

Elkhart Historic & Cultural Preservation Commission

Meeting Thursday, April 18, 2024

Call to Order:

Ann Linley called to order the Elkhart Historic & Cultural Preservation Commission Meeting for Thursday, April 18, 2024 at 7:22 pm.

Roll Call:

Present: JA Whitmer, Ann Linley, and Bill Zimmerman. Eric Trotter with the City of Elkhart Planning and Development and Deb Parcell with Indiana Landmarks. Bobby Glassburn (via WebEx).

Absent: Raymond Enfield

Approval of Agenda:

Ann Linley gave a moment to look over the agenda.

Linley asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Motion made by JA Whitmer, seconded by Bill Zimmerman; motion carried.

Approval of Minutes:

Linley gave everyone a minute to look over the minutes from March 21, 2024 to see if any corrections needed to be made.

Linley said she would accept a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Motion made by Zimmerman, seconded by Whitmer; motion carried with the following roll-call vote:

Whitmer- Yes

Glassburn- Yes

Zimmerman- Yes

Linley- Yes

Linley said the March 21, 2024 minutes are approved.

Financial Report:

N/A

Hearing of Visitors:

N/A

Old Business:

N/A

New Business:

A: 24-COA-03, 515 East Street

Deb Parcell stated that she would like to note that she wrote the staff report before she got the revised drawings but there was not a substantial change to what she was about to read. Linley asked Parcell if the revised drawings were the colored printouts provided for that evening. Parcell responded yes.

Parcell said the staff report is for property address 515 East Street which is a new construction infill in the Historic district, not built yet and she does not have any details like she usually has on a building.

Description of the proposed project: The owner proposes to construct a new 61-unit multi-family apartment building with commercial tenant space. Materials shall include majority of masonry, a smaller percentage of fiber cement board panels on non-frontage elevations. Parcell pointed out that the major change was less brick and more cement board and since it is a new construction, newer materials could be used. Features: storefront casing at the commercial tenant space, a dog run, and picnic/grill area for residents, private roof deck, and parking. Proposed artwork includes a mural on an existing retaining wall and ghost sign painted above the roof deck.

Staff Recommendation: The proposed traditional design with masonry exterior, the proportion style, and placement of windows, and first-floor commercial storefront area blends well with existing architectural styles in the State-Division Historic District. Parcell pointed out that there is also a difference in the massing of the building because the balconies are more together instead of alternating window, balcony and so on versus now there are more balconies with more windows together but still the proportion of the windows were still very much like the Historic district, long and narrow. Parcell said that she thinks it would not make a lot of difference but she was just noting that it is different to when she wrote the staff report. Parcell continued reading the staff report: while the scale of the building is greater than surrounding buildings, the new building will be at a lower elevation than the adjacent two-to two-and-a-half story residences on Division Street, minimizing the height difference and visibility of the proposed development. East Street between Division Street and the Elkhart River were historically manufacturing facilities, so the buildings in this area were typically of a different character than the residential neighborhood to the south. The window style, material, and manufacturer are unknown to her at the present time. Staff recommends approval of the new construction as submitted, with the condition of staff approval of final window selection. Parcell explained that it is going to be modern materials for the windows but the drawing showed four over four grid pattern and her question to the designers was what material the windows would be and if the grid would be between the glass or on the exterior. Parcell said that was the reason she was not able to approve it. Parcell added that they normally do not approve grid between the glass whether is new or old construction because they tend to disappear during the day with the sunshine and the reflectivity of the glass except at night when they are lit from behind when the lights are on in the unit.

Linley asked if there was anyone to speak to the proposal project.

Meghann Thannikkunnath thanked the board for having her again. Thannikkunnath introduced herself as the member of the development team from RealAmerican and Legacy 25 development.

Thannikkunnath wanted to touch a few things that she mention back in February. Thannikkunnath stated that the goal with this project is the creation of new housing in an area that really needs it. Thannikkunnath said that according to their studies density has been there historically as Parcell mentioned historically manufacturing and multifamily area was present in that nearby neighborhood. Thannikkunnath said that they really want to do the older building justice and she believed they have. Thannikkunnath said that she is back with the architecture team, The Progress Studio from Indianapolis and introduced, Joseph Lese, the architect of The Progress Studio and also an Elkhart native. Thannikkunnath said that Lese knows the area well and his vested interest in making this project was not only to make his team proud but for his family and community members could be proud of. Thannikkunnath proceeded to give the mic to Lese to answer the technical questions and she was happy to answer any question on the development side.

Joseph Lese introduced himself from Progress Studio with address 220 North College in Indianapolis. Lese said that he was born in Elkhart back in 1977 and shared that he had fun memories from his grandmother's old house on McDonald Street. Lese said that couple family members were listening to his presentation. Lese said that for him and his family this was a family event and added that his family are active members in the community by being in the police force and they are proud to have the Elkhart heritage.

