

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Minutes for May 1, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers, Municipal Building
911 N. 7th Avenue, Pocatello, ID

The meeting began at 6:00 P.M.

AGENDA ITEM #1: ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Jacquee Alvord, Stephanie Christelow, Latecia Herzog, Meagan Milder, Nick Nielson, Kelsey Stenersen, and William Strength.

STAFF: Councilman Johnston, Councilwoman Leeuwrik, Melanie Gygli, and Terri Neu.

AGENDA ITEM #2: COMMENTS FROM INTERESTED PARTIES

The Commission may wish to hear comments from interested parties.

Steve McCurdy, 1354 W. Jordan Hills Drive, S. Jordan, Utah stated he was concerned that the HPC was not provided all the facts and options discussed by the School District to meet ADA compliance without changing the 1930's façade. The first plan met ADA compliance without changing the façade, but this plan was not presented to the HPC. McCurdy asked the HPC to ask questions about other options available without changing the 1930's façade. McCurdy asked the HPC to change the meeting standards and allow the public to speak and give comments on all Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) requests. McCurdy did not understand why he was added to this evening's agenda to speak, but he was not allowed to be added to the agenda during a previous meeting. McCurdy asked that HPC guidelines be changed to allow public input for future COA requests.

Chair Nielson made comments to the Commission and the audience that he met with Mayor Blad to discuss recent issues that have been before the Commission. The Mayor expressed his appreciation and wanted to thank the Commission members for their hard work. The Mayor also acknowledged the time and effort that the Commission has put into their work on the Commission. Nielson briefly discussed Section 17.04.210 of the Pocatello Municipal Code, specifically the standards for COAs subsection i and for demolition subsection j. He stated decisions made on February 28, 2019 regarding Pocatello High School would stand as decided. As a courtesy to Mr. McCurdy and the Save Pocatello High School Group, Chair Nielson would allow the Save Pocatello High School group to speak for a total of five (5) minutes at the HPC meeting for the COA requests by Pocatello High School. Nielson will not allow any further discussion at any other HPC meeting, unless or until Nielson is specifically directed to by Mayor Blad.

The solution of these issues does not lie in the public attack of this Commission or the Staff Liaison for the Commission. The constant bombardment of negative publicity toward this Commission will only serve to lessen the desire of good capable in this community to volunteer in helping the City improve in the future. The solution lies in cooperation, and to work in a constructive fashion with the School District and City Council to consider changes to the Municipal Code if such are found necessary.

AGENDA ITEM #3: DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND EX-PARTE CONTACT

Disclose who was talked to, the basic substance of the conversation, and whether the conversation had any influence. Disclose if there is anything personally or professionally that would not allow an impartial or unbiased decision. Disclose if a site visit was done, location(s) of the visit, and what was seen.

Stenersen reported that she has a conflict of interest on agenda item #5 and asked to be recused from this agenda item. Stenersen's firm is working for the building owners of Station Square. The remaining Commission members did not have any conflicts, ex-parte contact, or anything else to report.

AGENDA ITEM #4: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Commission may wish to approve the minutes from regular meeting on April 17, 2019.

Herzog asked to include approving the tile color espresso bean in the April 17, 2019 minutes.

It was Motioned, Seconded, and Carried (**MSC**) (**S. Christelow, M. Milder**) to approve the meeting minutes with the inclusion of tile color, espresso bean.

AGENDA ITEM #5: CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Denis Clijsters of Station Square LLC requests a certificate of appropriateness for exterior changes to Station Square at 200 S. Main Street.

Denis Clijsters, owner of Station Square, 200 S. Main Street, Pocatello asked the Commission to approve his request to put the windows back on the mezzanine level. The windows were removed and replaced with sheetrock and an awning. Clijsters wants to remove the sheetrock and awning and replace the windows, which would allow sunlight to the offices. Clijsters wants to bring the building back to its original design.

Stenersen, the architect, addressed the Commission regarding the vinyl decoration. **Herzog** recommended to approve the windows and vinyl after Staff approves the vinyl. **Herzog** asked Clijsters to come back to address the awning with the plans and materials.

Herzog asked if Clijsters would bring a mock-up of the window style with the vinyl into the Planning Department for Neu to approve; upon approval, Neu would issue the Certificate of Appropriateness.

It was Motioned, Seconded, and Carried (**MSC**) (**L. Herzog, J. Alvord**) to approve the request by Denis Clijsters of Station Square LLC at 200 S. Main Street to remove the sheetrock and awning and add the windows and vinyl decorations as presented, upon staff's approval of vinyl decoration mock-up, and have Chair Nielson sign the Certificate of Appropriateness.

AGENDA ITEM #6: SPRING CONFERENCE

The Commission may wish to discuss the Spring Conference held at ISU on April 27.

Christelow presented the outcome of the HP conference.

