined in Article 173.13.i, City Council may accept, reject, refer back to the Commission, or overturn the recommendation and direct the Building Department to issue the permit.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles J. Kaiser, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Charles J. Kaiser, Jr.
Chair