Lese said that they have designed the building focusing on masonry Historic character of the area and specially the building that was getting replaced. Lese said thinking of old factory warehouse type buildings focusing more on the end caps with the masonry. Lese stated that they have masonry on all four sides of the building especially on the first floor for durability and human scale. Lese said that they have revised them on the main façade facing to the North originally in their first interaction where they had all masonry and it looked too heavy to them. Lese continued to say that they revamped the arrangement of the units and consolidated the balconies to create a more uniform appearance on the facades and by doing that they ended up changing the middle section that's recessed away from the streets to have a base of masonry with cement board panels above that. Lese said that they have a variation of paint color subtle but they will have a variety of pink color to help with breaking up the façade even further and they have variation of the façade, color but they are keeping the masonry out of human scale. Lese said that they found out that is important to use the northeast corner as the primary commercial node that would likely have been true of the past. They will be treating with cement board trim or some synthetic trim that would be smooth. Lese said that he had some examples of the cement board and brick for the board members to look at. Lese continued to say that it would be pedestrian oriented so anyone walking around the neighborhood, parking garage or anything of that nature would be able to utilize the commercial space on the corner, which would be able historically compliant with what would be expected in the past. Lese said that the residents would be using the parking spaces that would be developed to the west towards the existing retaining wall and they would have an art component to that where there would be a mural that would be painted on that to enhance the area. Lese said that they are still exploring what it would look like but it would be located by the roof deck on the second level at the northwest corner tying in the art component. Linley and Whitmer asked if the mural would go on the picture that Trotter was holding and Lese answered yes. Whitmer understood that the mural would go on the wall not the building.

Lese explained that they left the option to paint a ghost sign. They would do something fun but heartening to the city of Elkhart that could be the address of the building itself or something along those lines and since it is a little of a blank canvas they would have the roof track with some string lights but to enhance further. Lese said that in the parking lot side they would do a dog run, off street parking and they would have everything connected with accessible routes. Lese explained that the property is about twelve feet or so lower than the homes to the south and from a scale standpoint weather first or second floor of the homes to the south, residents would not be looking at a vertical wall surface because they have pushed everything in accordance with the ordinance on setbacks to the North and to the East which gives them thirty plus feet between the property line to the South where the residents are. Lese said that it's not going to be immediately up on those homes but further pushed to the North.

Lese recommended to work with staff to review and get the windows approved and he preferred the simulated divided lights and not the grids in between the glass. Lese shared that he is the land use committee chair at his neighborhood which is Meridian-Kessler in Indianapolis which is one of the largest neighborhoods in the States and he is their Historic preservation liaison on the board. Lese said that they are often in front of the Indianapolis Historic Commission or himself critiquing others as well and he appreciates the Historic nature of the neighborhood. Lese said that they would do the same with any storefront materials and he passed around the brick samples to the Elkhart Historic Commission members. Lese said that brick field is more reddish tone and they have the brown accent tone to break up the façade which all of it would be proposed to be a running bond for ease of installation. Lese said that the brick came from Indiana plants from Terre Haute Indiana. Lese pointed out that one of the important thing about this development was the target to have it green certified silver. Lese explained that there are more energy efficiencies and sustainability goals in mind when they are developing this project. Lese said that those were all the topics that he wanted to cover and he was happy to answer any question or critiques that the board may have.

Linley asked the board members if they had any questions or concerns.

Whitmer asked if the cement board was more rather than the brick. Lese responded yes and he said that he had samples of that. Whitmer said that she would like to see those. Whitmer said that does not have windows and asked what was in there. Lese responded that on that side of the building would be the amenity space, main mailbox room, and maintenance area which would be the main entrance from the parking lot of the residents into the building. Lese explained that façade is the elevator and stairs enclosure. Whitmer asked if that was the back of the building. Lese responded that the one on the lower right closest to Megan on his view was the side that's facing the parking lot which is the west façade and the one on the top was the Northwest façade facing north. Thannikkunnath explained the board members with the pictures but her explanation was inaudible. Zimmerman asked if facing towards the west or the retaining wall in the hotel. Thannikkunnath responded yes.

Inaudible

Whitmer pointed at the board that Thannikkunnath was holding and asked if that was where the rooftop would be. Thannikkunnath responded yes. Lese said that in the blank area in their plans they have proposed a potential ghost sign which historically would be buildings that had signage painted on the side of the building like hardware and it would be something that would harken to

that above that since they know it's blank. Whitmer said that it would make it look like it is faded and old. Lese confirmed it and said yes. Zimmerman asked if the gray area was the main entrance.

Thannikkunnath response was inaudible.

