

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: August 7, 2002

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Council Chambers, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois 61801

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rich Cahill, Liz Cardman, Alice Novak, Trent Shepard

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Sharon Irish, Bill Rose, Art Zangerl

STAFF PRESENT: Rob Kowalski, Planning Manager; Elizabeth Tyler, Director of Community Development Services; Michaela Bell, Planner; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: G. D. Brighton, Howard Wakeland

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Urbana Historic Preservation Commission Chair, Alice Novak, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. The roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Item #9, Audience Participation, was moved up on the agenda before Item #5, Continued Public Hearings.

3. APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Mr. Cahill motioned to approve the minutes as corrected. Ms. Cardman seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as corrected by unanimous vote.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

- Email from Art Zangerl to Rob Kowalski regarding non-contributing structures.
- Memorandum from Mike Ward of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Ms. Novak noted that it regarded a scholarship that was named in memory of Lachland F. Blair. The scholarship was used to establish a fund to pay conference and registration fees for a member of either Historic Preservation Commission in Champaign and Urbana or a local

citizen to attend the annual statewide preservation conference. This year's conference will be held in Chicago from September 12th through the 14th.

***Note:** Ms. Novak introduced and welcomed Michaela Bell as the newest planner for the City of Urbana.

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Howard Wakeland, of 2213 Combes Street, mentioned that he was resubmitting his petition to the Historic Preservation Commission requesting changes in the Urbana Historic Preservation Ordinance. He handed out copies of the petition to the commissioners and staff. Mr. Wakeland did not want the Historic Preservation Commission to discuss and/or act upon the petition at this time. However, he asked the commission to take it home and look it over and to act upon it at a meeting in the near future. He noted that this request was from thirty-six property owners of the fifty-four properties that were originally proposed in the previously nominated West Main Street Historic District.

Mr. Wakeland talked about the lawsuit that his company had with the City of Urbana. He asked the Historic Preservation Commissioners for suggestions of what he should do with the apartment building at 813 West Main Street as well as the three adjacent properties at 807 ½, 809 and 811 West Main Street.

Mr. Shepard inquired as to whether Mr. Wakeland built the apartment building at 813 West Main Street? Mr. Wakeland replied that his company built that apartment building at a time when the company was first starting. The company made mistakes and was weak. Although it is a functional building, it is not pretty and it lacks architectural character. He would not hesitate to destroy that building and rebuild.

Ms. Tyler informed Mr. Wakeland that the Historic Preservation Ordinance is part of the Zoning Ordinance. The proper procedure would be to fill out a text amendment application and go before the Plan Commission. However, the Historic Preservation Commission could discuss the petition and advise the Plan Commission.

6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

7. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

8. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- **Report on Downtown Walking Tour**

Rob Kowalski, Planning Manager, presented the update. He noted that on June 24th staff held the Downtown Urbana Walking Tour, which was a big success with approximately 200 people attending. He reviewed the route that was taken for the walking tour. He stated that one key to the success of this tour was that each guide had their own different way of presenting the information.

Mr. Kowalski mentioned that staff might want to allow more time for each tour in the future. He felt that the tours were being rushed. Some of the people on the tour felt that it could have been longer, and some wanted to tour the inside of the buildings.

Mr. Kowalski expressed appreciation for the great job that Lauren Kerestes and Jennie Ely had done in putting the walking tour together. He noted that both of the walking tours were available to be viewed on the historic preservation page on the City of Urbana's website at www.city.urbana.il.us. He added that copies of the brochures for both the West Main Street walking tour and the Downtown walking tour are available at the City of Urbana's Tourist Information area on North Cunningham for visitors.

Mr. Kowalski talked about the next walking tour. He stated that staff had started working on a basic route for the Green Street/Elm Street area. He added that staff had thought about having the walking tour in October.

Mr. Cahill shared his experience of the walking tour with everyone. He commented that there was a crowd of all ages. At one time, the line extended from the Station Theatre to the Courier Café. It looked like a long parade and slowed down the tour. This created a safety issue for people crossing several busy streets. On the other hand, it worked out well with Art and himself "tag-teaming" the groups. Art and himself had different stories to tell, and many people had questions. Many of the people were interested in staying with the tour guides. It might have helped to have a practice run prior to the actual tour.

Mr. Kowalski replied that it was hard to know how many people would attend the walking tour. Staff advertised really well with putting flyers downtown, having news coverage on television, and it had been publicized in the newspapers. If staff had known how many people would attend, then they could have planned for more tours.

- **Update on Historic Preservation Brochure**

Mr. Kowalski gave a brief update. He noted that some basic changes included a page on Joseph W. Royer with pictures of some of his work, a half page on Nathan Clifford Ricker explaining his importance to the community, and a half page on the Historic Landmark and District Criteria. He asked for any additional comments.

Ms. Novak noted that she had sent the planning intern a copy of Ms. Irish's requested changes. Mr. Shepard commented that a different picture of the Historic Lincoln Hotel should be used focusing on the older part of the building rather than on the newer part.

Ms. Cardman asked about photo credits? Mr. Kowalski replied that staff still needed to insert the photo credits.

- **Discussion of Nonconforming properties in Historic Districts**
- **Discussion of "project level of review" table**

Mr. Kowalski reported that on July 22, 2002, City Council asked that this commission look at considering non-contributing structures in historic districts. He gave the definition of contributing structures. He noted that the Zoning Ordinance does not give any guidance about what to do regarding non-contributing structures. Staff researched six other communities and did not find any of those communities to have any guidelines, except for the City of Iowa City. Iowa City provides a handbook regarding historic structures, which gives guidance for non-contributing structures.

