

Item 39

CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



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Central Presbyterian Church – item AHPC 15-3

October 7, 2015

We respectfully request that the St. Paul City Council vote YES on our appeal of a condition of approval by the Heritage Preservation Commission regarding a necessary roofing project.

Nine different documents are included as agenda attachments, we hope this one-page document provides a summary of background information you need, the process we have followed, and what we hope this appeal will enable us to accomplish.

Background:

Central Presbyterian Church, located at 500 Cedar Street downtown, has about 225 adult members and is working hard to buck challenges of national trends against viability of downtown urban core churches. We have been growing in membership and financial support for ten years. We have been making improvements to our facilities. And we have been involved in the life of St Paul as our church motto is “in the city for good.” Throughout 2011-2015, knowing that our current asphalt shingle roof was at the end of its lifespan and having repaired damage caused from roof leaks, we have worked diligently to research attractive, long-lasting and affordable roof possibilities and raise funds for this project. We are listed on the National Historic Register, we share the values of historic preservation, and so we fully agree that materials must be selected with care. Any new plans must compare proposed materials to original materials and design; in our case, the original was a slate roof. Estimates to use slate shingles began at \$3,000,000. The lowest estimate to use synthetic slate shingles, an approved standard substitute, was for a base cost of \$702,000 while the lowest base cost bid for asphalt shingles was \$615,000.

After extensive research, we were pleased to get a base bid of \$267,000 to use DECRA stone-covered metal shingles from the contractor Jaegger Associates, Inc. Visits to four churches with these materials and telephone reference calls to four additional churches using these materials, along with research on the fifty year warranty that comes with these materials, satisfied our questions and concerns and we presented this proposal to the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Committee staff. On August 27, 2015, we met with the St. Paul Historic Preservation Commission, which voted eight to three to approve these materials for our roofing project.

With extended discussion at the St. Paul Historic Preservation Commission about our proposed DECRA stone-covered metal shingles, there was just brief mention prior to the vote that the motion for approval would include conditions. One of these conditions is that *“Continuous metal ridge caps shall be used and the finish and profile shall be submitted to staff for final approval. The DECRA shingle material shall not be used for any ridges. Where copper ridges or caps exist, they shall be maintained or replaced in-kind.”* (Currently the only ridges that have continuous ridge caps are the ones on the bell tower.) Since our meeting with the St. Paul HPC, our research shows that this is not compatible with the DECRA materials.

A DECRA tech bulletin states that copper and lead cannot be used with their product as they react with steel over time and degrade it. Their warranty states that they will not cover damage caused by use of materials that will degrade their product or if the problem is caused by installation that does not follow their installation instructions. The integrity of the DECRA system requires using all DECRA parts, including ridge caps. The major issue here is that St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission approved our use of a product, but then placed a condition upon us that would require us to the impair the integrity of the system and void the product warranty.

Process:

Because one of the conditions attached by the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission is not compatible with the materials we have selected and the SPHPC approved, we find ourselves with the need to appeal the conditions. Process dictates that the appeal is made not to the St. Paul HPC but to the City Council. **We respectfully request that the St. Paul City Council vote yes on our appeal.**

Next Steps:

We have done significant fundraising for this project. If the City Council approves our appeal, we can go ahead with our plans to complete this roofing project as soon as schedule and seasons allow.

If the City Council denies our appeal, we will need to delay our plans for a new roof, which could lead to continued expensive leaks and damage. A denial of this appeal would also require us to go back to the drawing board to explore more expensive alternatives. Any additional funds necessary for more expensive materials and labor would be a formidable challenge for a church of our size to raise and would jeopardize the mission of the church and the feasibility of replacing the roof in a timely fashion.