

Feed and Grain sit-and-wait

Commission give historic preservationists more time; building's owner says members, 'don't have any guts'

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Another 30 days.

Residents who want to save the Loveland Feed and Grain building, and the owners who want to tear it down, asked the Loveland Historic Preservation Commission for a decision Monday night, but the commission delayed its decision.

The commission voted 4-3 to continue the item to its April 17 meeting.

Dean Anderson, who owns the 115-year-old downtown grain elevator, said after the meeting that he was disappointed the commission didn't "respect private property rights and didn't have the fortitude to vote on it."

"They don't have any guts," Anderson added.

More than 40 people attended the meeting and more than a dozen spoke.

Supporters practically begged the commission to deny the Andersons' request to raze the building, calling it an "integral part of Loveland's economy and skyline for more than a century."

But they still wanted a vote.

Loveland resident Tiffany Zerges has worked with the group during the past month to raise money and support to save the downtown landmark.

Supporters want to buy the building to buy some time.

"We are not working against the Andersons; if anything we are trying to work on their behalf," Zerges said. "... We want to move forward, come up with funding to give them a fair, honest price."

Developer Gary Hassenflu, president of Garrison Cos. based in Prairie Village, Kan., has the property at 130 W. Third St. under contract. He originally planned to transform the downtown landmark into an apartment complex.

But, after being turned down for grants and tax credits, Hassenflu said the project isn't financially possible. He wants to tear down the grain building to start from construction

from the ground up.

Because the building is a designated landmark on the local historic register, the Historic Preservation Commission has some say in its fate. The commission voted Feb. 20 to delay a decision for 30 days, hoping to give residents a chance to come up with alternatives to the bulldozer.

Several residents spent the past month coming up with a plan they hope would work: Raise money to buy the building from the Andersons for \$400,000.

The group wants to raise \$100,000 in donations from the community (they have about \$16,000 so far) and ask the Loveland City Council for another \$100,000. That \$200,000 would serve as a cash match for a possible grant from the State Historical Fund.

If everything falls into place, residents want to buy the building by midsummer. They plan to seek either money or a developer to renovate the building into an art center with possible offices or retail space.

“The passion that you feel, take it to the council,” Chairman Martin Janssen said to the audience. “They’re the one with the purse strings.”

No one is guaranteed a decision at the commission’s April 17 meeting. The commission could delay a decision for another 30 days before voting.