

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: August 4, 2004

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rich Cahill, Scott Dossett, Alice Novak, Trent Shepard

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Bill Rose, Art Zangerl

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Rob Kowalski, Planning Manager; Michaela Oktay, Senior Planner; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Ernie and Sylvia Sullivan

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

Urbana Historic Preservation Commission Chair, Alice Novak, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Mr. Dossett moved to approve the minutes from July 7, 2004 as presented. Mr. Cahill seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

7. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

8. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Case # HP-04-COA-02: Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the removal and replacement of gutters.

Case # HP-04-COA-03: Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the installation of a wooden privacy fence.

Michaela Oktay, Senior Planner, presented these two cases together to the Historic Preservation Commission. She began with an introduction explaining the purposes for the two Certificate of Appropriateness requests. She talked about the historical background of the Lindley House and gave a brief description of the house. She discussed the proposed changes to the gutters on the house and reviewed the requirements for a Certificate of Appropriateness according to Section XII-5 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance. She read the options of the Historic Preservation Commission and stated that staff's recommendation was as follows:

Based on the findings outlined in the written staff report, and without the benefit of considering additional evidence that may be presented at the public hearing, staff recommended that the Historic Preservation Commission grant the proposed Certificate of Appropriateness in case HP-04-COA-02 as requested.

Ms. Novak asked if the Lindley House originally had half-round gutters on it? Ms. Oktay replied that she had not found any documentation regarding that. She and Ms. Sullivan had walked around the house and found some concrete round piping or terra cotta piping that went into the ground. It was possible that those were part of the original gutter system.

Ms. Novak noted the letter of support that had been submitted from Strong Brothers Construction regarding the roofing replacement, which had already been granted as a minor works Certificate of Appropriateness. The letter was attached to the staff report.

Mr. Shepard felt that it was an easy decision that the petitioners could go ahead and replace the gutters with new material. Even if the current gutters with holes in them and being rusted out were the original gutter system, he could not see how the Historic Preservation Commission could expect the petitioners to repair them every year instead of replacing them. It would not be a practical thing to do.

He believed that the fact that the petitioners wanted to spend the extra money to put half-round gutters on the house was great. The Historic Preservation Commission should approve the request.

Mr. Cahill mentioned that living in a big house in the same general neighborhood, gutters were always an issue. He liked the idea of the petitioners using the half-round gutters. He suggested that the petitioners make sure when having the roof redone that the gutters were at a higher capacity, so they could get the water away from the house as quickly as possible. The fewer turns and bends, the better. The house was probably originally adjoined to a cistern in the back yard.

He felt that this was a very necessary, expensive repair that the petitioners must do. Without a good roof and a good gutter system, the rest of the house has no good future. He would support approval of the request.

Mr. Dossett recommended that petitioners consider replacing the gutters in mass as opposed to trying to do gutter repair, because the first task had to be preservation of the structure and making certain that it was solid. He believed that the half-round would add a quaint-kind of stylistic point to the house. Therefore, he supported granting the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Ms. Novak echoed the others' comments. She thanked the petitioners for going through the trouble to seek having someone make half-round gutters. She felt it was a very important element of the house. She believed that half-round gutters were used from the late 19th century up till about 1940. Therefore, it would be the appropriate style of guttering for the house. She believed that the petitioners had the finest example of the Queen-Anne style in Champaign County.

Sylvia Sullivan, of 312 West Green Street, commented that was why they wanted to save the house by replacing the gutter system and the roof. The wood in the house was beginning to rot.

Mr. Dossett moved that the Historic Preservation Commission grant the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for case HP-04-COA-02. Mr. Cahill seconded the motion. The roll call was as follows:

Mr. Dossett	-	Yes	Ms. Novak	-	Yes
Mr. Shepard	-	Yes	Mr. Cahill	-	Yes

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Shepard added that he believed the petitioners had their work cut out for them on the east side of the house with all of the trees hanging over there and dropping walnuts and leaves on the roof and in the gutters. Ms. Sullivan mentioned that their plan was to get those trees trimmed. It was going to cost about \$1,000 to have that done, so they had to make a choice between the replacement of the gutters and the trimming of the trees. They felt that the replacement of the gutters was more important at this time.

Ernie Sullivan, of 312 West Green Street, stated that they were going to have the roofer trim the tree limbs hanging on the house, until they could afford to have the trees trimmed further back.

Ms. Dossett commented that when he did the second story gutters on a house that he had helped rehabilitate, they used the stainless steel, diamond-shaped gutter guards on the house. He noted that he had been real happy with the performance of those guards.

Ms. Oktay continued the public hearing by talking about the installation of a wooden privacy fence. She described the privacy fence and reviewed the requirements for a Certificate of Appropriateness according to Section XII-5 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance. She read the options of the Historic Preservation Commission and stated staff's recommendation, which was as follows:

Based on the findings outlined in the written staff report, and without the benefit of considering additional evidence that may be presented at the public hearing, staff recommended that the Historic Preservation Commission grant the proposed Certificate of Appropriateness in case HP-04-COA-03 as requested.

Ms. Novak noted the letter of support that had been submitted from Dobrovolny Law Offices regarding the wooden privacy fence. The letter was attached to the staff report.

Mr. Dossett inquired about how far the fence went down the west side of the property? Did it line up with the rear foundation of the house and then cut across? He stated that he was trying to figure out what percentage of that side façade was covered by the fence. Mr. Shepard pointed out the pictures in the staff report showing the fence. Ms. Novak added that the fence comes out about at the rear elevation of the property.

