



**Division of Development Administration and Review**

City of Pittsburgh, Department of City Planning

200 Ross Street, Third Floor

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219

Minutes of the Meeting of August 3, 2011

Beginning at 12:30 PM

200 Ross Street

First Floor Hearing Room

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

In Attendance:

<b><i>Members</i></b>	<b><i>Others</i></b>	<b><i>Others</i></b>	<b><i>Others</i></b>	<b><i>Others</i></b>
Noor Ismail	Rose Marie Profozich	Donald M. Keller	Richard Kopec	Vincent Cinski
Ernie Hogan	Anna Marie Ricci	Bob Bauder	Jean Ehrman	Geraldine Wagner
Linda McClellan	Paul Schermann	Page Thomas	Linda Law	Mary Jane Stankovic
Arthur Sheffield	Darrell Woodrow	Evelyn Jones	Ceika Poutene	Edward J. Stankovic
	Joseph Stivorich	Ray Pietrone	Kristin Kipke	Frances Kristoff
<b><i>Staff</i></b>	Milan Predick	James Augustine	Christopher Ponticello	Kason Spahr
Sarah Quinn	Robert Ehrman	Sandy Koch	Fr. Daniel Whalen	Jennifer Smail
Makenzie Diehl	Nicholas Cipriano	Ryan Koch	Janet Roper	Michael Sambol
	Vincent Jaksic	Michael Koch	Mary Petrich	Mary Anne Hunt
	Richard Gromo	Folarin Ijelu	Coleman S. Horvath	Nancy Leglev
	Anthony Benvin	John Krauland	Michael Horvath	Steve Zivic
	Nicole Moga	Donna Schmitt	Bill Stout	Anna Maria Cvitkovich
	Bill Hashinger	Regina Plut	John Kelly	Janet Kopec
	Jack Shmitt	Jane Sestric	Rich Sestric	Amanda Pietrone
	Lynne Corsello	Susan Petrick	Gretchen Haller	William Kurtek
	Peter Karlovich	Bill Vergot	Bernice Goak	Councilwoman Darlene Harris

**New Business**

**Approval of Minutes:** In regards to the July 2011 minutes, Ms. McClellan moved to approve. Mr. Sheffield seconded the motion. Mr. Jennings abstained due to absence from July's meeting. Mr. Hogan and Ms. Ismail voted in favor.

**Certificates of Appropriateness:** In regards to the July 2011 Certificates of Appropriateness, Ms. Ismail moved to approve, Ms. McClellan seconded the motion, all members voted in favor.

**Applications for Economic Hardship:** None

**Upcoming Demolitions:** Ms. Quinn indicated that the following addresses would be considered for demolition at the September 2011 HRC meeting:

- 1424 Chateau Street

**Adjourn:** Ms. McClellan moved to adjourn, Ms. Ismail seconded the motion, all voted in favor.

Discussion on hearing items follows on the attached pages.

**2008-2012 East Carson Street**

*Pittsburgh HRC Minutes – August 3, 2011  
East Carson Street Historic District*

OWNER: Tim Husini P.O. Box 42323 Pittsburgh, Pa 15203	WARD: ..... 17 <sup>th</sup> LOT & BLOCK: .....12-K-18 INSPECTOR:.....PAT BROWN COUNCIL DISTRICT: ..... 3 <sup>rd</sup> ZONING CLASSIFICATION: ..... ARCH. RATING: .....	APPLICATION RECEIVED: 6/20/11 SITE VISITS: CERTIFICATES OF APP.:00-000
APPLICANT: Rick Crisella 225 Butler Street Pittsburgh, Pa 15223		

NATIONAL REGISTER: LISTED .....  ELIGIBLE.....

**Proposed Changes:**  
After-the-fact installation of aluminum windows

**Discussion:**

1. Quinn says this was reviewed last month. She says the application to install rectangular aluminum windows with an arched transom was denied. Quinn says she was alerted by a member of the public that work had begun contrary to recommendation. Pat Brown, Building Inspector, issued stop work order. She says the Commissioner’s packet shows former conditions and current work in progress conditions, and includes a letter from the South Side Local Development Company.
2. Hogan asks if representative is present.
3. Ric Criscella introduces himself. He says they have building permits in place to do work on the building, but the question is using a round top window versus aluminum with transom above. He says after the last meeting they were under the impression they could use aluminum. He says they windows they installed are not permanent, and have a stop on them. He says they are doing work on the interior and rather than put plastic on the windows they put these there to protect it from the elements.
4. He says the owner has implored him to ask the Commission what is historically insignificant about using these windows. He provides a sample of the currently installed window, and a piece of the removed wooden windows. He says the amount of glass space is the same, but the wood is falling apart and from a standpoint of quality and air infiltration there is no comparison. He says individuals have taken these windows to meet this look but it does not meet energy needs. He says they will do the curved top window but are asking to use aluminum instead of wood.
5. Quinn says when she investigated with BBI Project Chief Ed McCallister there were no permits issued for external work only internal. She says she also inquired with Public Works regarding the scaffolding and there was a permit issued.
6. Hogan asks if he acknowledges receipt of July 7 letter which makes it clear the HRC denied the proposed windows. He says yes. Mr. Hogan says the minutes from that meeting are also very clear that it was suggested he look into wood replacement windows. He says they only approved pointing and cleaning of brick as per guidelines.
7. Hogan says his request it to approve aluminum windows and if they have been able to find round top aluminum windows without mullions.
8. Criscella says yes the manufacturer makes aluminum single sash round top windows. He says he knows the guidelines say it needs to be wood windows on the façade, but those are just guidelines. He says the federal government writes guidelines and those are either adopted or not on the local level.
9. Mr. Hogan says they have gone against the HRC’s approval, and they are in clear violation.
10. Mr. Criscella says they are just temporary.

