

Partial Transcript of Ad Hoc Landmarks Ordinance Review Committee
Aug. 27, 2014 File # 34202
Prepared by Franny Ingebritson

01:00 (one minute after sound was recording)-- Call to meeting.

01:30--Dave Mollenhoff:

I need to apologize. This is the busiest time of my business year and I did not have time to get these to you beforehand but the points are short and I can make them quickly.

01:55 Alder Chris Schmitt, Chair of the Committee:

I just want to make the comment because it's going to come up in a minute anyway. We'll take these pages today but, I know we let it happen last week, and now you're passing out paper- we set a rule for 3 days beforehand (72 hours).

Mollenhoff:

OK. That's fair. Beginning next week, the plan of many of us who are on the preservation side will give you one packet all consolidated so you won't have to hear lots of people talk about this. So I apologize once again. (Continued with his testimony)

Fast Forward to 13:50

Alder Schmitt:

Jeff Vercauteren, representing Apex Properties, Hovde Properties, Steve Brown Apartments, Urban Land and Wright 2102 LLC. Actually, Jeff presented his materials on time. Thank you.

Jeff Vercauteren:

Mr. Chair and members as you mention I did submit my materials on Sunday. I also brought some courtesy copies along for the audience. Well, just to speak a bit about the process before I jump into my comments. I think these are complex issues, very complex issues, and when we look at materials that are just submitted and try to absorb them and process them we end up with poor results and bad process. **So I encourage the committee to reject everything that's been submitted for the first time here tonight.**

[Clarification: The Agenda for the meeting was not available on Legistar until the afternoon of Friday, Aug. 22. The three day deadline for written statements would have been 5:30 PM on Sunday, Aug. 24. That suggests that citizen volunteers would have to give up their planned weekend to prepare their written statements for the committee. It's understandable that working thru the weekend might not bother a lobbyist who gets paid whenever he works.]

Vercauteren continues:

What I've done in my comments is go back to the last meeting where I feel like as we saw in the last meeting, that comments were submitted--again at the last minute—but **the committee had a discussion that focused on those and perhaps made some decisions that were not in line with what the committee truly intended.**

[Clarification: Is Mr. Vercauteren suggesting that the committee made decisions that were not in line with what they truly intended? Did he have prior knowledge of what the committee intended to do? Citizens at the meeting had no such knowledge.]

Vercauteren continues:

So in the comments that I've submitted on the Purpose and Intent section, I've gone back to reemphasize the primary things that I emphasized on my original comments on this section which is that our historic districts can't be museums. They need economic growth and development and that growth and development is not provided by preservation alone. Preservation can be part of that but it's not the only thing.

[Clarification: Using the Mansion Hill Local Historic District (MHLHD) as an example, there are several parcels that have structures that were built after the period of significance (1850-1930) or are currently used as parking lots. These are the areas where we anticipate new construction. However, parcels that have structures built between 1850-1930 are historic resources because they are associated with the people and families who played major rolls in laying the groundwork for our beautiful city. It is the evolution of the Mansion Hill neighborhood from 1850-1930 that tells the story of Madison's past.]

Vercauteren continues:

That's why we see areas of our historic districts that are not what our historic districts should be because we've got an ordinance for 40 years that has maintained historic district the way they are as of 1970. So in a sense they're museums to 1970 -- not even in the historic period.

[Clarification: The parcels that contain structures built during the 1960s and 1970s are parcels where new construction is anticipated. The Madison Landmarks Ordinance was the result of the outcry of citizens in 1974 over the loss by demolition of some of the City's most historic buildings. The Mansion Hill Local Historic District became Madison's first local historic district in 197___ to preserve the remaining historical structures in the district.

Vercauteren continues:

So my revisions talk about the importance of allowing for intelligent development within historic districts, that's consistent with the character. When you look at the National Standards for National Historic Districts that's really what we're looking at is the character of the district and not any particular building within the district. I think that's an important distinction for us to remember as we're looking for changes to our own local historic districts.

[Clarification: Mr. Vercauteren is mixing apples and oranges. The important distinction that he wants this committee to remember is that his clients would like the revised Landmarks Ordinance to be watered down to the National Standards for National Historic Districts. The Madison Landmarks Ordinance provides greater protection for Madison's historic resources. The Landmarks Ordinance looks at particular buildings within a local historic district. Mr. Vercauteren is trying to confuse the issue and suggest that this committee should look at the entire character of the district rather than the visually related area (VRA) definition found in the Landmarks Ordinance.]

Vercauteren continues:

So a lot of the changes that are in my document are the same as last time that were not discussed at the last meeting and didn't make their way in. You'll see that I've reference the NY model ordinance as much as possible because there is language in there that I believe was overlooked by others that supports wise development within historic districts that's consistent with the character of them.

So I'm just re-emphasizing that. The other document that I sent around is the revisions to the commission composition and the powers and duties section that I presented at the last meeting. I won't talk about that again. I just wanted to make sure that you had them in front of you and I'm happy to answer questions on either of the documents I submitted to you.

Fast Forward to 27:25

Vercauteren

What I was thinking was incorporating historic structures with artifacts was not necessarily limited to what we were just talking about -- incorporating materials or incorporating existing buildings -- **but that thinking at the historic district level** to the extent that we're going to build something new adjacent to a historic building or a landmark that the design that we use for the new building would incorporate and be sensitive to the existing landmark building. So **not looking at the building level necessarily, but at the district level.**

[Clarification: Mr. Vercauteren is again asking the commission to look at the district-wide level instead of the building level and the 200 ft. visually-related area definition in the Landmarks Ordinance.

29:00 The Commission made the decision not to accept the written testimony because it wasn't made available 72 hours before the meeting. The oral testimony was accepted.