Mr. Shepard wondered how the Historic Preservation Commission got to the point where they were considering approval for something that had already been done? Ms. Oktay explained that the fence was erected, and then the petitioners filed for a building permit with the Building Safety Division. City staff was then alerted that the wooden privacy fence would need to request a Certificate of Appropriateness, even though it was not a direct exterior change to the building. Mr. Sullivan stated that this was a learning experience for them. They were learning the proper procedures and routes.

Mr. Cahill remembered his first experience with getting a fence permit. He remembered having to define where the front yard was, because the fence had to be at least 50% open and had a certain height requirement. With fencing the backyard, almost anything was allowed.

He stated that before he could do anything in his backyard and side yards, he needed the fence built. Until the boundary lines were defined, it was hard to do any landscaping.

When looking at the petitioners' fence from the street side, he commented that the fence would improve over the years as the bright redness of the wood weathered to become grayer that would match the colors of the house more. He questioned why the petitioners decided to build the fence so far up to the front of the house? Ms. Sullivan stated that the reason was because when the college students, who live next door, have parties, they leave their beer bottles in the Sullivan's back yard. The college students cut through the Sullivan's back yard and hang out there, which is right underneath one of the Dining Room windows where guests could be sitting. They wanted privacy from the neighbors. She mentioned that they also have two dogs, which they wanted to be able to let outside without the dogs running off.

Mr. Shepard commented that the way the top of the fence was scalloped or gently rolling added a nice touch. It helped soften the fence.

Mr. Dossett moved that the Historic Preservation Commission grant the request for the Certificate of Appropriateness to allow the installation of a wooden privacy fence in case HP-04-COA-03. Mr. Shepard seconded the motion.

Mr. Dossett agreed with Mr. Cahill in that the color of the fence was really bright. It would be nice for the fence to weather down a little bit. Ms. Novak pointed out that the Historic Preservation Commission did not consider color when determining approval or denial of Certificate of Appropriateness requests.

The roll call was as follows:

Ms. Novak	-	Yes	Mr. Shepard	-	Yes
Mr. Cahill	-	Yes	Mr. Dossett	-	Yes

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Novak stated that she hoped that the petitioners understood the process now. It was awkward for the Historic Preservation Commission to consider a request after the fact.

Mr. Dossett inquired how new homeowners would know about what they had to do when they buy a house. Was there a packet for historic properties? Ms. Novak explained that the previous property owners had told the Sullivan's. Mr. Sullivan stated that as far as the historical repairs, they knew that they had to go through the Historic Preservation Commission. However, they had talked to City staff about the process for building a fence, and according to City staff and the guidelines for historical repairs, fence lines did not fall under these guidelines, because under the definition it was not affecting the structure of the house.

The Historic Preservation Commission and City staff talked about the Urbana Zoning Ordinance and agreed that it was not exactly clear in spite of all of the amendments to try to make a user-friendly ordinance.

Ms. Novak suggested that the petitioners write down the names of City staff when talking to them and always ask to speak with Ms. Oktay or Mr. Kowalski about making a change or replacement of materials.

9. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

- **Lincoln Statue** – Mr. Cahill noted that the Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA) had funded some improvements in the landscaping around the statute, which included putting in some new shrubbery. There had also been some restoration done to the statute in the last two months.
- **Ricker House** – Mr. Cahill mentioned that the new owners had moved in, and at some point, the members of the Historic Preservation Commission or City staff should go say “hi”. Mr. Kowalski stated that the new owners had expressed some interest in building a carriage house.

Ms. Novak pointed out that there was originally a one and a half story carriage barn located on the north side of the lot.

- **608 West Green Street** – Mr. Cahill stated that the First Presbyterian Church was planning to demolish the existing house on this property. This would greatly change the streetscape of Green Street. Would there be any review since the existing house was adjacent to a local and national landmark? Mr. Kowalski responded by saying that City staff would need to look into that. Mr. Cahill expressed his concern for what could happen on the site, once it became vacant. Mr. Kowalski mentioned that City staff had met with representatives of the church. At which time, the church had reviewed their plans for expansion of the church. Any final plans would have to be approved by the Development Review Board, because the church and the property at 608 West Green Street were located in the Mixed-Office Residential (MOR) Zoning District.
- **Time to Update the Inventory of the City's Historical Landmarks and Districts** – Mr. Kowalski believed that it would be a good idea to go out to the historical landmarks and districts in Urbana to check up on them and take some pictures. Mr. Cahill felt that the Royer House should be highlighted, because the property owners had done a really nice job in turning the property around.

11. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Kowalski reported on the following:

- **Buena Vista Court Historic District** was passed by the City Council by a unanimous vote. It was very impressive how the neighbors got together and supported the nomination.
- **MOR Design Guidelines** were scheduled to be considered by the City Council on August 16, 2004.
- **The Development Review Board** was almost filled. The Mayor was struggling with finding someone who lived inside the MOR Zoning District. The Mayor would be presenting the list of names to the City Council soon.
- **Michaela Oktay** was moving to Dublin, Ireland. He noted some of her accomplishments regarding historic preservation during her employment with the City of Urbana.

12. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Shepard moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Mr. Cahill seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted,

Michaela Oktay, Senior Planner