

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE FOR THE CITY OF SUPERIOR

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 11, 2022, 5:30 p.m.

The HPC meeting for the city of Superior was called to order by Tim Meyer at 5:37 p.m. The meeting was held at City Hall in room 270 and by web and phone conference.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Brian Finstad, Kathleen Laakso, Tim Meyer, Tom Wondolkowski, Matt Osterlund

Staff Present: Jeff Skrenes

Others Present: Mayor Jim Paine, Maria Lockwood

There being a quorum present, the meeting was in order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Board Member Wondolkowski seconded by Finstad, to approve the April 13, 2022 minutes, carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

None

OLD BUSINESS

1. Recommendation of projects or sites to receive SLFRF funding

- a. **Princess Theater** – Skrenes advised committee of the 2021 feasibility study, showing a cost between \$2.1 million and \$2.7 million. That included some internal design and furniture costs. The bare bones renovation would likely be \$1.7 million, which included a 10% contingency. Significant changes in market costs mean that number is likely higher. Tim Meyer stated that at his architectural firm he has seen an increase across the board at roughly 30%. The full cost of renovation could exceed \$3 million. Skrenes advised the committee that they could recommend this as a priority with either minimal SLFRF funds or to fully fund the project, or to fund only certain elements while the rest is sought from other sources. The animal shelter was brought up as a model of how a city-managed restoration, as well as post-renovation use, could work. The committee discussed the merits of spreading SLFRF through multiple projects or making sure the Princess is fully funded up front and the impact on Tower Avenue businesses that could come from that development. The committee also decided not to recommend specific dollar amounts, but instead list which projects were the first, second, third, etc. priorities. The Council would then decide on dollar amounts from which areas of a budget, terms, and processes.

MOTION that fully funding restoration of the Princess Theater is the top priority for SLFRF program funds, made by Finstad and seconded by Laakso.

The site is available from Douglas County to sell or release. Members still have not been able to view the inside and have a desire to do so. Wondolkowski indicated he may not

vote in favor of a site until that happens, and this was one he had not seen. Finstad commented that the feasibility study was done by experts in the field that knew more than he did, and while he wanted to see the interior, the study was sufficient for this vote. The motion carried, 4-1. Wondolkowski voted no.

- b. Carnegie Library** – Skrenes gave a staff summary that the roof is failing and in need of immediate replacement. The owner believes that the cost for that roof is in the \$600,000 range. It includes terra cotta as the roofing material, in order to maximize the site's eligibility for designation on the National Register of Historic Places. However, that material may not be ideal for this environment, and similar sites that no longer have terra cotta roofs are still on the National Register. The owner maintains that even a different material would not change the cost significantly. Other people with knowledge in the field believe that a different membrane or roof material would in fact result in cost reductions. The trusses have been done to support terra cotta, but there may be similar materials that mimic the look but perform better. Meyer noted that terra cotta was short-lived in its use at the site, and that historic preservation can mean that a site can be restored to any era of significance. A material from any prior era may not detract from the historic significance of the library.

Another difference between the Carnegie and the Princess is that the library has a private owner with no clear path to full development and use. The site does have clear value to the community, and the primary use of SLFRF funds would be to stabilize the roof from water intrusion and buy time for a new developer. The roof needs at least a tarp covering as soon as possible. Quick action would be easier on a city-owned site, and discussions are underway for the City to acquire.

MOTION that the Carnegie Library is the second-highest priority for the use of SLFRF funds, and that its roof should be covered with a tarp immediately, made by Finstad and seconded by Wondolkowski. The motion carried, with four voting in favor and Osterlund abstaining.

- c. Industrial Waterfront site at 1515 1st Street** – The site is privately owned and suffered near-total loss in a recent fire. The owners do not have much in the way of financial capability to come in with much “skin in the game.” The financial value the site has is either in its sale to the railroad for demolition, or to as yet unidentified developer for future use, most likely as an outdoor museum and gathering space for concerts and events. A previous report indicated that temporary shoring up of the site could cost between \$185,000 and \$235,000. Finstad spoke with Jepsen, Inc., which provided that estimate, and was told that estimate assumed it would be built upon or around in short order, and without new renovation the temporary shoring could result in monthly rental costs from the structural firm. However, a permanent shoring up for use as an outdoor facility would only cost \$10-15,000 more. (\$200-\$250,000, depending on costs to remove debris) The current state of the site remains a safety hazard. The owners are open to a lien that could be repaid. Skrenes advised the committee that such liens are often forgiven out of necessity for a new development to meet any gaps between redevelopment costs and market values. But at the least, such a lien would give the City some input over direction of a new development.

MOTION that 1515 1st Street is a priority, and that the City engage with current owners to get permanent support built. Made by Wondolkowski, seconded by Osterlund.

The committee discussed the need for an updated feasibility study and a preference to get funds back in the form of a lien. The motion carried unanimously.

- d. **Hammond Park Fountain** – Skrenes advised the group that this was a priority brought forward by many through public input. The current use is as a planter for community gardening. If the committee identifies this as an immediate priority, they should do so at this meeting, before planting season is underway. The committee was supportive of using SLFRF funds or park funds to restore the fountain, but agreed that this could wait until later in the fall. No motion was made.
- e. **Elevator at Old City Hall** – The committee agreed that this project could have immediate benefits and allow for the full restoration and use of the site. Funds for the elevator itself could come from other city budget sources, such as economic development. Funds for historic restoration could be more specifically targeted to other elements at the site. The committee asked staff to reach out to the owner and continue discussion.
- f. **Miscellaneous SLFRF Comments** – Skrenes advised the committee that there were a number of smaller items identified through community input, and there is value in targeting some funds towards those, to demonstrate what these funds can do more quickly than the longer-term projects that may take years to complete. Members also brought up the Tower Avenue arch, the Old Fire Hall, and a revolving loan fund as important items that had community support.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Jeff Skrenes