



**Roll Call Number**

14-1809

**Agenda Item Number**

49A

**Date** November 17, 2014

**RESOLUTION CLOSING HEARING ON APPLICATION FROM JACK PORTER TO DESIGNATE THE "RIVERFRONT YMCA" BUILDING LOCATED AT 101 LOCUST STREET AS A LOCAL LANDMARK, AND DENYING SAME**

WHEREAS, the City of Des Moines has received an application from Jack Porter to designate the Riverfront YMCA building owned by the YMCA of Greater Des Moines and located at 101 Locust Street, as a Local Landmark; and,

WHEREAS, the Landmark Review Board considered the application at a public hearing on September 16, 2014, and its members voted 16-0 in support of a motion to recommend that the Riverfront YMCA building be determined eligible for landmark designation in accordance with Section 58-58 of the City Code; and,

WHEREAS, the City Plan and Zoning Commission considered the application at a public hearing held on October 2, 2014, its members voted 10-0-1 in support of a motion to recommend DENIAL of the request to designate the Riverfront YMCA building as a Local Landmark, but suggested that City Council work to preserve the art and architecture that can be preserved if possible; and

WHEREAS, on October 20, 2014, by Roll Call No. 14-1631, it was duly resolved by the City Council that the application be set down for public hearing on November 3, 2014, in the Council Chambers; and,

WHEREAS, due notice of said hearing was published in the Des Moines Register on October 23, 2014, as provided by law, setting forth the time and place for hearing; and,

WHEREAS, on November 3, 2014, by Roll Call No. 14-1732, the City Council continued the public hearing on the application until November 17, 2014, at 5:00 p.m.; and,

WHEREAS, in accordance with said notice those interested in the application to designate the Riverfront YMCA building as a local Landmark, both for and against, have been given opportunity to be heard with respect thereto and have presented their views to the City Council; and,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, as follows:

1. Upon due consideration of the facts, statements of interested persons and arguments of counsel, the objections to the designation of the Riverfront YMCA building as a local Landmark are hereby sustained and the hearing is closed.
2. The City Council hereby makes the following findings of fact:
  - a) While the Riverfront YMCA building may be eligible for designation as a local Landmark under the criteria set forth in Section 58-58 of the City Code, such a



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designation would not serve the purpose of the Landmark Preservation Ordinance as set forth in Section 58-56 for the reasons identified in the accompanying Council Communication.

- b) The site of the Riverfront YMCA building, rather than the building itself, is the most important feature in light of numerous plans and implementation activities undertaken by the City, including the 2020 Community Character Plan, the Rediscovering the Rivers Plan, the What's Next Downtown? Plan, and the existing and planned River Walk improvements.
  - c) There are other examples of YMCA buildings in Des Moines and better examples of Modernist era architecture in Des Moines.
  - d) The constraints of the existing building – small floor plate, low floor-ceiling heights, obsolete mechanical-electrical systems, lack of sprinkler system, small window openings, and unique fitness facility floor plan – present considerable challenges to reuse of the facility. The building entrances are oriented away from the River, discounting the considerable effort expended on the River Walk improvements to enhance views and use of the Des Moines River. Changing the entrances and window pattern on the west side of the YMCA to enhance river usage would compromise the character defining elements of the building.
  - e) There are limited opportunities for redevelopment along the Des Moines River in the downtown. It is critical that additional uses be added to the River Walk that are active in the evenings and weekends.
  - f) The Riverfront YMCA Building is not of sufficient historic or architectural significance to warrant designation of the building as a local Landmark.
3. The application to designate the Riverfront YMCA building as a local Landmark is hereby denied.

MOVED by HENSLEY to adopt and deny the application for local landmark status, and:

- 1) To direct the City staff to continue working with the YMCA on determining, if possible and feasible, how to preserve the murals and have discussions with the new property owner regarding the same;
- 2) To direct the City staff to work with the AIA to look at the other specific recommendations submitted by Mr. Porter, and to possibly incorporate those



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recommendations into the Mayor's Task Force on Demolition Review recommendations;

- 3) Refer to the Legal Department and Community Development Department staff for review and recommendation regarding possible changes to the process, procedures and minimum requirements to trigger consideration of an application for local landmark designation.

FORM APPROVED:

*Roger K. Brown*

Roger K. Brown

Assistant City Attorney

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COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE	✓			
COLEMAN	✓			
GATTO	✓			
GRAY	✓			
HENSLEY	✓			
MAHAFFEY	✓			
MOORE	✓			
TOTAL	7			

CERTIFICATE

I, DIANE RAUH, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

*T. M. Franklin* Mayor

*Diane Rauh* City Clerk