Zimmerman asked how many elevators are there. Lese responded one elevator. Zimmerman asked if the elevator is freight or standard. Lese responded it is a standard elevator but it is sized so that it can fit stretchers or people's furniture and it was done with life safety in mind. Zimmerman asked if the elevator is large enough for a paramedic to get their equipment in there. Lese responded yes and said that the stairwell is connected with the elevator shaft and the stair is providing the root access. Zimmerman asked if there is not separate freight elevator. Lese responded that is correct. Zimmerman wanted to confirm if there is only one elevator for the entire building and if that met code. Lese answered yes and explained that the elevator is oversized for beyond what it is needed for residential but its size in a way that a stretcher could be used if needed in an emergency.

Linley asked Glassburn if he had any questions for the team. Glassburn responded no and he said that he was unable to see the photos well on the screen. Glassburn said that he understood the directions and he was fine with it.

Lese said that he could share the sample of the cement board panel.

Zimmerman asked if he could explain a little more about the mural and he wanted to confirm that to his understanding the mural was going on the cement retaining wall and not on the building. Lese confirmed and said yes. Zimmerman asked if they have decided what the mural would look like. Thannikkunnath responded that they have not selected a mural artist yet but she has begun the research process from folks local to the area and Lese had couple recommendations which they will discuss in the next couple of weeks but have not been decided. Zimmerman asked if they could talk more about the rooftop structure. Lese said the residents would have common area space, community room and a small fitness area on the main level in that same zone above the second level there would be a roof deck. The roof deck would have pavers, a knee wall to screen the majority of the roof deck and they would only do a short railing beyond that to make up the rest of the distance. Lese said the entry would be right off the elevator and there will be an opportunity for a small amenity space weather a coffee bar or something like that depending on what the owners would like to see. Lese said that the roof deck would have pavers, furniture for lounging and string lights between the post and the building itself.

Zimmerman asked if there would be cement slab for basement or crawlspace underneath. Lese said that it would be slab on grade. Whitmer was curious on the cement boards. Lese explained that there are two different kinds of board: faux simulated woodgrain and smooth and their proposal was smooth since they are going modern not historically which would require cedar woodgrain. Whitmer pointed out that originally there was more brick than board cement and she asked the reason for the change. Lese said that there two main reasons for the change. 1st the challenge of supporting the brick and certain locations of the design and 2nd would be aesthetics. Lese explained that the original iteration in the packet the main façade felt really heavy compared to the rest of the building and wasn't really cohesive with the rear façade. Lese said that as an architect he tries to do four sided architecture to make sure everything looks as it is the same

intention and the main reason was to help break up the heaviness of the North façade and introducing some of the cement board. Lese said that what they ended up doing was introduce another color to help provide more variation to not make it read as all one monotone model.

Zimmerman expressed his concern with the size of the structure and the amount of people that will be in the structure with only one elevator. He pointed out that one elevator may not be sufficient and not having a freight elevator for larger pieces of furniture, people move in and out, and with sixty people how long would they have to wait, and for an emergency he understands that there are stairways and would not use the elevator but he still thinks that is not enough. Thannikkunnath responded that it was a relevant concern. She explained that they have several properties that are four story buildings with one elevator, all 60 units, and they have not had any issues or complains from their residents or maintenance staff and so far one elevator have been a good fit for that kind of size building.

Whitmer asked if the elevator was sufficient to meet safety code requirements. Thannikkunnath responded yes absolutely. Lese said that some other life safety issues of concern are the stairwells themselves which have a sufficient landing what is called an area of rescue in case that somebody cannot exit the stairs on their own, an emergency person would be able to rescue that individual and that was part of the building code. The other thing that they have is a firewall that splits the building into two buildings in case of fire they would have another side to get out and that adds another level of protection. Lese said that the building would be sprinkled as well. Thannikkunnath added that their other new construction properties with the same number of units and have only one elevator are so far for seniors and individuals with developmental and physical disabilities. Thannikkunnath wanted the board to have that extra confidence that those folks have not had any issues and they hoped that in a family product it will be even easier and more effective.

Whitmer stated that in her opinion the proposed front picture needed more brick and she was not a fan of the cement board and she asked for Parcel's thoughts. Parcell asked if the material was LP smart side and the architects nod yes. Parcell stated that the product and finish smooth was correct according to what they recommend for additions and she has real issues with texture finish. Whitmer said that she was not complaining about the finish but she believes that it was too much because it has a white section in the middle of the building. Parcel agreed that it is a lot of cement board and she was surprise as well. Parcell said that they are not trying to replicate something and because it is a new construction there is more flexibility and not necessarily want to look like the building has been there forever because it hasn't but it needs to be compatible. Parcell said that it is plenty of cement board but not totally out of order. Zimmerman asked if it could be paintable to paint different colors. The architects nodded confirming it was. Whitmer stated that she would make that center section brick to look nicer because it would blend better with the district and the cement board does not look Historical in her opinion. Zimmerman asked Whitmer what section of the picture she was talking about and she pointed on the picture the three center white sections divided by two balconies. Whitmer added that the center section is the one that she had issues with and she thinks that it would be better in brick. Parcell said that looking at new construction they look at things differently and they are more concerned about the overall size. Parcell stated that they do not want a huge building surrounded by little buildings in which we have but it is set lower and as far as finish they need to be compatible but they don't really need to be exactly the same as

other things in the district. Parcell stated that currently there is nothing to compare this at in the immediate Historic district and it is a very large building.

