

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes

City of Geneva
109 James Street - City Council Chambers

Special Meeting

May 2, 2023

Call to Order

Chairman Zellmer called to order the May 2, 2023 Special Meeting of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission at 7:01 pm and read a prepared statement regarding the continued public hearing for case 2022-079 & 2022-080 concerning the request for demolition and de-designation of a historic landmark located at 4 East State Street.

Chairman Zellmer stated that this public hearing is to allow for cross examination of the professional review of the pro forma statement completed by consultants obtained by the City of Geneva and to hear additional public testimony relevant to the applicant's request.

Chairman Zellmer stated that a motion was needed from the present commissioners to allow the virtual participation of Commissioner Jensen.

Motion by Commissioner McManus to allow Commissioner Jensen to attend the meeting remotely. Hartman seconded. Motion passes by voice vote 4-0.

1. Roll Call

Present: Chairman Zellmer and Commissioners Hartman, Jensen*, McManus, Stazin

Absent: Commissioner Salomon

Staff Present: Preservation Planner Michael Lambert

Others Present: City Attorney Ron Sandack, Recording Secretary Anna Benson

Virtual Attendees: Court Reporter Leyhbert Sharp for PlanetDepos

2. Continuation of Public Hearing (from January 18, 2023)

A. 4 East State Street (Case 2022-079 & 2022-080). Applicant: David A. Patzelt, Authorized Representative Shodeen Family Foundation. Application for: Demolition of a Historic Landmark and De-designation of the Property.

Preservation Planner Mr. Lambert distributed a copy of written correspondence received from Sally Wiarda of Wheaton, IL.

Chairman Zellmer began by asking if the Commissioners had any questions for the representatives from Teska Associates and The Planera Group. Clarification about TIF funding for the project was discussed. Lee Brown of Teska Associates explained how overall TIF district growth could result in available funds that could be used to pay for eligible public improvement expenses within the TIF district. Commissioner Hartman asked if TIF funds can be directly used for historical renovation on the property in question.

Scott Goldstein of Teska Associates affirmed that renovation is an eligible expense. Lee Brown stated the applicant would apply for eligible expenses to be paid for with TIF funding and it is within the City's authority to distribute funds if available. Terri Haymaker of The Planera Group stated there are two grants available from the state for this type of project. Chairman Zellmer asked if the owner has to apply for the grants, to which Ms. Haymaker said the city can apply for those grants in partnership with the owner.

Representative for the applicant, David Patzelt of 77 N 1st Street, Geneva, IL distributed a packet to the Commission and began his cross examination of the professional review of the pro forma completed by the City's consultants. He highlighted six points that he found to be inconsistent or erroneous in their review and continued to present each point in greater detail.

In regards to potential federal historic tax credits, Mr. Patzelt reported that he has spoken to the state of Illinois and according to those sources, the stone remnant structure does not meet criteria for tax credits and thus he believes they are not going to be officially available. Chairman Zellmer asked if that documentation was included in his report. Mr. Patzelt said no but he believes the City has this information. Mr. Patzelt stated that he has obtained emails from the state of Illinois to the City of Geneva regarding the site's inability to meet criteria for historical designation and thus a tax credit, through a Freedom of Information Act request. Mr. Lambert was called upon by Chairman Zellmer to see if he was aware of this to which Mr. Lambert said he is not aware of the information that Mr. Patzelt is presenting. A copy of this documentation was requested by City Attorney Ron Sandack.

Mr. Patzelt continued his cross examination presentation, highlighting errors he believed to be present within the consultant's review of the applicant's pro forma. Mr. Patzelt highlighted numerical errors found within the financial tables that significantly reduce the ROI (return of investment.) Mr. Patzelt stated that he is proving that there is a financial hardship to restore the remnant structure and an additional financial contribution would be needed. City Attorney Ron Sandack reminded all that the property is designated historical, and that we are to determine hardship as stated by Mr. Patzelt, but also to determine if we have exhausted all alternatives available. Commissioner Stazin states he believes that there are a number of untapped alternatives available. Chairman Zellmer was curious if TIF funds could be included in the financial reports to see how that financial contribution would increase the ROI in the scenarios presented.

Representatives from the Teska Associates stated they would like to make a written response.

The Commissioners discussed whether they wanted to close the public hearing or if they believed a written response from Teska Associates would be beneficial in their decision making. It was determined that they would like Teska Associates to complete a written response and following the presentation of that, the applicant will have their final response.

Motion by Commissioner McManus to continue the public hearing to June 20, 2023. Second by Commissioner Hartman. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote 5-0.

3. Adjournment

At 8:56 pm Commissioner McManus made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Hartman. Motion passed by a unanimous voice vote 5-0.