AGENDA ITEM #7: CAMP TRAINING

The Commission may wish to discuss attendance at the CAMP training on May 18.

Neu stated she sent emails to the commission and she needed to know who would be attending, it will be at City Hall and will focus on Southeast Idaho local issues. SHPO will be paying for it. Alvord, Mildred, and Strength would attend, and Christelow will let Neu know.

AGENDA ITEM #8: HOMEOWNER OPEN HOUSE

The Commission may wish to discuss the possibility of an open house for homeowners.

Neu recommended the Commission move the date back to late summer or fall. Neu would add this item to the June agenda.

AGENDA ITEM #9: BRADY CHAPEL OPEN HOUSE

The Commission may wish to decide if they are going to host an open house at the Brady Chapel on Memorial Day, May 27.

Neu stated Mr. Wench, who sings on Memorial Day wanted to address the HPC and discuss musical events this year and other issues at the Brady Chapel. Christelow said his presence is appreciated. The hours will be 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Herzog would come early to vacuum and clean.

Herzog, Neu, and Strength will clean and set up on Friday about 3 p.m.

Monday – Who will work Memorial Day and what hours.

- Milder - 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Alvord – 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
- Nielson – 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.
- Strength – 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

With no other business, it was MSC (M. Milder, J. Alvord) to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 P.M.

Submitted by: Aceline McCulla Approved on: July 3, 2019
Aceline McCulla, Secretary

LETTER TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION -

LETTER TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION #3

Chairman Nielson and members of the Historic Commission, thank you for allowing me to speak ~~hear~~^{hear} this evening. I know that you have a great concern for Pocatello, it's historic architecture and Pocatello High School.

In December when I first contacted Mr Nielson and asked him what he knew of the School District's plan to add a modernist steel and glass structure to Pocatello, High School, I had no idea that it would take so long to stand before you and voice my concerns. I am saddened that all these months later, few still understand Save Pocatello High School' goals, including many at that the school district, the planning commission and this commission. I am also saddened that our conversation has devolved into a fight about process when it should have been a conversation about what is best for Pocatello High School.

I think it instructive to recount at least some of the story.

On February 20th 2019, the Pocatello School District came before the Pocatello Historic Commission requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter the facade of Pocatello High School. On that day not so long ago the Pocatello School District told you a story. It was a good story, a long story, sometimes even a fanciful story. It was

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not, however, the entire story. It was also not always accurate or even truthful. But the School District knew that they could tell it without out debate, without rebuttal and without time limit. The game was stacked in their favor.

Now there was another group, called Save Pocatello High School., and like Paul Harvey used to say, they wanted to share "the rest of the story." Save Pocatello High School was so desirous that their story be heard that for two months they asked questions, made phone calls and tried to find out how to address the Historic Preservation Commission. They were sometimes given misleading, erroneous and even contradictory information. In the end, Save Pocatello High School was assured that when the time came for the school board to make their case before the commission, that their story would also be heard -- or at least that is what they believed they were told. They were also promised they would be informed before that day came, so that they could come prepared, however that day came and they were not informed. They were told, "sorry, but we forgot."

Now it was only by a stroke of luck that Save Pocatello High School was able to make an appearance at the meeting at all. When the meeting started the Commission Chair was falsely told that it would be illegal for the committee to hear their side of the story. So they sat silently, sometimes not believing what they were hearing. The chair and commission, not fully understanding that they knew only half the story, made a judgement based on incomplete and inaccurate information. They granted a certificate of appropriateness with no concern for whether the petitioner for Save Pocatello High School's rights had been violated or even stopping to consider that they could postpone the decision and find out. The petition was granted and that

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was supposed to be the end of the story.

However, that was not the end of the story. An objection was made and a firestorm erupted. A local paper heard what had happened, and questioned why it is that Pocatello commissions, councils and schools so often are intent on limiting public access, open comment, and public participation. They wrote an opinion about optics.

Now let me say I did not start out to be confrontational. I did not start out to battle, I simply wanted the concerns of the now over 2075 people that have signed the Save Pocatello High School Petition to be heard. I wanted dissenting opinions to be heard, recognized and seriously considered. I wanted to talk about the issues and concerns about how to make Pocatello High School better.

Dealing with the School Board, City Council and the Historic Preservation Commission I have discovered that the existing processes often hinder public discussion, certainly discourages it and in the case of the Historic Preservation Commission don't even allow it. Worse I have discovered that many of those with power don't want it, don't seek it and wish to hide behind a false interpretation of the Idaho State Open Meetings law to avoid it. Some even tried to manipulate the story and scare citizens with false narratives and uniformed facts. It is obvious that when you no longer care about the public you serve, you can see it in your emails, you can see it in your faces, and you can see it in your decisions. --you begin to lose credibility.