11. Mr. Hogan says to spend the money on those windows does not make sense, plywood would be temporary.
12. Mr. Hogan says aluminum windows are not 100% objectionable, but can you make an argument that the style can be replicated exactly. Mr. Hogan says he has not the Commission with that information and he has no idea what the proposal may look like. Mr. Hogan says personally he is annoyed because they have gone to the contrary of what the commission has stated, and doesn't even know if he should consider aluminum replacements, but he will leave that decision to the other Commissioners.
13. Mr. Criscella says they meant no disrespect to the Commission. He says they ordered the windows because they had to 12 weeks in advance, and they needed to put something in these slots.
14. Ms. Ismail says there are not one but a few violations, because there is no external building permit and it is a perceived blatant disregard for the HRC's decision.
15. Mr. Hogan asks for public comment.
16. Aaron Sukenik of SSLDC says he doesn't have much more in addition to what is stated in the letter. He says this unfortunate and a lot of money could have been saved, and if that is the case it should be a question of economic hardship.
17. Hogan reads from the East Carson Street design guidelines for doors and windows, "Original doors and windows should be retained and repaired, wherever possible. If they must be replaced, the new ones should match the originals in size, style, and appearance as closely as possible. Wood windows should be used as replacement windows on the front facades of buildings in the district". He says he would entertain a motion.

**MOTION:**

Ms. McClellan..... Motions to deny the application as submitted.

Mr. Jennings ..... Seconds the motion.

All members ..... Voted in favor

.....**Motion passes.**



**1240 Buena Vista Street**

OWNER: Tabernacle Cosmopolitan Church 1240 Buena Vista Street Pittsburgh, Pa 15212	WARD: ..... 22nd LOT & BLOCK: ..... 23-J-299 INSPECTOR:..... MARK SANDERS COUNCIL DISTRICT: ..... 6th ZONING CLASSIFICATION: ..... ARCH. RATING: .....	APPLICATION RECEIVED: 3/21/11 SITE VISITS: CERTIFICATES OF APP.:00-000
APPLICANT: Brenda Simpson 1211 Sheffield Street Pittsburgh, Pa 15233		

NATIONAL REGISTER: LISTED .....  ELIGIBLE.....

**Proposed Changes:** Proposed replacement of damaged doors

**Discussion:**

1. Deacon Greg Ross introduces himself. He says they presented to the Commission in May of this year, and their proposal is still the same. He says the original doors were all wood. However, they are requesting to replace the doors and sidelight frames in-kind. He says there is grant money that is out there but they do not qualify. He says they would like to propose the Home Depot doors and maintain the stained glass.
2. Hogan says if he remembers correctly the original doors were all wood and the stained glass transom and sidelights were added. Mr. Ross says yes. He says the current doors are in very bad shape.
3. Mr. Hogan asks for public comment.
4. Carole Malakoff of PHLF says at the last meeting she recommended they come to PHLF because there is grant money for Historic Religious Properties.
5. Mr. Ross says he understood from Brenda Simpson that they do not qualify. Ms. Quinn says she understands that do to the grant cycle, money would not be available until after this winter.
6. Ms. Malakoff says they are going into the 2012 cycle. She says the Committee will meet in January and work would begin in 2012.
7. Mr. Ross they do not have a pastor right now or daycare or community outreach programs.
8. Ms. Malakoff says the PHLF guidelines say that the building must be a historic religious structure in Allegheny County in need of exterior work.
9. Mr. Ross says this is an immediate need, and that is his biggest concern.

**MOTION:**

Mr. Jennings ..... Motions to approve the application as submitted, with the retention/reuse of existing stained glass windows.

Ms. McClellan..... Seconds the motion.

All members ..... Voted in favor.

.....**Motion passes.**

**1003 Allegheny Avenue**

OWNER: Martin Rentals 8103 E. Kettle Place Centennial, Co 80112	WARD: ..... 21st	APPLICATION RECEIVED: 6/2/11
APPLICANT: Ray Wurth 8103 E. Kettle Place Centennial, Co 80112	LOT & BLOCK: ..... 7-D-75	SITE VISITS:
	INSPECTOR:..... MARK SANDERS	CERTIFICATES OF APP.:00-000
	COUNCIL DISTRICT: ..... 6th	
	ZONING CLASSIFICATION: .....	
	ARCH. RATING: .....	