Mr. Kowalski noted that during the West Main Street proposal, there was concern from property owners as to what they could or could not do with their property if the proposal would have been approved. The City of Urbana's Zoning Ordinance is not very clear about what property owners can and cannot do. Although it does specifically list things that are clearly not regulated, items that are regulated under a minor works process, and other items that require a full Certificate of Appropriateness review with the Historic Preservation Commission. He mentioned that upon request, staff put this information in a table format to try to make it easier to use. He pointed out the Project Level of Review Table that was included in the mailing packet. He briefly reviewed the table.

Michaela Bell, Planner, summarized a few sections of the Iowa City Historic Preservation Handbook, which were the following:

- *Definitions of Key Terms:* Included are the definitions of "contributing structures" and "non-contributing structures".
- *Categories of Compliance:* Ms. Bell briefly reviewed the table matrix on page seven of the handbook.
- *Iowa City Guidelines:* She noted that the Iowa City Guidelines contain fourteen general sections where they address any category of work that a property owner may undertake on a house or structure. Each of these fourteen sections include a column entitled "Recommended Procedures", a column on "Disallowed Procedures", and a list of "Exceptions", which is intended to allow for flexibility for projects on non-contributing structures.
- *Design Standards for Multi-Family Construction:* This section provides very specific guidelines for multi-family buildings that may be proposed in a historic or conservation district.

Mr. Shepard asked what the purpose would be for having a handbook for the City of Urbana? Ms. Novak commented that the reason Champaign included provisions for conservation districts in their

ordinance was to allow old areas that had more integrity problems, but still had some cohesiveness in older buildings, to have some kind of protection mechanism.

Mr. Kowalski commented that each section takes and defines what is appropriate and not appropriate from the ground up for a structure in a historic district. He believed that this handbook would be very useful to property owners in historic districts.

Ms. Novak read Ms. Irish's and Mr. Zangerl's written comments, and they were as follows:

- *Level of detail seemed excessive.*
- *Unfair to place constraints on non-contributing structures that are placed on contributing structures.*
- *Suggestion that there are three classes of non-contributing*
 1. *Newer Buildings: Design review should only be placed on a replacement structure or an addition to an existing structure. The goal should be to minimize distraction from the historic character of the district.*
 2. *Older Potentially Contributing Structures*
 3. *Vacant Lots (Added by Ms. Novak).*

The commissioners discussed the issue of imposing review process on non-contributing structures. They agreed that non-contributing structures should be included in a historic district to allow the Historic Preservation Commission the ability to have some design review over what can happen to those properties. It is important to preserve the spirit of the integrity of those structures.

Ms. Tyler handed out a copy of the request from City Council. There was discussion about what kind of recommendation that the Historic Preservation should make. Most of the commissioners felt that the level of detail in the Iowa City Historic Preservation Handbook was too detailed. They decided that the Project Level of Review Table would be beneficial.

Following was some discussion of what should be included in the table, such as new construction and/or demolition. They agreed to define non-contributing with three sub-categories and work on a non-contributing procedures amendment. The three sub-categories of non-contributing are as follows:

1. ***New Construction*** – Structures built within the last forty-nine years.
2. ***Old Construction*** – Structures that are fifty years old or older.
3. ***Vacant Lots*** – Construction.

The commissioners discussed what projects they may want to review and at what level. The three levels of review include the following: 1) No Review Required, 2) Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) with Administrative Review, and 3) COA with Historic Preservation Commission Review.

Ms. Novak felt that there should be two charts: one for contributing structures and one for non-contributing structures. She suggested that staff also list the maximum number of days that the Historic Preservation Commission has to review a Certificate of Appropriateness.

After some discussion, there was a proposal made to remove window air conditioners and television antennas as well as mechanical and electrical service equipment to “No Review Required”.

- **Discussion of community forum to promote historic districts**

Mr. Kowalski noted that the community forum would be held on September 25, 2002 at 7:00 p.m. at the Urbana Civic Center. There may be a speaker from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA). Staff is looking for people who actually live in historic districts to speak at the forum about what their experiences have been in doing projects and going through the different levels of review.

Ms. Novak felt that there should be a limit of three speakers and did not feel that it would be necessary to have a representative from IHPA speak at the forum. However, it might be useful for a representative to attend to field questions. Ms. Cardman mentioned that it would be beneficial to have flyers on state incentives, federal incentives, and Cunningham Township incentives.

10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Garrett House Update – There is a closing date set for the property in which the house will be moved to. The school district set a September 30th deadline for the moving of the house.

11. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Kowalski reported on the following:

- ✓ Illinois Statewide Preservation Conference will be held in Chicago on September 12th – 14th.
- ✓ Historic Chicago Bungalow Association – staff received information on this. Essentially, the City of Chicago offers some funding to owners of historic bungalows who want to fix the bungalows up.
- ✓ School District – School District owns a number of properties on Iowa Street and on Washington Street. They are entering into a long-range master planning process with a consultant, and the school district has promised to have a city representative be involved in the process. The public will be allowed to be involved as well.

12. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ✓ Mr. Cahill noted that the last weekend of September, the Old House Society would be having their annual building fair. It will be held at the David Davis Mansion.
- ✓ Mr. Shepard inquired about the West Main Street nomination coming back. Ms. Tyler replied that there is intent to reintroduce the nomination according to Carolyn Baxley. Other than that, she does not know much more.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Cardman moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. Mr. Cahill seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

Submitted,

Rob Kowalski, Secretary