

IDAHO FALLS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Thursday, February 01, 2018

12:00 p.m., Annex Conference Room

Minutes

Attending: Hereschell Mynarcik, Graham Whipple, Julie Williams (phone), Renee Magee, Catherine Smith

Hereschell acted as Chair in Kim's absence.

Meeting called to order at 12:04 p.m.

Minutes: Motion by Graham was made to approve minutes from January 18, 2018 with corrections. Julie seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Design Review Discussion: Graham made a motion to amend the agenda by moving agenda item number 6. Design Review Discussion above the rest of the agenda items. He feels that is a priority over the other items. Julie seconded the motion. The Motion to amend the agenda carried unanimously.

Renee and Graham went over the history of the design review guidelines the commission, staff and IFDD's rolls. A consultant was hired, the guidelines were created and the hope was that the guidelines would be adopted by ordinance and the commission would do project reviews and make recommendations from a local level for federal monies. However, the guidelines were not adopted by ordinance. Renee indicated that because this is a quasi-judicial process, the recommendation has to be based on the guidelines and not opinion. There is an agreement for the commission to act as a local recommending body to SHPO. There were a couple of problems with the SHPO reviews and the commission gave comments to SHPO, because the commission understood the context of the building and how it fits into the community as opposed looking at the Secretary of Interior Standards. Essentially in the end the commission became a local level recommending body to help SHPO, and put the guidelines into context at a local level and use the guidelines as a measuring stick. Graham handed out a document titled "City of Idaho Falls Façade Improvement Program 2008" (Exhibit A) and indicated that the document was guidance of what was needed during the application process so that the commission could measure a project or application with fairness. There was discussion regarding how the CDBG Administrator went from part-time to full-time and how previous staff handled applications vs current staff and why things are currently handled differently. Brad explained that HUD voiced frustration as to how previous staff handled things and current staff was asked to clean things up and follow their program because it is their money. HUD determined during an audit that the current staff was doing a good job. Graham stated that the commission has discussed in the past whether they should be involved with the review and recommendation process or not, or if IFDDC should take care of the entire process. Graham directed the commission to look at page 2 of the document item number 5, criteria of projects. Graham explained that he is not questioning that these project qualify, he is questioning whether those projects were prepared enough to be brought to the commission. When the commission was invited to be part of the process there were specific guidelines that needed to be adhered to. SHPO may not ask for that much detail, but the City Ordinance establishing the commission is very specific as to the roll of the commission and that we can't deny or interrupt the process and there is no ordinance, all there is an

agreement. The roll of the commission is to evaluate if the project is developed enough to make a recommendation. Graham stated that the projects from the January 18 meeting should not have been seen and it's not the first time in the past few years that the commission has seen projects like that. There was discussion regarding what should be included in the application and what SHPO requires according to Section 106 and what SHIPO wants from the commission. Julie stated that she has written hundreds of letters to SHPO. She indicated that she includes a brief history of the building. The year it was built, when and how it was remodeled or added on to. Julie indicated that she also included a topo map, 2 photos-one of the existing building and an oblique photo to show its relationship with surrounding buildings, architectural drawings and an explanation of the project and samples of the materials. **The Commission is guessing that the entire history of the Woolworths façade was not given to Jaime with SHPO and she did not know that it was registered with the existing facade.** Renee said that there are 10 or 11 buildings downtown that are listed as most important. Graham suggested that there be a second tier that identifies eligible structures and noncontributing beyond that. Brent sent an e-mail to Matt at SHPO that does the application reviews and asked what he needs for a façade grant application. He has not gotten a response yet. Julie stated that it is in section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. It has a very detailed description of the standards. Renee added that the SHPO website just added a new section 106 review process. This is what they are expecting to be provided with. Julie indicated that the Commission should be the one writing these letters to SHPO in doing the approval and not the IFDDC. That was done by accident of circumstances that lead to the process we have now. Julie's opinion is the Commission needs to take ownership of the process or not do it. Graham stated that there needs to be consistency and a checklist needs to be created. Design guidelines were put in place to preserve the character of the Downtown area. Brad determined that part of the issue for incomplete applications is due to staff maybe not knowing what a complete application looks like. Questions regarding who writes the recommendation letter to SHPO was discussed. It was decided that Brent would write the letter of recommendation to SHPO with the direction of the Commission with findings to support the recommendation, and he would send it to the Commission for review. Catherine explained that she appreciated the views and opinions of the Commission from the last meeting however she was disappointed in the manner that the meeting was conducted. It was not a positive interaction with the applicants at all. She feels that the Commission needs to figure out a better way to convey that the commission is a resource. Catherine feels there is a lot of knowledge and value with the Commission and does not want to see it divorced from IFDDC with the reviews, she would like to find a way to move forward without having another meeting like the last one, whether that is determining that the application are incomplete and should not be reviewed. Renee stated that Brent had a good point after the last meeting and that was that the staff works with you from day one. Maybe a pre-application meeting be done at a staff level if Brad and Brent are willing to do that. The successful projects downtown came in prepared, and there was dialog early on. There was additional conversation regarding a checklist and what it should consist of and how to move forward. It was determined that a check list is needed, then a staff report, if the application is not complete than it doesn't get put on the agenda to go before the Commission. The complicated aspect is the HUD component. There are rumors that there is a 2 or 3 year waiting list so people are just submitting something to get "on the waiting list." Not sure where this is coming from. There was some discussion regarding this among the commission. Lisa has to manage what is ready and what is not. Catherine things that Lisa does a great job determining what is ready to go. Brad suggested a work flow for staff be put together, given to the Commission to make sure they agree that's what the flow is, IFDDC agrees that is what the flow is and

