

MINUTES
City of Monona
Landmarks Commission
Wednesday January 13, 2021

Chair Goforth called the meeting of the Monona Landmarks Commission to order at 4:34 PM.

Present: Chair Kristie Goforth, Ms. Mary Murrell, Mr. Rick Bernstein, Ms. Branda Weix, Ms. Anne Wellman, Mr. Erik Lincoln and Ms. Rebecca Holmquist

Absent: None

Also Present: Douglas Plowman, City Planner, Mayor Mary O'Connor, Parks Director Jake Anderson and Patrick DePula

Approval of Minutes

A motion by Mr. Bernstein, seconded by Ms. Weix, for the approval of the minutes of December 9, 2020 carried with one correction.

Appearances

There were no appearances.

Unfinished Business

A. None.

New Business

A. Update to the Commission on the Status of the San Damiano Property at 4123 Monona Drive (Mayor O'Connor).

Mayor Mary O'Connor joined the meeting to share an update on the San Damiano property following discussions on the topic at the December meeting. Mayor O'Connor shared that the City just received news that the Clean Lakes Alliance had awarded them the Urban Project of the Year. Between now and June 1st (closing date) the focus is on fundraising to defray the cost of the purchase to taxpayers. Dane County will be giving \$2m, and the Friends Group are also working on fundraising. Once into the summer, the Friends will continue to fundraise, but it will focus on operational costs as well. The City is submitting applications for the Knowles Nelson Grant, Federal Conservation Grant and others. The City will be using Capital Budget funds to hire a grant specialist to help with this effort.

A master planning process will likely be underway in the next year, once the City owns the property. The Friends group will also be fundraising to help pay for that effort. Anybody who is interested will be able to give input, and Mayor O'Connor sees this as a long term project, with no need to rush. There is no easement with the County at this time, and that negotiation has not started, but will likely be complete before the sale. When that agreement is complete, it will go to City Council for approval. The Friends are not directly involved in buying the property, and any money raised will be given to the City. The property will be open to the public shortly after they close on it. There are no specific plans for the site at this time, and nothing has been formalized. The City wants the Landmarks Commission to be involved in the master planning process. The Friends of San Damiano will be launching a website in the next week or so, with more information on how to donate.

Ms. Wellman asked if there were plans for the archaeological survey. Mayor O'Connor responded that money has been set aside in the Capital Budget to fund this effort. Ms. Holmquist asked about the easement, and the Landmarks Commission oversight. The City Attorney's

opinion is that the Landmarks authority extends to the building, and not the whole site. There was discussion of the documentation efforts that the Landmarks Commission had recently undertaken. Planner Plowman responded that they were for internal record keeping purposes, and did not go through City Council for approval. Ms. Holmquist had been under the impression that these would be going to City Council for approval. It was shared that the Commission views the land as contributing to the Landmark for both the shoreline and the gardens. There was some discussion of the possible easement following the Dane County grant, but this is all hypothetical as this has yet to be negotiated. Ms. Holmquist asked if the Landmarks Commission can give a recommendation on the appropriateness of the easement to City Council, particularly because of the importance of the gardens to the site. Ms. Murrell asked about contributions to the Friends of San Damiano, and if the City would be bound to their wishes for any improvements to the site. Mayor O'Connor responded that the City would have final approval of any changes, not the Friends Group.

Ms. Holmquist added that the City should have a plan to secure the house once open to the public. She also asked if the City had a plan to maintain the house, when it comes into their ownership. Mayor O'Connor responded that they plan to secure the house, and also to complete an assessment of the property to understand outstanding maintenance issues. Mr. Bernstein shared that a number of gutters are missing, and the driveway closest to the house slopes towards the basement. There are drainage issues and water issues at the house. He added that the Commission would like to be involved in the visioning process, and as plans progress. Chair Goforth asked how the fundraising campaign is progressing, and if the Friends Group plans to use a membership model. Mayor O'Connor shared that a lot of these contributions are ongoing, and that she was unsure if they plan to use the membership model.

