

Case 034-17: 212 W 8th Street – A request to apply District HP (Historic Overlay District), and nominate as a local historic landmark, Memorial Hall – Jill Sullivan.

Mr. Duncan asked if there was anyone to speak in favor of this zoning request.

Mrs. Jill Sullivan, 721 N. Sergeant, Joplin, MO 64801 appeared before the commission. Mrs. Sullivan stated that Memorial Hall meets five (5) of the ten (10) criteria for nomination as a local Historic Landmark. The Historic Preservation Commission believes it meets 1, 3, 5 8, and 10. This is very significant because usually a nomination recommendation only meets one or two of the criteria items.

Criteria 1: Its character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the community, county, state, or country.

Criteria 3: Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or country.

Criteria 5: Its identification as the work of a master builder, designer, architect, or landscape architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the community, county, state, or country.

Criteria 8: Its unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature.

Criteria 10: Its suitability for preservation or restoration.

Mrs. Sullivan went through each of the eligibility criteria and explained how and why Memorial Hall met each one. The Historic Preservation Commission is in the process of putting Memorial Hall on the National Registry. The Historic Preservation Commission has secured grant funding through SHPO and must be completed by July 1, 2018 for the nomination. Connect2Culture does understand the difference between Local Landmark designation and the National Registry designation. Speaking with Connect2Culture and Mr. Wert, their statement was to help and be attentive to the process and is prepared to appear before any necessary body to keep the National Register moving forward.

Mr. Bolander stated that Mr. Wert was planning on attending the Planning and Zoning meeting and is supportive of this request for the historic local nomination but due to a family emergency he was unable to attend the Planning and Zoning meeting.

Mr. Ramsour stated that on the map it looks like the entire square block is included, from 8th Street to 9th Street and then from Wall to Joplin Streets is included.

Mr. Bolander mentioned that this is all the property associated with Memorial Hall. We designate the whole area as a landmark not just the property the hall sets on.

Mr. Ramsour asked does it include the southern half of the block, which has other enterprises.

Mr. Bolander stated that we may have included the southern part in the legal description. What you could do if approved is exclude that portion out, then staff can recommend the same at the City Council meeting.

Mrs. Steele made some comments about this case. She stated that in 1981 to 1987, the Parks and Recreation Board met in Memorial Hall, which she served on that board, and was advised at that time the building was structurally unsound and it would be prohibited to renovate the building. The building as it stands now is unsuitable for handicap access, both outside and inside. The architecture of the building has been compromised. To designate it as an architectural structure since it has been renovated 3-4 times is hard for her to accept. The Veterans should be remembered with a lovely thing whatever that may be. A plaza for all branches of service.

Mr. Ramsour wanted to point out one thing. Historic designation doesn't necessarily speak to the liability of the building, property or the site.

Mrs. Sullivan stated that if this was a local landmark and someone acquired the property they would not be able to tear it down. They would have to go before the Historic Preservation Commission and other entities. Also, if someone acquire the property as a local landmark, they would have to develop that property by the local landmark standards.

Mr. Ramsour stated that Memorial Hall is a city owned building and property and is not privately owned.

Mrs. Steele asked what does that do?

Mr. Ramsour stated that if you wanted to tear down or do anything else to the building or property, you could come before City Council. I think that this is a safe guard. The building is going to be preserved if humanly possible.

Mrs. Sullivan stated that she could not speak for anyone about plans that they may have or may not have for the building itself. National designation opens for possible tax credits for developers to come in and redevelop that area.

Mr. Duncan asked Mr. Bolander, from the cities perspective is this something that the city wants to put money in and bring back as an entertainment venue or just a building that just sits there. Will it be more of a museum quality building?

Mr. Bolander stated he couldn't answer any of those questions. He spoke about the current situation. Connect2Culture is wanting to build a new performing arts center on the parking lot. They have the first option to acquire Memorial Hall and repair, fix it up, and use it as well. That has not been determined yet. This is to protect the historical significance and character of that building. If someone did purchase it like Connect2Culture they may be eligible for tax credits to redeveloped that building or remodel it.

Mrs. Steele asked Mr. Bolander if it sustains itself financially?

Mr. Bolander stated he could not answer that question. The Parks Department, are the managers of the building and are aware of the request. They would be able to answer that question. The local historic designation would not affect the financial or the continuation of how it is used today.

Mrs. Brueckner-Sears wanted to know with the designation and if Connect2Culture purchased Memorial Hall, would have to keep the integrity of the building?