NATIONAL REGISTER: LISTED .....  ELIGIBLE.....

**Proposed Changes:** Replication of balusters, replacement of roofing with standing seamed metal, installation of 6” wooden columns, in-kind repair of windows, repair of porch decking and adding lattice detail.

**Discussion:**

1. Applicant is not present.
2. Quinn says when the plans for 1005-1007 were submitted there was no application for 1003. She says the plans are the same as what was approved for the neighboring 1005-1007.
3. Mr. Hogan asks Mr. Jennings if they came to BBI for a permit to replace the porch. Mr. Jennings says he does not know.
4. Hogan asks for public comment.
5. Carole Wooley of the LRC says the applicant has not been in front of them. She says 1005-1007 was approved and the HRC asked them to return to the LRC, but they have not. She says they have not seen plans for any of the buildings.
6. Ms. Quinn says that is not something which is specifically required as per the Historic Ordinance.
7. Evelyn Jones of the LRC says it was stated that they should return to the LRC and they haven't. She says she has been past 1005-1007 and it doesn't appear they are doing exactly what was approved.
8. Mr. Hogan says because he cannot ask any questions of the applicant he would ask for a continuance or denial.

**MOTION:**

Ms. McClellan..... Motions to deny without prejudice that the applicant is able to come in front of the Commission again.

Mr. Jennings ..... Seconds the motion.

All members ..... Voted in favor.

.....**Motion passes.**









**MOTION:**

Mr. Sheffield..... Motions to approve application with the details of the NANA wall to be approved by staff.

Ms. Ismail..... Seconds the motion.

All members ..... Voted in favor.

.....**Motion passes.**

**Manchester Demolitions**

**1451 Warner Avenue**

**Discussion:**

- 1. Russ Blaich of BBI says there has been no change with 1451 Warner Street.
- 2. Mr. Hogan asks for public comment.
- 3. Evelyn Jones of Manchester LRC says they recommend demolition.
- 4. Anne Nelson of PHLF says they are OK with demolition of this building.

**MOTION:**

Ms. McClellan..... Motions to approve the demolition of 1451 Warner Avenue.

Mr. Sheffield..... Seconds the motion.

All members ..... Voted in favor.

.....**Motion passes.**

**1900 Chateau Street**

**Discussion:**

- 1. Russ Blaich of BBI says the wall is bowing and it is getting worse.
- 2. Mr. Hogan asks for public comment.
- 3. Evelyn Jones of Manchester LRC says they recommend demolition.
- 4. Anne Nelson of PHLF says they would support the retention and encapsulation of this building as it is an important corner structure.
- 5. Mr. Hogan asks Mr. Blaich about the water damage to the building. Mr. Blaich says he has not seen the interior of the building, but every year it gets worse. He says he thinks there is water coming in the roofline in the back.

**MOTION:**

Mr. Jennings ..... Motions to approve the demolition of 1900 Chateau Street.

Ms. Ismail..... Seconds the motion.

All members ..... Voted in favor.

.....**Motion passes.**

**Manchester Demolitions**

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**1446 Columbus Avenue**

**Discussion:**

1. Mr. Hogan asks for public comment.
2. Carol Wooley of Manchester LRC says they sent a letter to the owner and are waiting for her to respond because they would like to see the inside.
3. Mr. Hogan asks if Mr. Blaich has had contact with the owner. He says he does have a phone number for her.
4. Anne Nelson of PHLF says they would support the retention of this structure as they are concerned with the demolitions that are happening in the Manchester Historic District and the buildings are the best way to restore the district.
5. Ms. Quinn says she did receive concurrence from the SHPO that there is no impact to historic structures related to the demolition of these buildings. Mr. Hogan says this is not in the National District. Ms. Quinn says yes, but being potentially eligible she consulted with them.

**MOTION:**

Mr. Jennings ..... Motions to table the application for demolition of 1446 Columbus Avenue for 60 days to allow for Manchester LRC and MCC to contact the property owner.

Ms. McClellan..... Seconds the motion.

All members ..... Voted in favor.

.....**Motion passes.**

**1321 N. Franklin Street**

**Discussion:**

1. Evelyn Jones of the LRC says their recommendation is against demolition because the front façade is in good shape and there are no other buildings missing from that area. She says the back looks bad, and asks if BBI can only remove the back and leave the front. Mr. Jennings says they no longer use that practice.
2. Carol Wooley of the LRC says they sent a letter to the owner and they have heard from neighbors that this building is causing them water problems.
3. Anne Nelson of PHLF says they support the preservation of the building, because it is a continuous streetscape and it should be maintained.
4. Mr. Hogan asks Mr. Blaich if there are complaints from the neighbors regarding water damage.
5. Mr. Blaich says yes he received a Mayor’s Service Center complaint.
6. The Commission reviews photos of the building, indicating that the third floor rear elevation is exposed.
7. Mr. Blaich says he believes someone was doing work there at one time then ran into problems and abandoned it.
8. Mr. Hogan asks Mr. Ahmed of MCC if this is in the target revitalization area of Manchester?

