

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: May 5, 2010

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: City Council Chamber, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois

MEMBERS PRESENT: Scott Dossett, Trent Shepard, Kim Smith, Mary Stuart

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Alice Novak, Joan Stolz, Art Zangerl

STAFF PRESENT: Robert Myers, Planning Division Manager; Rebecca Bird, Planner I; Tony Weck, Recording Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Dan Lanterman, Lauren Nurse, Brian Albrecht, Malcolm Davis, Gale Davis, Carolyn Baxley, Sergio Mendoza, Karen Kummer, Carl Hill, Brian Adams, Linda Lorenz, Georgia Morgan, Ralph Langenheim

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by acting Historic Preservation Commission Chair, Trent Shepard. Roll was taken and a quorum was declared.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

It was proposed that the Old Business portion of the agenda be moved to take place following the public hearing for Case #HP-2010-L-01. With no objections this agenda change was made.

3. APPROVAL OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes of the April 7, 2010 meeting. Mr. Dossett made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. Upon a vote, the Commission unanimously approved the April 7 minutes as presented.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

A Historic Landmark Preference Form, dated April 29, 2010 and signed by Howard M. Neuger on behalf of the property owner, Equity Asset Investments, was distributed to Historic Preservation Commission members and City staff. The form indicates that Equity Asset Investments objects to

designating their property at 209 S Broadway Avenue as a local historic landmark. A letter detailing their objection to designation is attached.

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Noting that the public would have an opportunity to speak about the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel landmark nomination at that point on the agenda, Mr. Shepard asked if anyone in the audience wished to address the Commission on any issue.

Carolyn Baxley, 510 W Main St, Urbana, addressed the Commission. She favors the nomination to designate the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel as a local landmark. She encouraged the Commission to approve landmark status for this property.

Malcolm Davis, 710 W Green St, Urbana, next addressed the Commission. Mr. Davis stated that his father was the president of the company that built the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel. He noted that his family had known the architect, Joseph W. Royer, and that Mr. Royer shopped at his father's grocery store. Mr. Davis recalled money being raised, largely through the sale of stock, to build the hotel.

Gale Davis, 708 W Green, next addressed the Commission. He identified himself as the son of the previous speaker. He noted that his family has lived on Green Street in Urbana for 100 years. He also noted that he was in the business of restoring old houses and wished the Commission success in landmarking the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel.

No others wished to speak at this point in the agenda.

6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

- **Case #HP-2010-L-01, 209 South Broadway Avenue (Urbana-Lincoln Hotel), Public Hearing for a Historic Landmark Application, Brian Adams, Applicant**

Mr. Shepard opened the public hearing. He outlined the procedures for the case and then asked for the City staff report.

Mr. Myers presented the staff report. Mr. Myers gave an overview on the background of this case. At its April 7, 2010 meeting, the Commission made a preliminary determination that the subject property in this case qualified for local landmark status under criteria a), b), c), d), and e) of Section XII-5.C of the *Urbana Zoning Ordinance*.

The Commission's task tonight is to hold a public hearing and recommend to the Urbana City Council whether or not the subject property should be designated as a local historic landmark. In order to proceed to the City Council, all four commissioners present tonight must vote to recommend approval, and because of the property owner's objection, two-thirds of the Council members holding office must vote in favor in order for the application to be approved.

He further noted that an issue for consideration is the effect that such designation would have on the financial viability of the property. Historic buildings must have a viable use in order to be financially successful and maintained for the building's long-term survival. Mr. Myers further noted that Marine Bank, the sole member of Equity Asset Investments, LLC and current owner of the property, has had a financial relationship with the property since the 1990s. Marine Bank has over the years held a mortgage on the property has twice filed foreclosure on the same and has once taken over due to the bankruptcy of the then owner.

Further, Mr. Myers noted that Marine Bank has been attempting to sell the property since it took ownership and that City staff have worked with Marine Bank to assemble an incentive package for potential buyers. The incentive package could include a significant public investment in the property in the form of tax increment financing funds. In order for a buyer to use City incentives, the buyer would need to enter into a development agreement with the City, which could include provisions for protecting the building. Lastly, Mr. Myers noted that preservation incentives for a potential buyer include the 20% Federal historic preservation tax credit for which the property now qualifies.

Mr. Myers advised the Commission that in its recommendation to the City Council it may either recommend that the application be approved or denied. He noted that the Commission's recommendation would be forwarded to the City Council along with a summary of the evidence presented at this hearing and the Commission's findings with regards to this case. He further noted that the City Council is expected to consider the Commission's recommendation at its May 17, 2010 meeting.

