

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Time and Date: The Historic Preservation Commission met on Wednesday, August 28, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Wausau City Hall.

Members Present: Gary Gisselman, Blake Opal-Wahoske, Kevin Crooks, Christine Martens, Brian Mason, Steve Miller, and Patrick Bacher (arrived at 6:10 pm)

Members Not Present: Linda Tryczak, and David Oberbeck

Staff Present: Brad Lenz, Samantha Kulig

Others Present: Lance Leonhard

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

Chairperson Gary Gisselman called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. noting that a quorum was present.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion on landmarking the former DAUV Hall (540 S 3rd Avenue)

Chairperson Gisselman opened the public hearing.

Chairperson Gisselman closed the public hearing.

Discussion and possible action on landmarking the former DAUV Hall (540 S 3rd Avenue)

Chairperson Gisselman stated a letter was received today by Susan Lang, president of Emmerich & Associates, stating that they strongly oppose, because this designation will inappropriately encumber their ability to get a return on investment for the property as it is currently up for sale. Chairperson Gisselman stated that from previous designations of property, the commission tend to not get in the way of a sale.

Bacher stated that his concern of holding the action on landmarking this site is that the new prospect owners may potentially want to renovate and lose the characteristics or even worse raze the building. Chairperson Gisselman stated that there is no ordinance that would prohibit the possibility of razing it. Crooks stated that real estate can take a while to complete a sale and that there is no tell of when that will happen. Crooks continued that in the meantime, the building can be razed. Bacher also stated that in this current state, the building is not in good condition.

Bacher also stated that Emmerich & Associates didn't attend in person to discuss more on why they strongly oppose landmarking. Chairperson Gisselman responded the owner has additional opportunities during the Plan Commission meeting and during the City Council meeting since those are the next steps on landmarking this building.

Miller read the letter and stated that he agrees with Crooks on the length of real estate and with Bacher's concern on the current state of the building. However, Miller understands Susan Lang's letter and her concern as well. Miller would like to see if we can find a compromise for both the Commission and Emmerich & Associates.

Blake Opal-Wahoske stated that based on this meeting and past meetings, it seemed that most owners do not know the advantages of landmarking a historical building. Opal-Wahoske suggested that the commission should have a list of advantages and disadvantages which can make owners more acumen in landmarking their property. Crooks responded that there are some tax credits/benefits for local designation landmarking.

Martens asked if anyone else from Emmerich & Associates reached out to the Commission members with questions regarding this. Chairperson Gisselman stated he received voicemail from Susan Lang, called back, left a voicemail but have not heard back. Lenz stated he had not heard from them either. Martens also stated that she agreed with Bacher's on his concerns.

Crooks stated Wausau has a rich, German heritage, and this building is very significant to the German workers. Many buildings in Wausau show buildings with the German name instead of the English name. Crooks felt preserving that German heritage is worthwhile.

Mason appreciated the suggestion from Opal-Wahoske of having a list of advantages and disadvantages of landmarking a historical building. He also stated that in the letter “inappropriately encumber” did not specify what kind of encumbrance, which Mason believed can be dispelled by a series of questions and discussion between the owner(s) and this commission. Mason also stated that there are two additional meetings – Plan Commission and City Council - after this meeting that Emmerich & Associates can still attend.

Martens appreciated this historical building would be preserving the history of workers versus the common preservation of history of rich individuals that we see up on East hill.

Motion by Bacher and seconded by Marten to approve the landmarking on the former DAUV Hall (540 S 3rd Avenue) and to move this onto Plan Commission. Motion approved unanimously, 7-0.