**Manchester Demolitions**

- 9. Mr. Ahmed says yes they would support a continuation of 60 days to allow for the preparation of a plan to fix the building and prevent the water damage from occurring.
- 10. Mr. Hogan asks if the property is tax delinquent.
- 11. Andrew Dash, Neighborhood Planner, says it is not. He says it was purchased off the City about four years ago, and the rear wall has been collapsed for approximately a year and a half.
- 12. Mr. Hogan says he is inclined to give the community more time because this is a key piece of neighborhood fabric.

**MOTION:**

Ms. Ismail..... Motions to table the application for demolition of 1321 N. Franklin Street for 60 days to allow for Manchester LRC and MCC to contact the property owner and prepare a remediation plan for stabilization of the building, and alleviation of water issues impacting neighboring properties.

Mr. Sheffield..... Seconds the motion.

All members ..... Voted in favor.

.....**Motion passes.**

OWNER: St. Nicholas Church 24 Maryland Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15212	WARD: ..... 24 <sup>TH</sup> LOT & BLOCK: ..... 24-H-89-0-1 INSPECTOR:..... OWEN FINEGAN COUNCIL DISTRICT: ..... 1 <sup>ST</sup> ZONING CLASSIFICATION: ..... ARCH. RATING: .....	APPLICATION RECEIVED: 7/18/11 SITE VISITS: CERTIFICATES OF APP.:00-000
APPLICANT: St. Nicholas Church 24 Maryland Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15212		

NATIONAL REGISTER: LISTED .....  ELIGIBLE.....

**Proposed Changes:** Demolition

**Discussion:**

1. Father Dan Whalen introduces himself. He provides the Commissioners with original copies of the documents he submitted via e-mail in the past few days.
2. Mark Fatla of the Northside Leadership Conference (NLC) says as he understands the Commission has received an application for a certificate of appropriateness (CofA). He says the criteria are spelled out in the Ordinance and do not include a cause for economic hardship, which is an entirely separate process. He says if the economic aspects were brought up by the proponent the opposition would have to rebut these statements and the hearing would last much longer. He says he understands that only if the application is denied could the proponent then submit an application for a certificate of economic hardship (CofEH). He asks the Commission if they are at this point limiting the testimony to not include financial matters.
3. Mr. Hogan says at this point the application in front of them is by the congregation (owner) to secure a CofA for demolition, and at this point it is the Commission’s desire that the applicant summarize the application. He says in regards to cost, Mr. Fatla is correct that unless an application was denied and a CofEH application was filed only at that time could the argument be made that the ownership of this building is a financial burden and the owner does not have resources to preserve it. He says the only thing they can consider today is if it is a health/safety issue and that demolition is warranted because it does not meet the preservation standards.
4. Mr. Hogan says all public comment will be limited to three minutes and the owner has the right to make a full presentation.
5. Mr. Fatla asks if organization representatives will be afforded a longer period of time. Mr. Hogan says in keeping with precedent they will limit all testimony to three minutes.
6. Mr. Hogan acknowledges all the submissions which were received prior to the meeting.
7. Father Daniel Whalen, Administrator of St. Nicholas Catholic Croatian Church, says he thinks it is important the Commission understands it is not just about facts. He says he is looking at this as a homily, and it is important the board understands this is coming from the heart. He says for the past three years he has understood his Parish and their pain with carrying this building on. He says there is only one St. Nicholas Catholic Croatian Church in Pittsburgh right now even though there are two church buildings, one of which it does not need, which is like a ball and chain on this Parish. He says the Commission received the engineer’s report which the Parish requested because the property is just sitting there and it is getting worse. He says as you can see it says there is a serious threat that this building could come down at any time. He says the hillside has gotten worse, and is pressing against the building. He says it is their responsibility as responsible citizens to come forward with this report. He says he is not going to talk about finances but it is stated in the report as costing 1.2 million dollars which they do not have. He says he has heard this is the first Catholic Croatian church in the country,

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but this is not true. He says if you do a history of the buildings, the Millvale church is the older building. He says this does not just involve facts and preservation does not live in a vacuum, it involves people and lives and emotion.

