

CITY OF LEAVENWORTH PRESERVATION COMMISSION

COMMISSION CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

100 N 5th Street, Leavenworth, Kansas 66048

Wednesday, July 11, 2018 6:00 PM

The Leavenworth Preservation Commission met Wednesday, July 11, 2018. Chairman Ken Bower called the meeting to order. Other commissioners present were: Rik Jackson, John Karrasch, Sherry Hines Whitson and Ed Otto. Diane Soddors and Debi Denney were absent. Also present for the meeting were City Planner Julie Hurley and Administrative Assistant Michelle Baragary.

Chairman Bower noted a quorum was present and called for a motion to accept the minutes from June 6, 2018 as presented. Mr. Jackson moved to accept the minutes with the necessary correction of adding Luigi's to the discussion, seconded by Ms. Whitson and approved as corrected by a vote of 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. 2018-12 LPC – 202 POTTAWATOMIE

A State Law review under the US Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation for the proposed demolition of the property located at 202 Pottawatomie Street, a property listed on the Kansas State Register of Historic Places.

Chairman Bower called for the staff report.

City Planner Julie Hurley stated the property at 202 Pottawatomie is listed on the Kansas State Historic Register and the property has also been identified by city staff as a potential city initiated demolition. Structures that are assessed to be in an unsafe and dangerous physical condition pose a threat to the public health, safety and welfare of the City. To address and abate these structures, the City of Commission, through its powers under Chapter 22, Article X (Dangerous Structures) of the Code of Ordinances, has requested that City staff annually develop an inventory of unsafe and dangerous structures for review and potential removal through demolition.

Staff has compiled a list of dangerous structures, which have been evaluated by staff in accordance with KSA 17-4759. The City Commission reviewed the structures at their regular meeting on June 26, 2018, and passed a resolution granting the property owner of 202 Pottawatomie an extension until October 9, 2018 to commence repair of the structure.

The owner of the structure has indicated his intent to rehabilitate the property.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends granting an extension to review progress at the regularly scheduled LPC meeting on October 3, 2018.

ACTION/OPTIONS:

- Motion, to Table item until the regularly scheduled PLC meeting on October 3, 2018 for further review.

Chairman Bower asked if there is any in the audience who would like to speak.

Rickey Giles Jr. (applicant and owner of the subject property) approached the board.

Mr. Giles stated he became owner of the property in 2017 but has been working on the structure since 2015 and a fire occurred on the veranda in December 2016. Mr. Giles stated he spoke with the Historic Committee and they wanted to be able to see the windows, which were hidden by the enclosed porch. The enclosed porch was removed and replaced with beams so the windows are now visible. Mr. Giles stated if all tile is removed, the property could be registered on the National Register, which is what he intends to do.

Mr. Giles stated the asbestos siding and lead paint saved the dwelling during the fire stating the structure is good; 95% cosmetic and 5% structural renovation needed. Wants to put a privacy fence up. Believes this is the only black historic home in Leavenworth. Current work done on the structure includes changing the weather head, fixing the cellar and installing plumbing, electrical and wifi.

Mr. Giles further stated he has applied for the Heritage Trust Fund Grant but missed the meeting and has not been afforded a grant as of yet.

Mr. Giles stated the areas of the structure needing renovations are the veranda and a little bit of the rear wall. The craftsmanship and bones of the dwelling are good. He restated the issue with the home is 95% cosmetic.

Mr. Bower asked if the veranda was original to the home or if it was an addition to the house.

Mr. Giles stated the veranda was added to the house.

Mr. Bower asked what is in the added structure.

Mr. Giles stated a kitchen, bathroom and pantry area.

Mr. Giles stated he feels as though the City has not been working with him because when he went to address the eye sore of the subject property he stated the City told him to redo his sidewalk so he fixed his sidewalk last year. He stated in the spring of 2018, the City sent him several letters but he never received any of the letters. He did not know the property was on the demolition list until he went to the property and saw the notification posted to the structure.

Mr. Bower asked if the mailing issue has been rectified.

Mr. Giles stated the City was mailing letters to his father's address but it has since been rectified.

Ms. Hurley stated the City must use the mailing address listed on county records. The county records have since been updated with Mr. Giles current address in Lansing, KS.

Mr. Bower asked if Mr. Giles is the official owner of the property.

Mr. Giles responded in the affirmative. He further stated he submitted a grant request in November 2017 and has received no grant money at this time.

Mr. Bower stated the Heritage Trust Fund is typically given to more public structures and he would not suggest pinning all his hopes on receiving the grant.

Mr. Giles responded that he is not broke and is aware of other fund money.

Mr. Bower asked if the owner is comfortable with meeting the October 9, 2018 deadline the City Commission gave him.

Mr. Giles stated he is comfortable with it but would like more time. So far he has done all the work himself except for the electrical and cellar. He further stated he has received bids to fix the eye sore where the fire occurred.

Mr. Bower asked what plan he has for the asbestos shingles.

Mr. Giles responded that he had some beautiful brick sidewalks and the City cut them off. But wheelchairs can get up and down on the sidewalks now. He proceeded to ask Mr. Bower what his question was.

Mr. Bower repeated his question about the asbestos siding.

Mr. Giles said he asked the City where he can dispose of asbestos siding. He stated no one at the City could tell him anything. A week later he stated a house a block away had been destroyed and he asked the contractor who was removing the shingles if he could remove his. The contractor said he could either this week or next. Mr. Giles said he would rather do the National Register rather than just State Register.

Mr. Bower asked if he has thought of putting vinyl siding on the house.

Mr. Giles said he has thought about it.

