

MINUTES
VIEUX CARRE COMMISSION
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2008
1:30 P.M. CONFERENCE ROOM
334 ROYAL STREET, 2ND FLOOR

MEMBERS PRESENT: E. Ralph Lupin, M.D., Chairman
Dodie Smith, Vice Chairman
Raymond R. Young, Sr., Secretary
Tom Bissell
Stewart Farnet
Fred Lawson
Betty H. Norris

MEMBER ABSENT: Pat Denechaud
Carol B. Wise

STAFF PRESENT: Lary P. Hesdorffer, Director; Hilary Somerville Irvin, Principal Architectural Historian; Stephen McNair, Building Plans Examiner; Cindy Schoenberger, Building Plans Examiner; and Lily McNee, Preservation Assistant.

OTHERS PRESENT: Dawn Segura (Office of City Attorney), Robert Vanlangandonck, Bruce Egger, Ron Rivet, Jim Cripps, and Rodney Ratliff.

I. ROLL CALL

A quorum was established with Dr. Lupin, Mrs. Norris, Ms. Smith and Messrs. Lawson, Young, Farnet and Bissell present.

Mr. Hesdorffer introduced the newest staff member, Cindy Schoenberger, who joins the staff as a Building Plans Examiner. Ms. Dawn Segura was also introduced, representing the Office of the City Attorney.

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES from meeting of January 15, 2008.

Mr. Bissell moved, Mr. Young seconded, to **approve** the minutes as drafted. The motion passed unanimously.

III. NEW BUSINESS

531 Bienville: Bienville French Quarter Properties, owner; Rodney Ratliff, architect/applicant. Architectural modifications (work permitted in 2005 but not executed) & **change of use** from *vacant* to *residential* (four condominium units), per application & revised drawings received 01/15/08.

Following the staff presentation of the application, based upon the revised drawings received 01/15/08, Mr. Ratliff informed the Commission that the owners have revised their request for a waiver from the Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA) for two (2) residential units, rather than four (4) residential units, and that he was submitting new drawings.

Accepting the revised application, Mr. Bissell moved, Ms. Smith seconded, to approve the **change of use** from *vacant* to *residential* and *commercial* and to support the applicant in obtaining a waiver from the Board of Zoning Adjustments for no more than **two (2) residential units**, with the applicant returning to the Architectural Committee for review of the revised drawings. The motion passed unanimously.

301 Decatur: 301 Decatur, LLC, owner; James S. Cripps, architect/applicant. Proposed architectural modifications for **change of use** from *vacant* to *residential* (3rd floor), per application received 11/29/07 & revised drawings received 01/31/07.

Following the staff's presentation, Mr. Bissell moved to accept the Architectural Committees recommendation to **approve** the change of use from vacant to residential. Mr. Farnet seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

1235 N. Peters: City of New Orleans (French Market Corporation), owner/applicant. Review of proposal to install a 16' tall, painted steel sculpture, per application received 12/20/07, revised details received 02/07/08 & model received 02/08/08.

In the absence of a representative from the French Market, the staff presented the proposal and outlined the Architectural Committee's recommendations. Following the presentation, Mr. Bissell moved, Ms. Smith seconded, to **conceptually approve** the proposed installation with the following provisos:

- The location for the sculpture installation be revised to be lakeside of the shed and the vendors stall area, at the corner of the site, adjacent to the intersection of Barracks and French Market Place.
- The base of the sculpture be raised onto an elevated platform or pedestal, at sitting height, approximately 16" above grade.
- If staff should have any doubt regarding the revised pedestal details, the application should be again referred to the Architectural Committee for additional review.

This motion passed with the affirmative votes of Ms. Smith and Messrs. Bissell, Farnet, Lawson and Young. Mrs. Norris abstained.

400-08 Chartres: Kemper & Leila Williams Foundation, owner; Robert Cangelosi, Jr. (Koch & Wilson Architects), applicant. Proposal to install new recessed frameless glass wall and door in Chartres elevation pedestrian alley as part of architectural modifications proposed for a **change of use** from *vacant* to *museum*, per application & drawings received 02/01/08.