City staff's recommendations in this case were as follows: that City staff concurs with the determination made by the Commission at its April 7, 2010 meeting that the subject property qualifies for local historic landmark designation based on criteria a, b, c, d, and e of Section XII-5.C of the *Urbana Zoning Ordinance*. Staff continued to support landmark designation of the hotel on a technical basis. However, the Mayor and City Council have given clear direction to staff that re-occupancy of the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel is a top priority for the City. Staff is currently working with a potential purchaser of the property who seeks to own and operate it as an independent boutique hotel and conference center. Given the current condition of the subject property the City of Urbana would need to be a major financial partner in the proposed rehabilitation. Until the specific needs and concerns of the potential purchaser can be determined with respect to historic preservation, staff cannot provide a recommendation regarding the historic landmark designation of the property. It will be important for the City Council to have the ability to assess the proposed designation in concert with the anticipated redevelopment agreement with the potential purchaser. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission complete its review and recommendation within the required period of time and forward the case to the City Council for further evaluation and a final determination.

Following the staff report Mr. Shepard asked if the applicant in this case wished to address the Commission. Brian Adams, 412 W Elm Street, addressed the Commission. Mr. Adams gave a PowerPoint presentation which included background on the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel and other examples of the work of Joseph Royer. More than 100 buildings designed by Joseph Royer have been identified in Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa. Only two of these buildings were hotels, both of which are in Urbana (Urbana-Lincoln Hotel and Lincoln Lodge). His presentation also included examples

of historic hotels which have been restored and operated successfully, including several which are part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Historic Hotels of America program.

Following Mr. Adams's presentation, Mr. Shepard asked if any opponents to application wished to question the applicant. There were none.

Mr. Shepard then asked if anyone in the audience wished to address the Commission as a proponent of the nomination for local landmark designation.

Karen Kummer, 1104 Devonshire, Champaign, addressed the Commission in support of the nomination. She stated that Lincoln Square Village and the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel are together listed in the National Register of Historic Places as having national significance. Less than 2% of National Register properties are listed as being nationally significant. If the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel is lost, it would not only be a huge loss but also greatly undermine the integrity of the remainder of this nationally-significant property.

Mr. Shepard then asked if the representative of the property owner wished to address the Commission. Dan Lanterman, Assistant General Counsel for Marine Bank, addressed the Commission. Equity Assets, Inc. and its managing company, Marine Bank, oppose the nomination and designation of the subject property as a local historic landmark. He noted that Marine Bank is a "forced owner" of the subject property as a result of the most recent owner's bankruptcy. Marine Bank is concerned that landmark designation would hinder the sale of the property. Specifically, Mr. Lanterman noted Marine Bank's concerns that restrictions on renovation of the property may result from landmark designation, thus making it more difficult to market and sell. Although local landmark designation would only apply to exterior changes, using the Federal historic tax credit would apply to both interior and exterior building changes.

Mr. Shepard then asked if there were any questions for Mr. Lanterman from the Commission. Ms. Stuart clarified that local historic landmark designation would apply to the exterior of the building only. Ms. Stuart also inquired as to what specific exterior changes were being recommended to Marine Bank by an architect that would be impacted by landmark designation. Mr. Lanterman replied that there were no specific changes were yet being recommended but that a future owner needs the flexibility to make changes necessary to make the property financially successful.

Mr. Shepard then asked if anyone in the audience wished to address the Commission as an opponent to the nomination of the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel. Carl Hill, 1913 Trails Drive, addressed the Commission. Noting his experience as a developer and builder in the Urbana area, he stated that the timing is not good for designation of the property as a local historic landmark. It might be appropriate at a later time, but he opposes designation before the property has been sold when the needs of a new owner are not yet known.

With no further comments from opponents to the nomination, Mr. Shepard asked if the applicant in this case would like respond to any comments or questions given by anyone else following his initial presentation. Brian Adams briefly clarified two points Mr. Lanterman made about Mr. Adams' presentation.

Mr. Shepard asked if Mr. Lanterman wished to respond to any of Mr. Adams's previous statements. Mr. Lanterman briefly responded.

With no further public input, Mr. Shepard then called for Commission discussion of the case, asking if any Commissioner present would like to make a motion in regards to the same. Mr. Dossett made and read the following motion in its entirety:

Pursuant to Historic Preservation Case no. HP-2010-L-01, the Historic Preservation Commission recommends the Urbana City Council approve the Historic Landmark Nomination for the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel located at 209 South Broadway Avenue.