Whitmer asked if the last page of the packet was the samples of the buildings that the architects have re-done. Lese responded that the last page was the precedent for what was influencing their design. Lese pointed out that a lot of the commonality that you'll see between all of them are the commercial storefront, which they have in their instance and the rest of them are essentially historically appropriate size windows and obviously they will meet the egress for fire safety and some of those images they were using as precedent were focusing on the full hipe masonry on the most prominent sections of the building and then where it is not where they have masonry around the ground level they are using the fiber cements above that. Lese stated that from a pedestrian standpoint, human scale, they have twelve feet of masonry. Whitmer said that for her those images were more aesthetically pleasing because it does not have the massive cement board. Parcell said that Lese made an important point that people would not see straight forward because the parking garage is there on the north side but it could be seen while driving along the street on that side but not the pedestrians walking downtown unless they are really staring up. Parcell said that the ground level is masonry but the East side facing East Street is masonry and that is the prominent facade.

Linley asked for a motion to approve **24-COA-03 515 East Street** to approve the construction of a 61 unit apartment based on further staff discussion on windows. Motion made by Zimmerman as long as windows comply with staff recommendation, seconded by Whitmer; motion carried with the following roll-call vote:

Whitmer- Yes

Zimmerman- Yes

Glassburn- Yes

Linley- Yes

Trotter said 24-COA-03 515 East Street is approve.

Linley thanked the architects for their time and coming up from Indianapolis.

Announcements:

Trotter said that he received an email from the Beardsley neighborhood to announce the 2024 Beardsley Avenue and neighborhood day. Trotter said that the City participated a year and half ago and the weather did not cooperate because that day snowed and rained. Trotter stated that the date has been set up to be Sunday August 4th from noon to 4. Trotter said that Beardsley is asking if the city would like to participate and setup a table again this year. The rain date is Saturday, August 17 about a week and a half later in the event of inclement weather on the fourth.

Trotter said that for the work session they are aiming for Tuesday, April 30th late afternoon but he does not have the exact time. Trotter said that he will email each of the board members with a date and an exact time.

Linley asked Trotter if he needed anything from the board members for the big report. Trotter responded that the report was due in two weeks. Trotter asked if they had any recollection during

last calendar year where they participated in some continuing educational opportunity because that's one of the last pieces to finish the report. Trotter said that he is almost done with the report but that is where he has been distracted. Trotter continued to say that once he goes back into the office next week he would wrap up to get Linley's signature on the acknowledgment as well as the mayors.

Trotter said that unfortunately they did not have Indiana Landmarks do a presentation to them last year because of the unusual calendar year and pointed out that Parcel and himself would do better for 2024.

Whitmer asked how long the window guy was there. Linley responded that it has been several years. Trotter agreed that it has been couple years ago. Trotter said that 2023 was a crazy year because half the year he was on his own but he has talked to Parcell to organize at least couple events for the board members this year. Linley said that the education that NAPC was doing are long unfortunately but they are hitting really good topics. Trotter said that the last one that he attended along with Linley has been recorded and he strongly recommended each of the board members to participate and listen to it. Linley added that she emailed the link to everybody. Trotter remarked that the board members need to watch the video which is one hour and half long and he recommended to watch it after work. Linley recommended to watch the video in pieces and she explained that it is very much on where they are going with materials on what is acceptable or not because modern wood does not hold up and how they are finding out that some of these marvelous imitation composite products are doing weird things. Zimmerman asked if they have a link that she can send to each of them. Trotter responded that Linley did email it. Linley said that she will look and will send it out as an email. Eric recommended to listen to it before the work session on April 30 because that would help frame that discussion.

Adjournment:

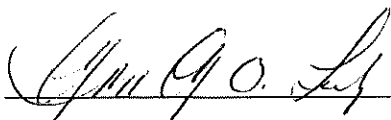
Linley said that she would accept a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 pm. Motion made Zimmerman, seconded by Whitmer; motion carried with the following roll-call vote:

Whitmer- Yes

Zimmerman- Yes

Glassburn- Yes

Linley- Yes



Ann Linley, Chair