

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING**

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**APPROVED**

**DATE:** February 1, 2006

**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.

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

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Rich Cahill, Scott Dossett, Alice Novak, Bill Rose, Mary Stuart, Art Zangerl

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Trent Shepard

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Robert Myers, Planning Division Manager; Rebecca Bicksler, Planning Division Intern; Tony Weck, Recording Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Gerald Brighton, Jeff Drook, Ralph Langenheim, Chris Stohr

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

Urbana Historic Preservation Commission Chair, Alice Novak, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

**2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

There were none.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Dossett proposed an addendum to the part of section 7 of the minutes of the 12/7/05 minutes pertaining to 202 South Broadway (I.M.C. Building/Post Office), which he had himself written. The changes were accepted unanimously by the Commission. Mr. Rose made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Dossett, and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes presented with the addition of Mr. Dossett's comments.

**4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

There were none.

**5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Chris Stohr, President of the Historic East Urbana Neighborhood Association, spoke to the Commission regarding the brick sidewalks in his neighborhood. Mr. Stohr stated that in light of the fact that the neighborhood's brick sidewalks had been recognized for their historic significance, they should be preserved. He urged the Historic Preservation Commission to coordinate with the Urbana Public Works department to see that they are properly maintained and that they are not demolished in favor of concrete sidewalks.

**6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

**7. OLD BUSINESS**

There was none.

**8. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

**2005 Annual Report of the Historic Preservation Commission**

Rebecca Bicksler, Planning Division Intern, gave the Commission an overview of the 2005 Annual Report of the Historic Preservation Commission, which outlines the activities of the Commission over the course of calendar year 2005. There were no questions regarding the report from the Commission and therefore Ms. Novak called for a vote to approve as presented. Mr. Zangerl made a motion to approve the report, seconded by Mr. Cahill. All Commission members signified their approval by saying, "Aye," and the report was approved.

**Discussion on implementing historic preservation elements of the City's 2005 Comprehensive Plan**

Robert Myers, Planning Division Manager, initiated a discussion among City Staff and the Historic Preservation Commission with regards to the Commission's role in implementing parts of the Comprehensive Plan that relate to the Commission's activities. Presented to the Commission for review and reference during this discussion were excerpts from the Comprehensive Plan pertaining to the Historic Preservation Commission and its mission. Particularly, from page 33 of the Comprehensive Plan, Mr. Myers noted the goals set forth with regards to Urbana's established neighborhoods. From page 37, Goal 12.0, regarding the preservation of the characteristics that make Urbana unique was also noted. From page 87 in the Implementation Program section of the Comprehensive Plan, Mr. Myers noted the Plan's direction to develop a neighborhood action plan for the "Historic East Urbana" neighborhood and from page 88 the direction to develop a "Conservation District Ordinance". Further Mr. Myers noted from page 91 the direction to update historic surveys of older neighborhoods in order to develop an inventory of historic structures. Also

of pertinence from this section of the Plan were: to study the feasibility of initiating a low-interest loan or grant/match program for exterior renovation projects on structure that have been designated as “historic” under the Historic Preservation Ordinance; to coordinate with local non-profit agencies (such as P.A.C.A.) that are focused on preserving historic structures within the community; to designate the downtown and portions of West Main Street for historic district status; and to designate civic buildings that contribute to Urbana’s history for landmark status.

The idea was mentioned to prioritize what areas of Urbana are most significant for historic designation, bearing in mind the question, “what would we hate to lose the most?” Mr. Zangerl suggested that such prioritization should be reviewed by the City Attorney, considering the Historic Preservation Commission’s approach to landmark application review as a semi-judicial body. He questioned whether or not it would be going too far for the Commission to judge which properties are more eligible than others, to which Ms. Novak answered that this was part of the Commission’s job. Mr. Zangerl went on to pose the question of whether neighborhood groups such as W.U.N.A. and H.E.U.N.A. have regular meetings, as these might be a good opportunity for Historic Preservation Commission presence. Chris Stohr answered that his group (H.E.U.N.A.) does have regular meetings but that attendance at those meetings is small. The group does, however, according to Mr. Stohr, have an annual picnic, which would be a good venue for a presentation by the Commission. Mr. Cahill raised the issue of the myth that historically designated homes sell more slowly than others, with low resale values. He pointed out that homes so designated such as the Ricker House, the Lindley House and the Gothic Revival House all sold quickly. Mr. Rose concurred with Mr. Zangerl’s concerns over prioritizing but added that the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance is a great tool and that the Commission should assist in its interpretation. Mr. Cahill made mention of an ordinance in Springfield, IL that states that an applicant for a demolition permit must prove that the structure to be demolished is not historically significant, suggesting that this might also be a good idea for Urbana. Ms. Novak asked if the implementation of the aspects of the Comprehensive Plan relating to historic preservation would be a City Staff-led project and if the Commission would be the governmental body dealing with implementation. Mr. Myers answered in the affirmative to both questions.

### **Planning for the Stucco Workshop, May 2006**

Rebecca Bicksler presented an update to the Commission on the progress of the Stucco Workshop. She stated that the date of May 21, 2006 had been set and that the Urbana Park District’s Phillips Recreation Center had been reserved for part of the day’s activities (or all of the day’s activities, should inclement weather become a factor). Ms. Bicksler also reported that Steve Halfar, of Halfar Masonry, would be able to attend the workshop to present demonstrations on the repair of damaged stucco.

## **10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

With regards to Mr. Stohr’s statements to the Commission earlier in the meeting, Mr. Myers stated that he would confer with William Gray, Director of Urbana Public Works, regarding Mr. Stohr’s concerns about the brick sidewalks in the east Urbana neighborhood.

**11. STAFF REPORT**

There was none.

**12. STUDY SESSION**

There was none.

**13. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Cahill announced that the Preservation and Conservation Association (P.A.C.A.) is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference in Chicago on April 5<sup>th</sup> through the 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006 was also announced (Commissioners had received conference and registration information with their informational packets for this meeting). Mr. Dossett announced that H.E.U.N.A. would hold its annual picnic on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006 and that the group may also organize a neighborhood walk, coinciding with the picnic.

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Zangerl moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Rose seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Novak at 8:42 p.m.

Submitted,

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Robert Myers, Planning Division Manager