Considerations include:

- 1. Section XII-5.F.2.a of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance provides the City of Urbana the authority to designate local landmarks and historic districts with the stated purpose to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the community.*
- 2. The City of Urbana on February 16, 2010 received a complete application to designate the property located at 209 South Broadway Avenue as a local landmark.*
- 3. The property owner sent a letter of opposition to the nomination on April 5, 2010.*
- 4. On April 7, 2010, the Historic Preservation Commission made a preliminary determination that the subject property qualified for designation as a local landmark under criteria a, b, c, d, and e (Section XII-5.C of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance).*
- 5. On April 23, 2010, the property owner sent a revised letter of opposition.*
- 6. The property located at 209 South Broadway Avenue and known as the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel was constructed in 1923 in the Tudor Revival architectural style.*
- 7. Criteria for Designation of a Landmark A - The Urbana-Lincoln Hotel has significant value as part of the architectural, civic, cultural, economic, political, and social heritage of the community. The hotel has been a downtown landmark since its opening in 1924. Additionally, the building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places based on its architectural and commercial significance. Being such a prominent building in the heart of the City, it has been considered architecturally significant throughout its history.*
- 8. Criteria for Designation of a Landmark B – The Urbana-Lincoln Hotel is associated with important people in national, state, and local history. The hotel was designed by Joseph W. Royer, prominent local architect. The hotel is also a symbolic link to Abraham Lincoln’s tenure as a lawyer in Urbana.*
- 9. Criteria for Designation of a Landmark C – The Urbana-Lincoln Hotel is representative of the distinguishing characteristics of the Tudor Revival architectural style inherently valuable for the study of a period, style, craftsmanship, and method of construction and retains sufficient integrity to well convey a sense of time and place. The Tudor Revival architectural style is one of the period revival styles popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Later changes have not appreciably inhibited the public’s ability to perceive the property’s historic character, and the property retains a sufficient degree of integrity.*
- 10. Criteria for Designation of a Landmark D – The Urbana-Lincoln Hotel is a notable work of a master architect whose individual genius has influenced an area. The hotel was designed by Joseph William Royer, Urbana’s most prominent architect. Local buildings designed by Royer include the Champaign County Courthouse, the Urbana High School, the Urbana Free Library, and the Urbana Post Office. The City of Urbana recently created the Joseph W. Royer Arts and Architecture District to commemorate Royer’s historic and architectural heritage. Moreover, two of the City’s historic landmarks are Royer buildings and the City has a Royer Historic District.*

11. *Criteria for Designation of a Landmark E – The Urbana-Lincoln Hotel is an identifiable and familiar visual feature in the community owing to its physical characteristics and its unique location in the heart of downtown Urbana.*

In addition we note that:

1. *The Urbana-Lincoln Hotel is not a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure.*
2. *The Urbana-Lincoln Hotel is not known to be located in an area that has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.*
3. *In their 2010 City Council Goals, the Urbana City Council identified restoring the property as a viable hotel and conference center while respecting its historic character as an important strategy for creating a vibrant, innovative downtown (2010 City Council Goals, goal 4, strategy F, page 4).*

Ms. Stuart seconded the motion.

The Commission briefly discussed the case after which Mr. Shepard asked for a roll call vote. Roll was taken and the votes were as follows:

Dossett – yes
Shepard – yes
Smith – yes
Stuart – yes

With all Commissioners present in favor, the motion carried unanimously. With no further questions or discussion, Mr. Shepard closed the public hearing for this case. Mr. Myers noted that this case was to be considered by the City Council at its May 17, 2010 meeting.

8. OLD BUSINESS

- **Draft revisions to Article XII, Historic Preservation, of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance**

Mr. Shepard asked for the staff report for this agenda item. Ms. Bird presented the staff report to the Commission, outlining revisions made to the draft at the request of the Historic Preservation Commission at its last meeting. It was the recommendation of staff that the Commission forward a recommendation of approval to the Urbana Plan Commission as outlined in the staff memorandum dated March 31, 2010, as well as the changes outlined in the present staff memorandum.

Ms. Smith asked for the definition of the word “appurtenances” as included in the text. Staff offered to clarify the term or add a definition before forwarding to the Plan Commission.

With no further discussion, Ms. Smith made a motion that the Commission forward a recommendation of approval with a provision that the definition of “appurtenances” be clarified.

Mr. Dossett seconded the motion.

With no further discussion, Mr. Shepard asked for a roll call vote. Roll was taken and the votes were as follows:

Dossett – yes
Shepard – yes
Smith – yes
Stuart – yes

With all Commissioners present in favor, the motion carried unanimously and the proposed text amendments were forwarded to the Urbana Plan Commission for approval.

9. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

There was nothing to report.

11. STAFF REPORT

Ms. Bird reported that the Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA) has awarded John Cronan, the owner of 303 West High Street; the City of Urbana Community Development Services Department; and the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission a Heritage Award for the house unveiling workshop and subsequent rehabilitation of the exterior of 303 W. High Street. Everyone was very appreciative.

12. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Shepard announced that May is National Preservation Month.

14. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business Mr. Dossett moved that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Stuart seconded the motion. With all Commission members in favor the meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Submitted by:

Robert Myers, AICP
Planning Division Manager