8. Mr. Hogan says he understands this, but asks what they can present that is relevant to the code and the basis for the determination of the Commission's decision.
9. Father Whalen says they must rely in large part on the engineer's report, and a visual inspection of the property.
10. Mr. Hogan says he has read the report, but it is not clear on any eminent concern that the building is going to fall into Route 28 tomorrow. He says there are issues of the retaining wall addressed, but they are separate from the church. He says they have also received a lot of information and they have not had time to read and digest everything. He says he hopes they can give a summary of the report and make an argument based on the Code of the Historic Review Commission on why they should approve demolition.
11. Father Whalen says he has summarized it at this point in accordance with the engineer's report.
12. Mr. Hogan asks if there is anyone present to give further testimony on the engineer's report.
13. Father Whalen says their attorney Chris Pontacello is here to speak to it.
14. Mr. Hogan says he assumes the Diocese has empowered Father Whalen to speak on their behalf with regards to this request. Father Whalen says that is correct.
15. Christopher Pontacello, counsel to church, says he was present ten years ago when the building was designated and argued against it. He says it is a painful history of this Parish as their church has expended so much money to preserve an unwanted and unused building. He refers the Commissioners to page seven of the report and reads from the document. He says the Parish is present as a responsible property owner because they are clothed with an engineer's report which describes in glaring detail the concern for the stability of the church and the hillside. He says they are here today saying the building is unsafe or unreasonably restorable. He says he doesn't know how they can discuss restoration without discussing finances. He says the restoration would cost 2 million dollars, and to demolish would cost \$200,000 neither of which the Parish has in hand. He says this has been a closed vacant structure for 7 years. He says the church is fighting to preserve the Millvale building which is on the National Register. He asks the Commission to take a closer look at the report, and says it would be irresponsible for the Parish not to be here today seeking demolition.
16. Mr. Hogan asks if the engineer is present to discuss the report further. Mr. Pontacello says the author of the report is not here. He says they have experience property maintenance professionals from the Diocese who can entertain questions.
17. Mr. Hogan asks if there is any other comment on behalf of the applicant.
18. John Cralin, loss control/safety coordinator for church, says he walked through the site with the engineer. He says the main thing which is discussed is the retaining wall, and the pressure behind it. He says picture 26 shows the dirt starting to slide over the wall.
19. Mr. Hogan asks where the retaining wall is located. Mr. Cralin says it is on the west side of the rectory. He says he doesn't know when the wall would give out but the vibrations from the work on Route 28 are not going to help. He says he concurs with the report in terms of safety. He says in regards to liability, there has been vandalism and theft in the building, and if someone gets hurt it would be their responsibility. He says there have also been accidents with people trying to pull into the parking lot.
20. Mr. Hogan says it is his understanding that the Route 28 project will cut off the entry and exit points so that is not a factor from a safety standpoint.
21. Ms. Quinn says she has been in touch with a Culture Resource Manager at PennDOT who provided her with the Environmental Assessment. She provided the commission with copies of the report.

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22. Mr. Hogan says the public comments shall be limited to three minutes and limited to the issue at hand, not including economic issues with relations to the church.
23. Ray Pietrone, Troy Hill resident, says he is a lifelong resident of the Northside and he has seen a lot of buildings torn down and it is enough. He says it is a beautiful church, and he is totally against [demolition]. He says PennDOT has already proposed a route to get into the church. He says the Diocese has had opportunities to sell it but the Diocese has put so many restrictions on it.
24. Vincent Sinski, Mayor of Millvale, says he lives next to St. Nicholas Church Millvale and is very passionate about the church's paintings and architecture. He says he is in favor of demolition.
25. John Mannetti says he is a registered professional engineer in PA. He says the Patel report presents a plethora of conditions which are more cosmetic than structural. He says the Patel report makes a specific assertion that the church will fail in the very near future. He says after a site visit on August 1<sup>st</sup>, and a review of all available technical reports, he does not believe in the imminent failure of the retaining wall behind the church or the church itself.
26. Mr. Hogan asks if it is Mr. Mannetti's opinion that this wall is imminently ready to fail. Mr. Mannetti says there are several walls, but in regards to the wall behind the church, the buttress concrete retaining wall seems to be in very good condition with no major cracks or tilting. He says it is believed this wall was built when the church was moved in 1921, and the cracks referenced are normal effervescence cracking for concrete of this age, therefore failure of this wall does not appear imminent or even predicted.
27. Rob Pfaffman, architect, says he is here to address the interior. He says the report talks about dropped plaster that is causing water damage, and this is not true. He says this is normal because it is an unheated building. He says in looking at the interior walls, they could not find any structural damage or movement in structure of buildings. He says there is a "stair-step crack" which starts out as a construction joint, and has nothing to do with the structural stability of the building. He asks Mr. Jennings whether BBI has inspected or cited the building in any way in the past on structural deficiencies. He says they have never had any complaints which required an inspection.
28. Bronco Brnardic, general contractor, says he is the one that has been boarding it up to keep people from coming in. He says he was asked to put together costs to fix problems that are occurring. He says the building does not have any real damages other than some water penetration, and any cracks from exterior sides are porches and walkways which have deteriorated due to lack of maintenance. He says he thinks the structure should stand and there is a long life in it.
29. Richard Sestrich, north side resident, says he has experienced the destruction of Route 28 construction. He says his family's old home was demolished due to Route 28 construction, and he doesn't want the same thing to happen to his church. He says the Northside Leadership Conference has established a viable plan to restore the church for reuse as the National Immigrant Museum. He says the area needs a center to retell the immigration story, and this is an economically sound project. He says the current highway plans move construction toward the railroad and do not require demolition of the church. He says Pittsburgh has always been proud of its neighborhoods and ethnic groups, and this would be a gift back to the city for all to enjoy.
30. Jack Schmitt says he first became aware of St. Nicholas Church in 1958, when he attended North Catholic and had to climb the 85 steps by the church. He says in 2000 he was asked by friends to help save the building from demolition and nominate it as a landmark. He says in the last 10 years he has cleaned the parking lots and sidewalk. He says he took some pictures, which he passes around the table. He says most of the damage has been done from lack of maintenance. He says preservation is about development, and this building is important to Northsiders. He says there is only one other Northside building with onion domed turrets which is on California Avenue.
31. Jane Sestrick, of Preserve Croation Heritage Foundation (PCHF) says they have been working with the Northside Leadership Conference (NLC) since 2009. She says they want to use the building to tell national immigration stories. She says the architect's design study and market analysis study which