Mr. Bower stated the property will lose all of its historic value if vinyl siding is used.

Mr. Otto asked if there have been issues with kids or homeless individuals trying to get into the structure.

Mr. Giles responded that a light in the rear of the home comes on when the City lights come on.

Ms. Whitson stated the national historic center in Topeka has a wealth of information and can help the applicant get information on registering the property on the National Register. She further stated the library at University of Kansas would also have a lot of information.

Ms. Whitson asked Mr. Giles if he plans on living in the home or what his future goal is with the property.

Mr. Giles stated he works with kids and would like to continue this work at the property.

Ms. Whitson asked if the structure is currently livable.

Mr. Giles believes it is livable because there is plumbing and electricity; however, it wouldn't make sense for someone to live there until renovations are complete.

Ms. Whitson asked what the owner's 6 month and 12 month goals are for the property.

Mr. Giles stated he has a goal. The property has a big yard so he does a lot of yard maintenance. But he does do work inside the structure as well.

Ms. Whitson believes this is a great property to have for history. She stated having a timeline would be beneficial to meet his goals.

Mr. Giles stated that a timeline has to do with money. Receiving the grant funds would have sped up the process. He stated his main focus is to correct the eye sore and he has been working with the City to do so. Mr. Giles further stated he told the City to put in the wheelchair ramps and he would not fight it. He states he has been working with the City but the City has not been working with him. He called Topeka when the City was installing new sidewalks because he did not want the bricks in front of his house removed.

Mr. Otto stated he has a couple concerns. First, the subject property, in its current condition, is bringing down the value of neighboring properties. Second, he hopes the owner can get it to fruition but wants to owner to know there will be an exponential cost to restoring the structure.

Mr. Giles stated the wood floors don't crack, the staircase is beautiful, has great craftsmanship and overall the structure has good bones.

Mr. Otto asked if he has done a price comparison so he knows what it will cost to renovate the structure.

Mr. Giles responded that he and some friends will do the things they know how to do like drywall; everything else will be outsourced. He further stated he has family who will invest in renovating the property as well. Mr. Giles states he already has doors and is working on getting windows. He is also working with a contractor, Mike Wisdom. Mr. Giles believes the eye sore can be corrected by October.

Mr. Bower stated the City Commission has given the property owner an extension but they will not give inordinate amounts of time to fix the structure. Mr. Bower further stated he does not believe grant money will be provided for this project because that is typically given for public buildings rather than individual structures. Other than the historical part and the history of the community in that area, the structure does not have any redeeming value as it sits now.

Mr. Jackson stated he is very familiar with the house as he previously lived across from it in 2012. Mr. Jackson recommends concentrating efforts on fixing the area of the house in the rear which caught fire. Furthermore, it was stated by the property owner that the house has functioning plumbing in it but the staff report indicates there has not been water service to the subject property since November 12, 2015. All this is used to determine if a property will stay on the demolition list. Mr. Jackson suggested draw-up a timeline in the next couple weeks with emphasis on the exterior of the house. Mr. Jackson asked the contractor, Mike Wisdom, an estimate of the man hours to fix the rear portion of the house.

Mr. Wisdom stated it should take him approximately 3-5 weeks to complete. There is some structural damage but not much. The roof will also need to be replaced as well as the porch in the rear and the lap siding in the rear of the house. Mr. Wisdom is waiting on funds from Mr. Giles. Mr. Wisdom stated he has worked on historical houses in the past and knows what needs to be done to fix the house.

Mr. Bower asked if they are keeping the porch in the rear and fixing it up.

Mr. Wisdom stated the porch will be fixed and will extend out farther. Mr. Wisdom stated he know certain things like vinyl siding cannot be used but he wants to know exactly what the Preservation Commission wants him.

Mr. Bower responded that the City will help answer questions on what can or cannot be done in order to keep it in historical perspective. The City can also provide him with guidelines from the US Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Mr. Giles stated he is trying to figure out what to do with the windows and wants to know if he can replace the inside of the windows.

Mr. Bower replied that windows are a big item on restoration. If those are the original windows then the owner should try to work to preserve them.

Ms. Whitson said if money is an issue and if the back structure is not part of the original house then maybe it can be removed and just fix the rear of the home at this point in time. The back structure could be added on at a later time. This would save in cost.

Mr. Bower stated the City can provide some guidance on what is good and what is not good from a historical perspective. The eye sore on the subject property needs to be fixed so the City does not tear the home down. Mr. Bower believes everyone is behind Mr. Giles on getting the structure fixed to preserve the home.

Mr. Giles stated that when the fire occurred, he was cleaning up and addressing the eye sore in the rear of the home when he said the City told him to stop because the City wanted the sidewalks done.

Mr. Bower said not to worry about the sidewalk as that is the least of anyone's concerns right now.

Mr. Karrasch stated the outside part of the house needs to be fixed for the City Commission. If you spend all your time on the inside you will waste all that money because the City Commission is not going to care what is on the inside if the outside is not presentable.

Mr. Giles said he is well aware of that but working on this house is therapeutic for him. He has the plumbing fixed so the toilets would work and electrical finished so contractors can use their tools. He is pushing to start work in August.

With no further discussion, Chairman Bower called for a motion. Mr. Jackson moved to review the property again on October 3, 2018, seconded by Mr. Otto and passed by a unanimous vote 5-0.

Mr. Bower asked if there were any updates on the Lee building.

Ms. Hurley stated she and the City Manager have been trying to get in contact with the property owner but have not been successful yet.

Chairman Bower called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Karrasch moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Whitson and passed by a unanimous vote 5-0.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:41 pm.

JH:mb