Agenda Item No. REP 147-10
TO: City Council
FROM: City Manager and Staff
DATE: December 10, 2010
RE: Heibel-March Building Proposal Review-Historic Preservation Commission
(Case #10-124)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At the November 15, 2010 meeting, the City Council referred a proposal for the Heibel-March Building from Legacy Construction to the Historic Preservation Commission for review and recommendations. The Commission discussed the topic at their December 7, 2010 meeting.

DISCUSSION:

Attached is a letter from the Historic Preservation Commission Chair, Brian Treece, summarizing the Commission’s findings and recommendation that the City Council accept the proposal from Legacy Construction Group to purchase and renovate the Heibel-March Building.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact is anticipated as a direct result of this report.

VISION IMPACT:

2.2 Goal: Historic areas will be identified, valued, and preserved through education, enforcement, and incentives.

SUGGESTED COUNCIL ACTIONS:

Consider the recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission.
William H. Watkins, City Manager  
City of Columbia  
Columbia, MO 65201

Re: Legacy Construction Group proposal

Dear Mr. Watkins:

It is the recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission that the City Council accept the proposal by Legacy Construction Group (Legacy) to renovate the Heibel-March building.

At the request of Council, the Columbia Historic Preservation Commission considered the Legacy proposal at our December 7, 2010 meeting. The HPC examined three alternatives including: Accept the proposal, Issue a new RFP, or Demolish the building. The Commission then carefully evaluated Legacy’s proposal to change the façade of the building by installing an overhead door as well as Legacy’s plans for commercial use.

Our findings:

- There have been multiple opportunities for interested parties to submit proposals during the previous RFP process, as well as prior and subsequent conveyances. Issuing a new RFP would not necessarily attract additional prospects or viable proposals. Initiating immediate stabilization and restoration of the Heibel-March by a group with hands-on construction experience and project management knowledge is a superior alternative.

- Demolishing the building is not an acceptable alternative and may be prohibited by federal fund restraints placed on the acquisition of the structure.

- HPC agreed that limited modification of the Rangeline elevation to accommodate a discreet and architectural overhead door was not inappropriate for this building. Indeed, continuous operation of the Heibel-March building as a commercial structure may have yielded a similar modification over the years.

- Legacy’s plan for commercial use is appropriate given the building was built in the 1920s as a commercial building. Moreover, Legacy’s proposal to restore the Heibel-March should be recognized as a service to the community and may lead to additional enhancement of the area neighborhood.

- HPC heard public testimony from leaders from the Corner Action Group which helped stabilize the Heibel-March, property owners immediately adjacent to the Heibel-March, and homeowners in the North Central Neighborhood. All testimony was in favor of Legacy Construction Group’s proposal.

It is our conclusion and recommendation that Council accept the proposal by Legacy Construction Group and negotiate an agreement with Legacy Construction including a long-term land lease that guarantees proposed improvements to the building are made timely and historically appropriate.

Sincerely,

COLUMBIA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Brian Treece, Chair