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were conducted by NLC in 2009 and funded by PCHF at a cost of \$40,000 show that the building is a sound structure, suitable for a museum, and that the market would support an immigrant museum. She says in 2010-11 they have been working with Lamar Advertising to collaborate in drafting an agreement to take ownership of the church or a long-term lease for reuse as an immigrant museum. She said since March of 2010 there have been a series of break-ins at the church, so the NLC hired the firm of Bronco Barndardic to secure the building and deter vandals from entering. She says to this date NLC and PCHF have committed \$2,971 that were spent to barricade and secure the building.

32. Amanda Pietrone, Troy Hill resident, thanks the Commission for their decision to preserve the Church ten years ago. She says she testified as a twelve year-old at that meeting and today has the same conviction, but also a better understanding of the proceedings. She says in voting today to remove the historical status the Commission would be doing an injustice to the youth of the City. She says the church represents her ancestors and the struggles they faced, and that those people gave everything they had to build this church.
33. Daryl Woodrow says when they received the church it was in disrepair. He says they have expended approximately \$300, 000. He says as steward of the church, he can see the wastefulness of the money being thrown away of the parishioners who are active in the Parish at this point. He says they are one Parish, and as long as the building continues to stand it is going to be a detriment to the Parish.
34. Anthony Bendon, of Troy Hill Citizens Organization, says they are opposed to demolition. He says on May 3<sup>rd</sup> of this year he submitted a letter to BBI regarding the upkeep of the church, stating that damages are a fault of the owner. He says the site itself has no construction value. He says by applying for permission to demolish the owner's themselves admit that the building has no particular value to them. He says his solution is that they should give it away, because there is a plan for reuse, and there is an overseer of the project. He says even if the plan didn't work the future cost of demolition could be removed from the Diocese. He quotes Father Whalen in an article from the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, "the buildings are a source of inconvenience and a waste of time". He says they strongly request that the reject the application and at the very least suggest that it is premature.
35. Jan Kopek says she is not for tearing a church down, however since the construction began on Route 28, they have found that the road on Pittview Avenue (which she lives above) is continually sinking. She says this has convinced her that the church should be torn down, also because of the report that she was told about. She asks why it is an insult for her friends and fellow church-goers to attend St. Nicholas Church in Millvale.
36. Mary Petrich, Lawrenceville resident, says the church in Millvale was never built for only Millvale. She said it used to serve Lawrenceville and Etna. She says she belongs to St. Nicholas Millvale and has no problems empathizing with the people from the Northside, because they would lose a church and they have so many losses in their lives. She says they already have a building with the history of the Croatians on the walls. She says they have a society for the preservation of the murals.
37. Bill Curtek introduces himself. Bill Vergot, co-chair of Preserve Croatian Heritage Foundation, introduces himself. Mr. Vergot says they would like to read a letter from his co-chair, Peter Karlovich, who was unable to attend the meeting.
38. Bill Curtek reads the testimony of Peter Karlovich into the record. Letter states that Mr. Karlovich has been involved in the fight to save St. Nicholas Church on East Ohio Street and also with the Preserve Croatian Heritage Foundation for the past 11 years. He has been involved in meetings with Diocesan, Parish, and PennDOT officials regarding this structure and the Route 28 improvement project. He has personally been involved in numerous financial offerings/sale options for the property which were ignored or turned down by the Church. He states that two copies of these ignored correspondence are attached. He says first letter implores the Diocese to meet with PCHF. He says the letter was followed with a telephone call to Robert Urman, then chair of the Parish Pastoral Council, but neither the letter nor phone call were returned or acknowledged. The second letter addressed to the then pastor Father Gabriel Baderina, in response to the announcement by the Diocese that the furnace was emitting dangerous carbon monoxide gas, was an offer of professional and financial involvement by PCHF. Says

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these are two examples of financial offerings made by PCHF and the claim of economic hardship is disingenuous at best.

