

HISTORIC VERMILION DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
Meeting Minutes of March 4, 2020 @ 6:00 pm ~ Municipal Complex

Roll Call: Robbie Brown, Judy Williams, Brenda Miklos, Marilou Suszko

Not Present: Susan Cairns

Gwen Fisher called the Wednesday, March 4, 2020 meeting to order.

ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON/VICE CHAIRPERSON:

J. Williams MOVED; B. Miklos seconded to appoint Robbie Brown as the Chairperson for 2020. Vote 3 YEAS (Brown, Williams Miklos – Suszko; late arrival)
MOTION CARRIED.

R. Brown MOVED; B. Miklos seconded to appoint Judy Williams as the Vice Chairperson for 2020. Vote 3 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

R. Brown welcomed Brenda Miklos to the board.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

J. Williams MOVED; M. Suszko seconded to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2019 meeting. Vote 4 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

NEW BUSINESS:

(Commercial) 5523 South Street – Rachel & Ted McNeely (Siding, Gutters, Windows, Trim, Exterior)

Rachel and Ted McNeely presented their plan to paint the top front siding of their business in a similar blue color, which will help preserve the cedar siding. The trim will be aluminum and white around eight windows. They will replace the gutters and downspouts.

M. Suszko MOVED; B. Miklos seconded to approve the project as presented. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

(Commercial) 5693 Liberty – Dan Roth (Landscaping, Fence, Signage, Add'l Structures)

Dan Roth presented the board with an artist rendering of a 4x4 free-standing sign (low monument style sign to be located at the corner) they would like to put up. The colors include red, sandblasted wood with raised white letters and black border on the Coal and Ice, and black lettering for gourmet dogs and ice cream. Artist rendering on file in the clerk's office. They're considering calling the business Coal and Ice which serves gourmet hotdogs and ice cream. The building was originally called the Coal and Ice Weigh Station. He said they had also considered putting a sign on the top façade of the building, but they didn't know if it would

really show. He said on the east side of the building towards the street there is a section that he would like to mount a 3x4 old town hotdog advertisement sign with lighting washing down on it.

D. Roth said he is projecting to open his business by the middle or end of May. They are teaming up with the Pavilion Grill who will handle the food end of this, and he will continue to build and work more on the site. L. Roth called it 'Dannyland'. M. Suszko told the board to look up 'Randyland' as it's a place in Pittsburgh where Randy bought a piece of property in a neighborhood that was distressed and he spent years and not much money creating what is now known as 'Randyland' and people from all over the world come to see it because it's artistic, creative, and filled with color. It's out of character for the neighborhood but it totally fits. She said she has to abstain from any vote on this application because she is working with the Roth's to get some money to provide for signage and other things, but when you look at what D. Roth is doing it's a real departure from what you see downtown traditionally, but it totally fits because you're talking about nostalgia and Vermilion's modern history that a lot of them will recognize. She expects it to be a place that when you look at this you feel good about this when you come into town. The signage is different, it's fun, it's a little quirky, and she's real anxious to see how this all plays out. She said it goes against the traditional architecture and setup, but it fits. D. Roth said they used to visit Geneva on the Lake and it has that old summer town amusement park feel and this is sort of what he is shooting for. He wants it to be a roadside tourist attraction. R. Brown told him that she loves that he preserved the Hull building.

D. Roth said along the back boundary of the property he plans to take down the neighbor's lower fence and move it forward in front of her house, and have it repainted, and then he wants to put a taller 6' wood white fence (6x8 panels mounted on 4x4 posts) against the back of the property from Baker's building to the start of her house. It gives the neighbor more privacy and makes their property a little more attractive. He would like to do a mural on the fence with light gray silhouettes of people. He would like to incorporate Crystal Beach and Kishman Fish. He said they may need a small accessory building for additional storage, so he would do it in red with the Kishman Fish writing on it to make it look like one of the old fish barns. M. Suszko liked the idea of a tone on tone thing, but felt it looked like the postcard projects. So, when he gets to that point, she would like to make sure they are not repeating each other. D. Roth said if the board thinks it's too busy then he doesn't have to do this. M. Suszko didn't feel it was too busy, but she wants to make sure they're not repeating an image. R. Brown said the postcards are all selected so Dan could see what they're using. D. Roth said this is something that can be done years later too. R. Brown thought it was cute and fitting and liked that they're putting up a fence to separate the house.

D. Roth said he would also like to put a gemstone mining setup on the property. This would be a free-standing structure. G. Fisher asked him to check with the building inspector on this as well. B. Miklos said he might not want to overwhelm his building. D. Roth asked for the board's opinion but felt he didn't need approval from the building department because it's free-standing.

D. Roth said he doesn't have a picture of the additional structure, but it will be a small utility building painted red with the Kishman writing on it. R. Brown asked if

they are building the restrooms and D. Roth said yes. L. Roth explained it's an outhouse; everything has been thought out, and it will be cute.

