

March 15, 2023

## City of Summit Historic Preservation Commission Minutes 3/15/23

Meeting began on time at 7:00 PM in the Conference Room at City Hall

### Attendance:

Present - Brandon Righi (Chair), Susan Brady (Secretary), James Burgmeyer, Michael Digeronimo, Jessica Ekmekjian, Meredith Gaylord, Susan Hairston, Caroline King.

Guests Present - Bobby Pawlowski.

Not In Attendance - Jennifer Balson-Alvarez, Mary Malloy

James Burgmeyer made Motion to approve minutes from 2/15/23 – Motion approved.

Caroline King reported that the Summit Public Library is in the process of indexing Summit HPC's archive of records, which had previously been kept by the chair of the HPC in CD-ROM form. The library hopes to provide access to these records online.

### Advisory Review: 75 Tulip

Summary of HPC discussion: 100 year-old home in a historic district. No comment or objection to proposed work in the rear of the home. Alteration to the front of the home is not in keeping with the character and historical context of the neighborhood. HPC suggests plans be resubmitted to the City of Summit that preserve the original features of the facade, and that also detail the appropriate building materials as per "Design & Preservation Guidelines for Historic Properties in the City of Summit." For example, real stone on the foundation, or use existing stucco not cultured stone. HPC recommends smooth hardi-plank, not textured.

### Advisory Review 475 Springfield Avenue

HPC Findings: Located in Downtown Historic District, building is currently non-compliant with height requirement and proposed plan eliminates current setback. Overall, the proposed building does not compliment the historic district or neighboring buildings. HPC suggests structure be integrated with adjacent properties by using stucco to wrap sides and cornice lines (DRO 35-14.5 page 287 Mixed Use Non-Residential Development). HPC suggests plans be resubmitted in accordance with both Downtown guidelines and with Historic Guidelines.

### Other business:

Susan Hairston reported that there may be training for the City's volunteers in September that could help with understanding how their roles fit in with and support the City government's activities.

Brandon Righi updated the committee on the status of the new HPC ordinance. As written, the proposed HPC ordinance will not be voted on by Council, which has the following concerns: converting HPC to mayoral appointed body, increased work for city staff,

excessive burden for working-class families who happen to live in one of the historic districts.

Righi shared that his concerns with the proposed language (which was submitted in 2022 before he was chair) mostly overlap with Council's. He shared that he thinks the City should move slowly and pragmatically when it comes to additional regulation for building/development, for which there are already many in force. Summit has its coveted historic character, and is considered an architectural model for other municipalities in the state, and all of that was accomplished organically without government guidance or requirements.

Enabling the City and the HPC to better control the currently unregulated demolition of historic structures has potential broad support in Council, and is strongly supported by the entire HPC along with many in the community. Council and the Chair of the HPC recommend that a new HPC ordinance should focus on the demolition issue first.

The Chair is waiting on word from Council about the best way to move forward, which could include modifying the language of the proposed ordinance, modifying the existing HPC ordinance, or creating an entirely new ordinance. Once direction is offered, the HPC will have further discussions about the best way to protect historic/architecturally significant structures from demolition.

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 PM. –Notes recorded by Susan Brady