39. Mr. Vergot continues to read the testimony. Mr. Karlovich's letter states that in regards to the sale of the building Diocesan officials repeatedly changed the deal options, and they had no choice but to decline. He says he understands Lamar has been trying for several years to purchase the property and suspects they have incurred the same duplicity. He says this church was not built by the Church or Diocese but by hard-working, struggling immigrants. He says the property was built by the hands and dollars of these immigrants and given to the Diocese in the 1920s to care for and hold in trust for future generations, and the trustees are now asking that it be forgotten and wiped off the face of the earth. He asks the HRC to please deny the request.
40. Lynn Corscello says to prevent vandals from entering the church the NLC has coordinated steps to safeguard the church and rectory by boarding and securing them. She says this has included regular weekly inspection of the property to check for vandalism, boarding and securing of all entrances and lower stained glass windows, response to reports of vandalism, and added reinforcement when criminals have trespassed and thefts have occurred. She says from March of 2010 to March of this year this was done for under \$3,000, paid for by donations from PCHF, and at no cost to the Diocese. She says offers to install a security system were denied, and representatives of the Diocese declined to press charges on those who were caught when trespassing.
41. Page Thomas, board member of Society to Preserve Millville Murals, says they are in support of demolition of the Northside church.
42. Bernise Scoyak, says she would like to comment on the grounds of the Northside church, and how the weeds haven taken over. She says while the church was open a group of volunteers including herself maintained the grounds. She says these volunteers paid for all supplies and plants. She says when it was closed they continued to take care of the grounds. She says after several years of taking care of the grounds after closure, they were told the Diocese did not want them on the property. She says at this time or any it would not be appropriate to take away the historic designation because of demolition by neglect. She says the church was not neglected by its members.
43. John Kelly, Millvale resident and professional stained glass restoration expert, says he was making inquires on behalf of St. Nicholas Church with the Diocese regarding the disposition of the stained glass. He says there is some stained glass left in the church that is directly related to the Croatian immigration effort. He says there is no contemporary survey on the condition of these windows. He says these windows are as old as the church, 110 years, which is outside the envelope of structural durability. He says the metals that hold stained glass windows together have a life span of 80-120 years. He says without surveying their condition it is difficult to say if they can be safely removed. He says any drilling it could affect the stability of the windows. He says he doesn't believe these costs have been involved in any of the reconstruction or conservation reports.
44. Susan Petrick, Secretary of PCHF and lifelong member of St. Nicholas Northside, says she would like the HRC to deny the request for demolition.
45. Steve Zibick, lifelong member of Northside church, says he was on various Parish Committees. He says he was there when PCHF said they would pay the bills until the church can do something, and the church agreed that was fine, but no money ever came because it wasn't economically reasonable for them to purchase the building. He says he found Lamar Advertising and they have been negotiating for three years and they were always willing to sell but it is not economically feasible that the building be restored. He says it was a safety hazard when the church was closed. He says it is economically unreasonable for the owner to repair this building at the cost of 2.1 million.
46. Anne Nelson of PHLF says they are in support of preservation and reuse of the building. She says the building is a work by Frederick Sauer. She says his works include St. Stanislaus Catholic Church in the Strip District, St. Mary Magdalene in Homestead, the Latimer School in East Deutschtown, and St. Nicholas Millvale all of which are individually listed on the National Register. She says he also designed

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several buildings in Aspinwall which comprise a National Register listed district. She says the church opened in 1901 and was the first Roman Catholic Croatian Church in the U.S, and still retains its architectural features such as the Baroque onion-domed towers. She says it was determined eligible for the National Register in November 1996. She says they believe the building still maintains integrity and meets several criteria for designation.

47. Bob Urman, chairman of Parish finance committee, says it always sad to see a church to deteriorate. He says he is in favor of demolition.
48. Ed Stancovich, lifelong member of St. Nicholas Millvale, says he thinks that St. Nicholas Northside closed because it did not have the support. He says the people who let it come to this decision did not carry their load, and they are responsible for what happened and what is going to happen. He says the building is going to fall down and something tragic will happen.
49. Nicole Moga, Troy Hill resident, says she is against demolition. She says the building is still an asset for the Troy Hill Community and Northside. She says she doesn't think they have had enough time to fundraise and work out the feasibility for the immigrant museum.
50. Janet Roper, member of Millvale church, says she is in favor of demolition because they have been paying their bills.
51. Jennifer Smail says she is scared to drive on Route 28 after reading the report. Says she is a 36-year member of St. Nicholas Parish. She says she does fundraising for the church, and part of the money she is raising is going to retaining this building, and they can't afford to try to keep both.
52. City Council President Darlene Harris says she has supported keeping this church since serving on the School Board. She says she just found that a fax came out of State Representative Dom Costa's Office, stating that his office was in support of demolition. She says the fax came from Mr. Costa's Chief of Staff and Mr. Costa knew nothing about it. She says she had State Representative Costa call the office today because he did not know anything about this letter. She says he has walked through this building and is in support of its preservation. She says if the Catholic Diocese doesn't want to keep the problems that are with the building, she would hope instead of tearing it down they would give it to the community. She says she believes the community would have no problem restoring the building. She says she knows it must be a hardship for those members in Millvale but it would be a hardship to lose this building on the Northside. She says the hill is not going anywhere, that Pittview is way above it, and all of Troy Hill would fall down before it would get to Pittview. She says they have had the stained glass windows inspected. She says they shouldn't be looking at the cost factor but looking at the building and and keeping its history. She says the Northside tries to keep as much history as it can, and she has seen Northside buildings in much worse shape. She says there is not one BBI citation on the building. She says there was not an engineer here speaking on behalf of taking down the building, but there was one here speaking on behalf of saving the building. She says we shouldn't have to come back every 10 years to save a piece of history and it appears that's what happening here. She says the Troy Hill community cares for the building, and it is the center of the neighborhood. She says the Northside Leadership Conference will happy to help. She asks that if it is a financial burden to the Diocese to please give it to the community so they can save a piece of their history.
53. Sandy Cook, lifelong member of St. Nicholas Parish, says you can only work so hard and for so long. She says if St. Nicholas Millvale would close she would have the memories in her heart; it is only a building. She says it seems this is more emotional than thinking it through. She says her grandparents worked hard for this church and they would be upset right now.
54. Milan Predick says the church is not a building, it is people. He says the hill could come down and that would be it.
55. Mark Fatla, Executive Director of Northside Leadership Conference, presents the Commission documents to be entered into the record. He says they did have a stained glass expert review the building but do not have the report with them today. He says he presented the Commission with Bronco Brnardic's repair estimates. He asks the Commission to look over the scope of work which was