moving forward with the meeting, If the Commission feels the application is not complete meeting over. Graham went on to add, the Commission needs to review the packet in advance and let Brent and the rest of the group know if the application is complete and whether or not the Commission should meet on that particular item. There should also be a list of items that are missing and need to be addressed before it comes back to the Commission. Commission asks that packets get sent more than a few days in advance.

Public Outreach: Renee handed out a list she compiled from the input she requested from the commission when she asked them to list two reasons for conducting a citizen participation program. She said there were very different answers and she was not sure which direction to go. She also handed out examples of other community's historic preservation plans (both documents Exhibit B). This and the rest of the agenda items will be discussed at next months meeting.

Hereschell adjourned the meeting at 1:29 p.m.

Respectfully,

Naysha Foster, Recording Secretary

City of Idaho Falls
Facade Improvement Program
2008

This program is made possible through the HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds administered by the City of Idaho Falls.

1. Introduction.

The Downtown Master Plan envisions a restored and revitalized downtown with vibrant, profitable businesses in a fun and exciting place for people to shop, do business and enjoy themselves. To improve and maintain the historic character of buildings and create the visual sense of "Place" in downtown, three business assistance programs are being created and funded to retain the uniqueness of downtown. Subject to review and approval, a property owner or business applicant may use the programs singly or in combination to finance a project.

2. Programs.

A. Grants.

- (1) Sign Grant: Up to \$500 grant funds is available for new signs or restoring signs. These funds must be equally matched by the applicant. Projecting signs are preferred.
- (2) Awning and Canopy Grant: Up to \$1,500 grant funds is available for the installation of awnings or canopies. These funds must be equally matched by the applicant. Traditional materials like canvas are preferred.
- (3) Facade Improvements: Under facade improvement, monies may be used for architectural and engineering services, historical research and documentation, permit fees, and construction costs to repair and restore character of the building and downtown.

Up to \$30,000 grant funds are available per project. The city will match the owner's investment on a 75% grant to a 25% owner cash investment in the project.

An additional amount up to \$10,000 is available in the form of 5% loan with a term of six years. An applicant must match the loan with additional 20% cash. This loan shall be secured with appropriate collateral, including, but not limited to, a lien on the subject property.

Exhibit A

Historic Resources

There are presently fourteen individual buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the downtown area. The Ridge Avenue Historic District, 11th Street Historic District, and the Idaho Falls Municipal Airport District have been listed on the National Register since 1993. Through its survey process, the Idaho Falls Historic Preservation Commission has identified concentrations of homes which retain their sense of time and place on the "numbered streets", in Riverside Addition, and in the Original Town site. There are concentrations of Mid-Century modern buildings, primarily homes, which were built in the 1950's and early 1960's which are eligible for nomination to the National Register. There are other structures such as dams and bridges within the City which are historic. The importance of these historic properties emerged as a theme in the responses from people during the citizen participation events. The other theme which emerged in the citizen participation events is the importance of reinvestment in these properties and neighborhoods.

Our plan for Historic Resources:

Implementation Strategies

1. Continue to identify historic properties.
2. Assist property owners with maintenance and restoration of historic properties.
3. Develop and sponsor educational programs for the residents of Idaho Falls.
4. Meet with owners in historic neighborhoods to develop conservation districts.
5. Explore the formation of a non-profit corporation.
6. Explore a local historic district program.

