



Minutes - Final

Community and Economic Development Committee

Thursday, April 12, 2018

5:15 PM

Council Chambers

Roll Call: Chairperson Robinson, Affa, Guridy

[15-2167](#)

Bill 8

Amending the 2018 General Fund Budget to provide for a supplemental appropriation of Twenty-Five Thousand (\$25,000) Dollars. This was a result of a mitigation fee contribution from City Center toward the cost of a study to survey the historic buildings along Hamilton Street from American Parkway to 12th Street as required by the Zoning Hearing Board.

Attachments: [Bill 8 Historical Survey Contribution](#)

[Background Information](#)

[Ordinance #15435](#)

Mr. David Kimmerly stated that City Center proposed and demolished two historic buildings at 736 and 740 and 742 - 744 Hamilton Street. Those buildings were in the historic building district overlay. They are also contributing buildings in the national registry eligible historic district. HARB gets the opportunity to comment on that demolition and present those comments to the Zoning Hearing Board. The formulate as part of the mitigation of the demolition of the building. HARB recommended against demolition. However, with the caveat or provision if the Zoning Hearing Board approved the demolition that these are some things to mitigate the demolition of the buildings. One of them is this \$25,000 mitigation fee that would be paid to the city and the city would hire a historic preservation consultant to do a survey of historic properties on Hamilton Street from American Parkway to 12th Street. It was estimated at the time there will be about \$30,000 - \$50,000 to do the study. At the Zoning Hearing Board meeting it was verbally approved by City Center that they would contribute \$25,000 to the study. He stated \$25,000 would help get the study started, not complete everything that would need to be done to make a professional study of the buildings, but that was ultimately decided. He provided a Hamilton Street Historic Resources Scope of work. It is a draft, but it is what a professional would be hired to do to study the buildings along Hamilton Street. HARB felt that the Historic Building Demolition Overlay Ordinance isn't working. There are historic buildings being lost on Hamilton Street. At an alarming rate. Every building is potential up for demolition, including things like the Post Office which is going to be

transferred to an unknown owner. There are a lot of questions about what could happen to some of the more important buildings on Hamilton Street. That is part of the reason for this study.

Mr. Courtney Robinsons thanked Mr. Kimmerly and stated that he had a couple of questions, but want to see if his colleagues had any first.

Mr. Julio Guridy asked Mr. Kimmerly if he had an idea how many other buildings are in the same situation and Hamilton Street in that corridor.

Mr. David Kimmerly stated that he made a short list. The Central Railroad of New Jersey terminal railroad station at 300 Hamilton Street, and the Post Office, the Brining Brockman Building at 546 Hamilton Street, the Lehigh Valley Trust Building at 634 Hamilton Street, the Hotel Sterling which is listed on the National Registry of Historic places, the Post Office, the Americus Hotel, the Lehigh County Courthouse, the Zollinger-Harned Building, the PP&L Tower has no designation whatsoever, the Zion Church, the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, the Farr Building, the Lehigh Portland Cement Building, and Merchants National Bank which is the bank on the corner of 7th and Hamilton at 702 Hamilton Street.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that he thought that they were built prior to 1969.

Mr. David Kimmerly stated that is what the study would include. The study would include every building built before 1969. The other building that could potential be part of this survey is the building we are sitting in, City Hall.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that he is confused. Even if buildings are on the national register of historic places it doesn't prevent it from being demolished, correct?

Mr. David Kimmerly stated correct. The purpose of use of the project is to serve as an inventory of historic properties to be protected in an improved historic building zoning overlay.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that we do not have such a designation.

Mr. David Kimmerly stated that it does not exist, currently. The other option would be to nominate buildings that are not on the national register to nominate them to the national register.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that he is all in favor of the historic registration of buildings. He stated that we are six or seven years too late for this since some already started the demolition.

Mr. David Kimmerly stated that there have been some that have been lost. The Hess Building is one, but there are still enough there that makes it worthwhile to do this study.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that there are more then you mentioned.

Mr. David Kimmerly stated that he agrees with that. This is a list that he literally wrote.

Mr. Courtney Robinson stated that another benefit would be that currently when a property comes up for potential demolition you are doing all the research at the moment. This is going to give you a historically database so when something comes in front of HARB or Zoning we already have all the research complete on that particular building. He stated that the \$25,000 goes towards the cost of it. What will the total be and do you still need allocated through the process to do the complete study.

Mr. David Kimmerly stated that it would help to have another \$15,000. We should put the RFP out and see what we can get. I have extended experience doing historic district surveys and he would work side by side with the consultant and add to and do the leg work. That would alleviate some of the cost.

Mr. Courtney Robinson asked if Mr. Kimmerly wanted to try to get the RFP out as soon as possible for this and once the contract is awarded, what is a rough timeline to have something like this complete. He stated that it might not be a bad idea to explain the benefits.

Mr. David Kimmerly stated nine months. Being listed on a national register is largely honorary. It recognizes the building as important as state, national or local history. The protection gives a minimal amount of protection if the property is affective by a federal action or federal funding or federal permits. The Post Office is a good example of how the Section 106 process is called the Federal Regulations work. There is funding for a Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit for Rehabilitation of Historic Building, but the must be income producing buildings. It has to be a private owner and grants available that can be used by municipal governments or nonprofits.

Mr. Courtney Robinson stated that the biggest benefit is we get the complete and total inventory of all the properties built prior to 1969 on Hamilton Street.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that it sounds like a real good idea to have a

consultant to look into Hamilton Street. He stated that he is wondering if we should expand it and look at all buildings in the city.