Following the staff's presentation, Mr. Farnet moved to accept the Architectural Committee's recommendation to **approve** the installation of the door with the added proviso that the Vieux Carre Commission will continue to have jurisdiction over the pedestrian passageway. It was added that a restrictive covenant should be drafted to legally document the retention of VCC authority over the enclosed area, prior to having a permit issued. Mr. Young seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Bissell then offered an amendment in the form of an additional motion, seconded by Ms. Smith, adding that the consideration of the **change of use** from *vacant* to *museum* would also be **approved**. The motion passed unanimously.

637-41 Burgundy/1000-22 St. Peter Street: Burgundy Street Association, LLC (Eric Sharpe), owner; James M. Farr (Farr + Huson), architect/applicant. Proposal to remove non-original brick wall and pedestrian gate on St. Peter elevation, install new horizontal board fence with beaded board pedestrian and driveway gates, and install new curb cut, per application & drawings received 02/06/08.

Following the staff's presentation Mr. Farnet moved to accept the Architectural Committee's recommendation to **approve** the new fencing, driveway gate and new curb cut. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. Mr. Lawson said that he intended to vote against the motion because he opposed changing patio open space into areas used for automobile parking. The motion passed with Ms. Smith, Messrs. Young, Farnet, Bissell, and Lupin voting in favor; Mr. Lawson opposed. Mrs. Norris was not present during voting.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Inspections/Violations Report: Mr. Hesdorffer explained the staff's entire procedure for citing violations, the notification process as well as the paperwork involved to finally seek resolution through Administrative Adjudication. He also stated that the VCC's inspector had taken the long-standing list of violations, assembled since Hurricane Katrina while the Commission had no paid inspector, and was expanding that list with more recent infractions on a growing list of properties in violation. Additionally, other staff members had begun processing the official violation notices. Violation letters are being sent and in some cases, already, applications are being received to rectify some of the infractions. The staff is utilizing a spread sheet /matrix format in order to keep a running record of the entire violation process.

Dr. Lupin expressed his pleasure with the progress made so far and requested monthly reports on the violation letters to track such progress. He also encouraged the Commissioners to continue to report violations to the staff.

[Dr. Lupin left the meeting at 2:50 pm.; Mr. Farnet, at 3:10 pm. Ms. Smith assumed the Chair.]

V. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

In the absence of Dr. Lupin, there was no Chairman's Report.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director reported that he has continued to be active in various meeting with the City's Office of Film & Video. Meetings have been held to discuss production schedules planned filming, some in the French Quarter, for **12 Rounds**. He went on to add that based upon VCC objections over proposed activities in the French Quarter, the production company changed some locations to eliminate problematic filming conditions.

He noted that a request by Turner Sports to use the gallery of Johnny White's at Orleans and Bourbon, for live telecasts of programming during the NBA All-Star weekend had been well planned in advance. The

production team worked within the restrictions of the neighborhood, various agencies and Film/Video established practices. The telecasts were successful and went forward without incident.

The Friends of the Vieux Carre Commission held an expanded board meeting on Monday, February 18, 2008, marking its first meeting with the most recent addition of directors representing various French Quarter interest groups. The Friends is in the process of establishing revised bylaws and programs upon which it will focus. First among those was to join with VCPORA and The Historic New Orleans Collection in sharing sponsorship of the Jacob & Mary Morrison Memorial Lecture to be held on March 2, 2008. The Board's next meeting is scheduled for April.

A follow-up meeting was held among the various interested citizen groups and City agency representatives (including Mrs. Norris and the Director from the VCC) in Councilman Carter's office to continue the discussion of use violations that persist in the Quarter and the pursuit of remedies. In an attempt to curtail improper issuance of occupational licenses from the Dept. of Revenue and approvals from Safety & Permits, all license applications and renewals are to be forwarded to the VCC for preliminary review and comment. Although this is a substantial additional task for VCC staff, it may in the long run prove to curtail some of the unfortunate illegal licenses that in the past have slipped through.

Staff participated in an all-day retreat with Office of Recovery & Development Administration's Retreat (01/23) as part of a coordinated effort to unite all of the contributing offices/agencies staffs in understanding their roles in City-wide recovery.

VII. RATIFICATION of Architectural Committee and Staff Actions

Mr. Bissell moved, Mrs. Norris seconded, to **ratify** the Architectural Committee and Staff Actions taken since the last Commission meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 3:15 P.M.

APPROVED: _____
Raymond R. Young, Sr., Secretary

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