Mrs. Sullivan stated that typically whenever someone purchases a local landmark building and renovation are needed, it would have to come before the preservation commission and after approval, purchase a building permit. There are major works and minor works. Minor works, city staff can approve, major works must come before the preservation commission before any work can be carried out.

Mr. Bolander stated that it is an extra step to protect the historic resources. People assume that if it becomes dilapidated it can't be removed if it has local designation. That is not the case.

Mr. Cortez asked if this body approves this request, City Council approves this request and the building became a local designation, if determined at later date that this building is just beyond repair and needs to be removed can another building be constructed on that property?

Mrs. Sullivan stated yes.

Mr. Duncan stated and if it is Federal that could happen?

Mr. Bolander stated yes.

Mrs. Brueckner-Sears asked the person that bought it would be responsible for removal of the building?

Mr. Bolander stated that is correct.

Mrs. Steel wanted clarification that Connect2Culture would like control of Memorial Hall?

Mr. Bolander stated if Connect2Culture decides to purchase Memorial Hall there are two phases. The first phase is to build the Performing Arts Center and the second phase is to acquire and reuse Memorial Hall. That is the proposal but has not been agreed upon yet.

Mrs. Bruckner-Sears asked is interested in the land or the building?

Mr. Bolander stated the building.

Mr. Duncan thanked Mrs. Sullivan for providing the supplemental material. Mr. Duncan also stated that the building when it was built was elegant and beautiful and someone needs to take it back to that beauty.

Mrs. Sullivan agreed and stated that if the local designation had been in place prior to any renovations involving Memorial Hall, the Historic Commission could have denied those requests for renovations. Unless, they were up to the Historical Commission policies and procedures. This will not happen again in the future if approved.

Mr. Ramsour stated once designated a local landmark, the acknowledgment will continue as an historic sight and years down the line if the building is torn down the sight will still be acknowledged with a Story board.

Mr. Duncan stated that he is very much for Historic Preservation. He has watch Memorial Hall go downhill since 1978. He is afraid that it will continue to go downhill with the Historic designation. If Connect2Culture decides not to purchase and the city can't put money into the building then we have an historical building that is still running downhill. The concern is it is right in the middle of town. Not because he is against Historic Preservation.

Mr. Bolander stated that the Commission could look at it this way, if someone comes in and would like to purchase the building from the City of Joplin they could be eligible for the Historic Tax Credits if it is on the National Register, which it is not eligible right now.

Mrs. Steele asked Mr. Bolander if that is the main reason for the local designation, to make it eligible for the National Registry?

Mr. Bolander stated not necessarily but it is a marketing tool if someone wants to purchase it, especially for Connect2Culture if they are eligible for those types of credits.

Mrs. Sullivan mentioned that the National Registry is the one that makes it eligible for the tax credits.

Mrs. Steele wanted to know if Historic Preservation gets this passed are you going to continue for Federal?

Mrs. Sullivan stated that they are separate processes. The Historic Commission could continue with the National Registry regardless how this turns out.

Mr. Bolander stated he didn't want to make this complicated. What you decide tonight isn't going to change anything. It does open it up for the National nomination approval. The building is still being used by the Parks Department. The Parks Director stated that it is busy every weekend except for one from now until Christmas. The building is not in the best shape, but it is still being used and still producing income. Mr. Bolander didn't know if it was breaking even financially and that would-be a question for the Parks Director. It is still a useful building and is still being marketed.

Mr. Duncan asked if there were any other questions from the Commissioners. There were not.

Is there anyone else here to speak in favor of the request? There was not.

Is there anyone to speak in opposition of this request? There was not.

Mr. Duncan Closed the Public Hearing.

MR. CORTEZ MADE A MOTION, SECOND BY MR. DERMOTT THAT CASE 034-17 BE FORWARD TO CITY COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL. MR. CORTEZ, MR. RAMSOUR, AND MR. DERMOTT VOTING “AYE”. MR. DUNCAN, MS. BRUECKNER-SEARS, AND MS. STEELE VOTING “NAY”. (3 IN FAVOR, 3 NAYS, 1 ABSENT).

CASE 034-17 BE FORWARD TO CITY COUNCIL WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION.

Mr. Bolander suggested that the commissioners in opposition give a reason for the Planning & Zoning minutes so the City Council members would be able to review and understand the opposition. You don't have to but they will ask that question. None was given.