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prepared in April of this year. He says there are two building citations they found which were both for graffiti. He says he presented them with a summary of the museum studies, and a chart that categorizes the conditions sighted by Mr. Patel sorting those between structural and cosmetic issues. He says he also provided them with a letter of testimony from Mark Masterson, community development professional.

56. He says the standard is does the request serve the public interest of the city, and it seems there are two factors. One, is it a threat to the city and public safety? He says Mr. Patel's engineers report says yes, but the opinion of an engineer, architect, and contractor differ; and he as a 25-year real estate professional says the building is not in any imminent danger, nor are the retaining walls. He says the second factor in public interest is if the building is possible for reuse. He says when they began working with PCHF the first thing they did was a design study and market analysis to determine if [a museum] was feasible, and both those reports said it was. He says this is more than just preservation but also a community development strategy. He says this also includes trail development, and a museum on this site and a trail development are projected to bring 50,000 visitors a year to the Northside neighborhoods. He says in the long run the question ultimately is how do the Parish and the Diocese get out from the liability of the property. He says that is what they've been trying to work out with Lamar and PennDOT and the Diocese without success to this point. He says the NLC remains willing to work with the Parish or Diocese, and supports the idea of getting them out from under this burden. He says they had developed an acquisition strategy with Lamar, but have been unable to finalize it in terms of an agreement. He says the principle difficulty is the unknowns, namely the hillside, and what he thinks the next step would be is raising the funds for a geotechnical report so they can stop speculating about the hillside. He says if the risks are reasonable the NLC and PCHF are prepared to take title to the property relieving the Parish of its ongoing costs, and the future liability risk, but they have to answer the unknown before they do that.
57. Mr. Hogan asks what the time schedule would be for them to secure funds for geo tech study.
58. Mr. Fatla says they would like to do that as quickly as possible but their principle difficulty is without site control it is hard to raise money, so they have been working through Lamar to try and achieve that. He says perhaps an agreement that would allow them to jointly submit for the geo tech funds would allow them to achieve this.
59. John Cook says he is a lifelong member of St. Nicholas Millvale and with all the money they are spending to keep the Northside church open, they are destroying their own church, and eventually they may have no Croatian church.
60. Kristin Boos, co-counsel for Parish, said Mr. Fatla indicated there is no threat to public safety and there was no future reasonable reuse for the property. She says with regards to the hillside he stated the hillside was an unknown danger. She says the hillside is not an unknown danger, and they have had engineers review the area and they have identified this as an immediate threat. She says in regards to the reasonable reuse of the property, they have attempted to sell the property for the past 10 years, but no one has come forward and is willing to accept liability for the property, and this includes Mr. Fatla's own group. She says he Mr. Fatla indicated he worked with Lamar Advertising who was offered to buy the property and deed it over to his group, but they would not accept title unless PennDOT would pay for the identified concerns including the retaining walls. She said PennDOT they have no legal obligation and no financial ability to do so, and as a result NLC has denied taking title. She says there is no reasonable use left, no one here has the means to fix the problems identified, and all that is left is a threat to the community and Route 28 traffic, as well as a threat to the future of the Millvale Parish.
61. Father Whalen says the issue of demolition by neglect has been raised, but demolition is not intentional but necessary because they don't have any money. He says he has heard things about putting money into the property through flowers and boards on windows, and Council President Harris said we shouldn't be back here every ten years, and he agrees, but they get bills every month. He says it's because of those bills and the lack of funds that it becomes a safety issue.
62. Mr. Hogan says this is not a consideration in the decision.

63. Mr. Hogan says he would like to conclude the public comment. He says he would like to take time to review this material, and would suggest they continue the decision until next month. He says he very much sympathizes with both sides. He says the role of the commission is to preserve the architectural integrity of the City. He says at this point the church is not a safety threat and there has been no real evidence, and he plans to drill down and look through all the information. He says he appreciates the testimony and passion, and contributions to Pittsburgh’s Cultural Heritage. He says he understands the Parishioners want to have this burden lifted from underneath them, and they could have this as a shining asset to celebrate the history it at one time represented.

**MOTION:**

Ms. McClellan..... Motions to table the application to the September meeting.

Mr. Sheffield..... Seconds the motion.

All members ..... Voted in favor.

.....**Motion passes.**