Mr. David Kimmerly stated that a more comprehensive survey is in the works. The State's Historic Preservation Office would like Allentown to do identify areas where we spend HUD money. We need to do surveys in the areas where we spend HUD money: Jordan Heights and Upside Allentown. He stated that he has talk to and presented a very, very draft plan for historic resource surveys in Allentown that would do the entire building by building and intense survey in each of the historic districts which we don't have.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that he was thinking to get someone from Muhlenberg College or Lehigh University as an internship.

Mr. David Kimmerly stated that interns are a possibility. Historic Research Surveys that are done by interns and overseen by a consultant still has some legal issues. with Section 106 Federal Regulations.

Mr. Courtney Robinson asked if the public had any comments on Bill 8.

Ms. Lauren Golden, Allentown Preservation League, 1518 W Walnut Street, stated that she supports the project and survey for Hamilton Street. The Historic Preservation Tax Credit can seem somewhat complicated to get and does really apply to rehabilitation costs and gets a little bit more complicated from there it is the most successful tax credit that the federal government has. She stated that 400,000 building nationally has been rehabilitated using that tax credit. It is 20 percent at the federal level and Pennsylvania also offers a 10 percent state tax credit.

Mr. Courtney Robinson asked if there were any other comments from the public.

A motion was made by Candida Affa, seconded by Julio Guridy, that this Ordinance be recommended for approval. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Courtney Robinson, Candida Affa and Julio Guridy

Enactment No: 15435

[15-2247](#)

348 N 8th Street - Carriage House

Committee should probably make a recommendation for action at the April 18th Council meeting.

Attachments: [348 N 8th St](#)

[IMG 3193](#)

[IMG 3194](#)

[IMG 3195](#)

Mr. David Kimmerly stated that this property has been on his radar since 2015. There has been several notices of violations sent to the property owner for condition of the Carriage House. There has been numerous violations to the property owner at Building Standards and Safety. This is a building that he doesn't feel comfortable standing around. It is very important, historically. It is a good example of a Carriage House that remains in Allentown. There are not a whole lot of them that remain. It is two and a half stories tall. It may have been a caretakers apartment or some other type of living quarters. It could have been a stable with employees related to taking care of the animals or horses. It is a very important building. The property owner does not have the funding to repair it or demolish it. The city's department of Building Standard and Safety came to HARB recently and asked for a certificate of appropriateness to demolish the building and the certificate of appropriateness was altered based on discussions with the owner and Old Allentown Preservation Association and Allentown Preservation League which were present at the meeting. A compromise was developed. It is to simply stabilize the building and make the building safe. That work has already been done. The plan to repair the building must be submitted within six months, if the building is deemed salvageable. Some of the Certificate of Appropriateness has been implemented. HARB is a recommending body and recommends to City Council. City Council can modify or deny the Certificate of Appropriateness or change it, if desired.

Mr. Courtney Robinson stated that he has a concern with this because we are given you for a lack of a better phrase a permit for speculative demolition. I don't like doing that because I don't like the precedence that it sets. For me I would feel more comfortable if we did this as a clean slate.

Ms. Candida Affa agreed with Mr. Robinson stating that once we set a precedence for something, that's when we get into all kinds of sticky situations and believes they should send it to HARB.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that he agrees with them 100 percent. He thinks that it looks like Mr. Harvey recommended demolition. He would not like to demolish that building. He stated to Mr. Kimmerly that Council can change whatever they have in front of them and probably we can change it. Is it a time limit on the original on how long we can keep it before we demolish it.

Mr. Courtney Robinson stated that similar to other issues we had on the

timeframe of when it would. It started on March 9th.

Mr. David Kimmerly stated the 75 days. The deadline for this is April 24. The review period ends April 24, 2018. He stated that he can ask Mr. Harvey for an extension, assuming he will sign it.

Mr. Courtney Robinson stated that it has been an absolute goal to try to safe this building at all costs.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that the willingness for the owner to comply and make the necessary repairs and the ability for him to do so. What can you tell us about those?

Mr. David Kimmerly stated that he unfortunately can't answer that 100 percent without knowing their personal finances.

Ms. Heidi Westerman stated that Mr. Lightner could not be here tonight. He had a prior commitment. We did work with the family and they did come in and tried to qualify them through our financial specialist. She reviewed the documentation that they provided and it is through CDBG funding and a community development block grant. It has certain criteria's and could not meet the criterias through HUD. We are currently working with the Redevelopment Authority to come up with a different plan. The family has been cooperative.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that to demolish the building it costs about \$30,000. Do we have that money somewhere and can we use that money instead to refurbish the building? It looks like it should be closed down because if it falls somebody could get killed. It has to be some kind of proposed coverage or put something around it in the property. There is only one deed for the house and the building. That creates a problem with the bank. Is there a way to subdivide it and we take over it?

Ms. Heidi Westerman stated that they are looking at different options on what they can do to assist them with the repairs. They cannot subdivide the property. There is still a mortgage on this property. The immediate danger has been eliminated.

Mr. Courtney Robinson asked if anyone from the public has a comment on this Certificate of Appropriateness.

Mr. Mike Hanlon suggested they might look into consulting with the Solicitor's office and if your concern is demolition then perhaps you can see if you can pass a Certificate of Appropriateness and ration it out with the demolition.

Mr. Courtney Robinson stated that is exactly one of the things he was going to ask.

Mr. David Huber stated that he is the Chair of HARB was going to ask what does Council propose. He thanked Council for their support of HARB.

Mr. Courtney Robinson asked if there were any other comments from the public.

Approval of Minutes

[15-2197](#) February 13, 2018 Community and Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [February 13, 2018 Community and Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes](#)

[15-2199](#) February 21, 2018 Community and Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [February 21, 2018 Community and Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes](#)

Adjourned: 5:58 PM