B. Discussion of Maintenance Projects for the Springhaven Pagoda in addition to the Stone Bridge Park Improvements.

Parks Director Anderson provided an update on the Stone Bridge Park improvements to the Commission. The final design was completed in early January 2021, and reviewed by the Parks Board at their meeting on January 12th. The walking path through the park has been modified to accommodate ADA requirements. There are three benches that will be located along the path, alongside additional seating on the cut rock near the Pagoda. Parks Director Anderson suggested the planting bed would be an opportune location for a 2' x 3' sign acknowledging the significance of the Pagoda. The Pagoda has a 3' limestone screening around the perimeter of the footings, and this is an extension over the current dimensions that exist in the park. There will be 3 rows of cut rock along the back wall around the Pagoda to stabilize the slope, in addition to Enviro-Grid planting bags along the top. The bags provide an opportunity for plants and flowers to grow into the side of the bank, and soften the aesthetic.

The full landscape plan was included in the meeting packet, and this includes the plantings to the west towards Lake Monona. There will be water tolerant plantings as well as trenching to allow the clear spring water to flow to the lake. Riprap and shoreline stone is proposed along the water's edge, and it matches the stone of adjacent properties. Plans also include a pier alignment for the Sailing Club, and a launch pad for kayaks.

Mr. Bernstein responded that the inside of the well should be clear, and that any existing rocks inside need to be removed. There was also discussion of the pavestone around the footings of the foundation. This may be more appropriate historically than the crushed limestone around the footings. Mr. Anderson added that this should be possible, and something that can be edited in the field. There were questions of a rain garden to the west of the Pagoda, and Mr. Anderson responded that the plantings will work in a similar way. The amount of water and saturation of the ground made a formal rain garden difficult. The plan is to retain the existing grade level as much as possible between the Pagoda and lakeshore. Mr. Bernstein discussed the base of the

well, and the condition and possible repair of the stone and its coating. Mr. Anderson responded that this request would need to be in a different scope, as it is not in the park scope specifically. Chair Goforth asked about the height of the stone walls, and the distance to the Pagoda roof. Ms. Weix also suggested adding a “do not climb” sign to discourage climbing onto the Pagoda roof. The marker sign was also discussed, along with the suggestion of adding information of this being a native land. Mr. Anderson suggested the Landmarks Commission provide the text, and he will order and install the sign in the park.

C. Staff Updates

- i. Stone Bridge Park Improvements (Parks Board Meeting 1/12/2021)**
Planner Plowman updated the Commission that both he and Chair Goforth attended the meeting. The recommendation was made by the Parks Board that the design be recommended to City Council as proposed (the same plans that are included in the Landmarks meeting packet).
- ii. Springhaven Pagoda RFP**
The Pagoda RFP technical documentation has been finalized, following input from City Staff. The final documentation is with the City Attorney for review and approval before being issued.
- iii. CLG National Register Update**
The School Board decided not to proceed with nomination of their two properties to the National Register. Subsequently the decision has been made to proceed with nomination of three properties (two residential and one commercial). UWM are interested in nominating the Panther Mound as well. Planner Plowman is yet to hear back from the owners of that property, but there is still hope they will also be interested in pursuing the nomination. The Commission discussed the remaining CLG grant balance, and what else could be pursued. Ms. Murrell suggested the recommendations at the end of the 2019 Architectural Survey, and if those may be appropriate uses of this grant balance. This will be added to a future agenda for further discussion.

D. Landmarks Commission Requests for City Staff

Chair Goforth raised the subject of virtual or hybrid meetings outside of the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, only City Council or Plan Commission are available on the City’s YouTube page. Commission response was mixed, with some members in support of the request, while concerns were expressed with privacy particularly with the Google platform. Ms. Holmquist also asked about the Landmarks documentation that has been underway in the last 12-18 months, and if they can be formalized through City Council. Planner Plowman will confirm with the City Attorney, but his understanding was that this was an internal information gathering exercise, rather than an outward facing application.

Upcoming meetings

Upcoming meetings are scheduled for February 10, 2021 and March 10, 2021.

Adjournment

A motion by Ms. Holmquist, seconded by Mr. Bernstein, to adjourn carried. (5:47pm)

Submitted by,

Doug Plowman, City Planner