The Historical Preservation Commission has begun to lose credibility. Numerous building owners in old town can't understand how they are

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often prevented from making minor changes to their building while the School District is allowed to cut in and deface the facade of arguably the most important and historical building in town. Credibility with the public who NOW knows you can listen to ANYONE if only you exercise your discretion. A public who is now discovering that in the past the Historic Preservation Commission has held actual public hearings and listened to actual public testimony.

Now you and I all know that had I not battled to be heard I would not be standing here tonight. I hope that this concession is not just for show. I hope that it is not just five minutes so that you can check off a box and say, "see we listen to the citizens of Pocatello."

Having and holding public discourse is difficult. It is time consuming and to the chagrin of some might even slow down the process.

Now I would have preferred to spend my 5 minutes allotted me tonight to talk about how to best preserve the historic character and beauty of Pocatello High School, instead of the broken process that makes it almost impossible. But Save Pocatello High Schools concerns and the alternative plans that they have in development, deserves more than 5 minutes. It is a serious plan that deserves serious discussion and equal opportunity under the law. This standard is almost always difficult.

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This commission is a fact-finding body whose singular job is to see that the community's patrimony of historical buildings is preserved and maintained in the best possible way. Whatever the process, it should be carried out in a way that provides you with the most complete information possible, or at the very least the truth. And according to Idaho Code "must be open to the public and held where there is no discrimination practiced" The current process is discriminatory and treats the School District as a person, a right never given to public entities such as a school district.

Denying a voice to anyone who can provide information that may be helpful for making an informed decision about buildings of public concern, is counterproductive, inherently unfair, and ultimately I believe a violation of law.

Lets talk about phase #1 of Pocatello High School's current renovation project that was given a Certificate of Appropriateness in February.

Some on the commission seem to think it is their responsibility to guarantee ADA accessibility no matter the damage it will do to existing historical architecture. No, your job is to see that our historical buildings are protected and preserved. It is your mandate to guarantee that before the school district goes changing or modifying, or destroying historical architecture that all other options have been exhausted. Now let's be clear, we believe in ADA access, we want Pocatello High School to have ADA access, but we ask, "is there a better way? Can we provide ADA access while maintaining the current

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1930's facade? The answer is yes. What we discovered is that the school district in their own original RFP proposed away a BETTER way. Their original plan accomplished all of thier goals without marring the schools beautiful front facade.

The prject RFP states: "Design and construct new building addition at Pocatello High School...The new facility will serve as a central commons area, new administrative area and additional classroom and restroom facilities. The new addition will also provide ADA accessibility between new building and the Unit 1 main school to main/upper levels at the high school location."

This plan was a better plan, one that you never even heard about, one that was more in line with Save Pocatello High school's goals and the Historic Commission's gmandate. Why was ithis plan discarded? Why did that question go unasked? I will say because you were not adequately informed. Had we been allowed to speak you would have known to ask that question.

RFP: <http://www.sd25.us/docs//docs/district/depts/18/current%20bids/2018%20architectural%20services,%20request%20for%20proposal.pdf?id=2205>

We could share many more reasons why the current plan fails to protect the historic character of Pocatello High School and how future problems could be eliminated -but my time has been capriciously limited to 5 minutes.

Soon, another certificate of appropriateness will come before you. You will be told that such and such a feature will guarantee safety. That this is the only way to provide ADA accessibility even though in the end it will not even provide ADA accessibility to the cafeteria or the basement classrooms. You will be told that the only way to meet

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the high schools needs is to add a modernist glass concourse. They will tell you that the alley between the new gym and the new classroom that their plan creates will not be dangerous and ugly. And that the common area is adequate to Pocatello High school's needs. The planned commons area is so small it probably will not meet the fire department's occupancy standards and is nothing like the plan sold to the public back in September. I would ask that before you make these questionable changes you at least ask, "is there any other way to accomplish your goals and if so what are they and why not choose to go in that direction instead?"

I am fatigued by the fight with the school board and with your commission --with staff, spokesman and city lawyers. I am tired of receiving letters from the fictitious Mr. Mason and thoughtless school district supporters, who are unwilling to discuss the issues openly and publicly and put their name on them. I wish that the school board would sit down and talk. I wish you would sit down and talk. I do not understand why we can we not have discussions about these issues, and concerns, nor why it has to be limited to 3 and 5 minute increments, or why it has to be after a decision is rendered when it is too late.

To this day, I still do not understand the process to voice an opposing point of view other than in the court of public opinion. I do not understand why applications for certificates of appropriateness concerning public buildings are not quasi-judicial proceedings allowing for public comment. I am still not exactly sure how it is that I am on the agenda tonight except that it was obviously within the discretion of Mr Nielson all along.

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This process is flawed, it needs to be changed. I will continue to fight for changes to the process and until those people who have signed the Save Pocatello High School Petition are heard. I ask that you not just say, "see we have listened " and then continue to defend the status quo.

Please fix the problems with Historic Preservation Commission's process.