J. Williams asked if D. Roth would need special permission to put up the fence. G. Fisher said he would just need to get a building permit and if he meets code, he will not need a variance.

J. Williams MOVED; R. Brown seconded to approve the signage on the east side of the building as presented. Vote 3 YEAS; 1 ABSTENTION (Suszko). **MOTION CARRIED.**

J. Williams MOVED; B. Miklos seconded to approve the 6' white wood fence as presented. Vote 3 YEAS; 1 ABSTENTION (Suszko). **MOTION CARRIED.**

R. Brown MOVED; J. Williams seconded to approve the Coal and Ice free-standing sign as presented. Vote 3 YEAS; 1 ABSTENTION (Suszko). **MOTION CARRIED.**

D. Roth noted he has to put the outhouse on a separate foundation, which will be 3' away from the Coal and Ice building. It was noted the outhouse design was discussed and approved at a prior meeting.

D. Roth also showed the board an artist rendering of another possible idea of putting a 1950 fire truck on the property, which will have a stage for live music. The truck will be fenced in so people can't climb on the truck. R. Brown said it's hard to vision it until she can see everything else on the lot. D. Roth said this is an idea for the future, but he knows it will all fit and work together.

(Commercial) 5599 Liberty Avenue – City of Vermilion (Fulper Lot - Parking)

Mayor Forthofer explained that in 2017 the previous administration purchased the Fulper Lot (Gas Station) and the EPA investigation of the property began at that time. When he took office, the EPA study concluded, which meant the property was clean and clear of all contamination. He said Council expressed interest of making this property a parking lot as the sentiment was that the downtown needed more parking. However, he petitioned council to give the administration a reprieve to investigate the opportunity to make this spot something different; maybe a commercial/residential that attracts people to downtown, rather than just a parking lot. He had 10 months to have meetings and he talked with a lot of people. They had much polite interests from developers, but nobody was willing to step up with money to build on the property. One of the reasons why it was a hard sell is that the yield per square foot downtown is partially established by the fact that it's mostly old buildings. Therefore, the yield is low and for somebody to build a brand-new building and expect to pay for it with the same old low yield is unlikely. They are looking at another summer, so if they're going to do anything, they need to do it. Therefore, against his will he reluctantly went to Council with a plan for a parking lot with the realization that someone may still come along some day, but in the meantime, it's an unsightly mud pit. It's either a dust ball or a mud pit and that's not what they want for the downtown. They either want a nice-looking building or a nice-looking parking lot. He presented an artist rendering and site plan of a proposed parking lot of which accounts for 27 parking spaces, a deep frontage on Liberty Avenue, and retaining the parallel parking spaces along Grand Street. Since then, service groups have come forward to ask to modify the plans to make it prettier and to take away one of the parallel parking spaces to make it green down

the side and asked if they could move the entries a little forward. He said these are all great ideas, but he is trying to provide essential parking with leaving enough of a blank slate for the rest of the peripheral area, including the walkway running along the Art Scene which goes back to the Dickerhoff lot. He thought these areas could be embellished and enhanced to make them more attractive as they move forward. However, because of the season the City needs to move on this now, so they are going out to bid on the project as presented, and then if Vermilion in Bloom wants to do something in the front then that would be great. He hopes they can have a performance venue there, so Third Thursday's can perform there, and people can set up chairs for the parades.

J. Williams asked what material will be used for the fence. Mayor Forthofer said there are two versions consisting of board on board and one is rod iron with sandstone pedestals. They will go out to bid on both.

R. Brown asked if everything will be done at one time. Mayor Forthofer said yes and they will asphalt (hard-surface), and they will get a quote on the front from a landscape architect, but they're willing to modify it if a service group comes up with something better. He said there will probably be pavers going down the walkway, and they're hoping to get a historic lighting grant from NOPEC. There is \$13,000 in NOPEC dollars available to the City this year, and they could be looking at using it for the continuation of the historic lighting on Grand Street.

G. Fisher noted that a couple council members expressed concern to her on the wood fence concept with regards to the safety of seeing the cars, along with the threat of possible graffiti, so they may be more in favor of a rod iron type of fence. Mayor Forthofer said this will be decided on once they get the bids back.

R. Brown agreed they should take away the parallel parking space on the end of Grand Street, so it's easier to see when coming out of the intersection.

B. Miklos asked about the parking lot being handicap accessible with proper access into the parking lot. Mayor Forthofer showed her the handicap accessibility on the site plan.

J. Williams said it will be huge improvement that is much needed.

J. Williams MOVED; B. Miklos seconded to approve the design concept of the parking lot as submitted and discussed. Vote 3 YEAS; 1 NAY (Suszko). **MOTION CARRIED.**

ADJOURNMENT:

J. Williams MOVED; M. Suszko seconded to adjourn the meeting upon no further action. Vote 4 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, April 1, 2019 @ **6pm;** Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street

Transcribed by: Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk