

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: September 1, 2010

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Scott Dossett, Alice Novak, Trent Shepard, Kim Smith, Joan Stolz, Mary Stuart

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Robert Myers, Planning Division Manager; Rebecca Bird, Planner I; Ronald D. O’Neal Jr., City Attorney; Sukiya J. Robinson, Recording Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Addie Williams, Barbara Tatum, Rev B.J. Tatum, Odessa Taylor, Glen Stanko, Albert Williams, Brian Albrecht, Meg Miller, Linda Lorenz, Lori West, Ritchie Drennen, Charles Pettigrew, Mark Jones, James Lusk, Brandon Trice, Wally Wynn, Lakeith Brooks, Kimberly Brown-Riley, John Dorsey, Gina Pagliuso, Karen Kummer, Jeff Johnson, David Seyler, Alicia Lowery, Willie T. Summerville, Brian Adams, Mattie Gray, Leonard Gray, Darrel Foste, Antoine Gray

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

Urbana Historic Preservation Commission Chair, Alice Novak, called the meeting to order at 7:07 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

The minutes of the August 10, 2010 Historic Preservation Commission Special Meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Dossett moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Smith seconded the motion to approve. Mr. Shepard then asked for a correction to the minutes. He commented on the correction to minutes requested by Mr. Dossett at the August 10th meeting. Mr. Shepard stated the part referring to “the external of the house” was unclear. Mr. Dossett agreed that the words, “the

external” should be eliminated from the minutes. Ms. Novak asked if there was a friendly amendment to the motion and a second. Mr. Dossett and Mr. Shepard confirmed. The August 10th minutes, as corrected, were approved by unanimous vote.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Ms. Novak informed the audience that they were welcome to speak generally on historic preservation issues at that time, but if interested in speaking about the Eli Halberstadt House they might prefer to speak during the official public hearing coming up later in the agenda. If people choose to speak during the hearing they may be subject to questioning by opponents and proponents of the case. But if they chose to speak during this portion of the meeting their comments would not be a part of the official public hearing record.

No one in the audience indicated they wished to speak, and Ms. Novak proceeded to the next agenda item.

6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

Case No. HP-2010-L-02: A request to designate 104 North Central Avenue (Eli Halberstadt House) as a local historic landmark, Brian Adams applicant (Public Hearing)

Ms. Novak introduced this case. She first gave a brief idea of how a public hearing is conducted under the bylaws. Ms. Novak reviewed the procedures and order of the public hearing. Anyone wishing to speak should understand that they may be questioned by the property owner or applicant. The Commission is to consider the criteria that are in the historic preservation ordinance. The Commission’s authority in this case was to recommend approval or denial of the application to the City Council. She then asked for City staff’s report on this case.

Rebecca Bird, Planner I, presented the staff report for this case. She introduced the case and stated that the Historic Preservation Commission made a preliminary determination at their July 7, 2010 meeting that the property qualified for designation as a local landmark under Criteria a, b, and c of Section XII-5.C of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance requires that the Commission hold a public hearing within 45 days of the preliminary determination. The public hearing was opened on August 10 but continued until this meeting at the request of the property owner’s attorney. If the application for designation should be approved, the property owner would be required to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission for future changes to the exterior of the property.

Ms. Bird then provided information on the house itself. She stated that the house had been recognized as having architectural significance in the State of Illinois Survey (1971), Illinois Historic Structures Survey (1975), Urbana Preservation Study (1975) and PACA Downtown to Campus Survey (1985). On July 7, 2010, the Historic Preservation Commission made a

preliminary determination under the designation criteria provided in Section XII-5.c of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance. The staff report summarizes the preliminary determination. The options for the Historic Preservation Commission are to make a recommendation to the City Council that the application be approved or denied. The City council is expected to consider recommendation at their September 20th meeting. Based on the application and staff's findings, City staff recommended that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend approval.

Ms. Novak asked if there were any questions from the Commission for Ms. Bird. There were none.

Ms. Novak called upon the applicant, Brian Adams, to address the Commission if he wished. He summarized why he felt the Halberstadt house is worthy of landmarking and his reasons for submitting the nomination. Ms. Novak then asked if Mr. Adams had any additional evidence or witnesses that he would like to present. Mr. Adams called on Karen Kummer, Champaign County Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA).

Karen Kummer agreed with the architectural description provided in the nomination submitted by Mr. Adams. She summarized the architectural style, design, and integrity of the house. She stated it is worthy of landmark designation and meets the criteria as expressed in the Ordinance.

With no further witnesses for Mr. Adams, Ms. Novak then requested that they both remain at the table and asked if the property owner had any questions for them.

Glen Stanko, attorney for the property owner, asked Mr. Adams a series of questions to determine his interest in the Halberstadt House. Why did Mr. Adams chose this point in time to nominate the Halberstadt House when he has lived in the area for about 10 years?

Mr. Adams responded that the Halberstadt House is more than visible now that the Urbana Armory building has been removed. Mr. Stanko then asked how long Mr. Adams had been aware of the house. Mr. Adams stated he had been aware of it even before he purchased his own house. Mr. Stanko asked Mr. Adams what his occupation was and Mr. Adams stated he was there to talk about the house and not his personal information. Ms. Novak clarified that Mr. Adams should answer questions at a level of detail he felt comfortable with. Mr. Adams stated that he is an archaeologist by training and that he enlisted Mr. Chenail, someone interested in architecture, to help with the description of the house in the nomination. Mr. Stanko then asked Mr. Adams about a board he served on for the City of Urbana. Ms. Novak once again encouraged Mr. Stanko to keep his questions to things specifically relevant to the case. Mr. Stanko confirmed that Mr. Adams is a member of PACA. Mr. Adams stated he was not aware of the internal condition of the house. He also stated that he felt the whole house has integrity, not just the front porch. Mr. Stanko asked if Mr. Adams had any prior knowledge of the church's plans to demolish the house before filing the application. Mr. Adams replied he did not. Mr. Stanko had no further questions for Mr. Adams.

Ms. Novak next proceeded to public comments and turned her attention to the public speaking cards. She stated she would begin calling the people who were in support up to speak. Chris Berti, 411 W. Nevada, spoke in support of the landmark designation based on its architectural and historic significance. Mr. Stanko asked if Mr. Berti resided in the neighborhood of the house. Mr. Berti stated he lives a few blocks away. Mr. Stanko then asked if he owned his property and if

it was landmarked. Mr. Berti stated he does own his property, but it is not landmarked. Mr. Stanko asked how Mr. Berti would feel about the rules changing for his own property after he purchased it, that anyone can nominate a house for landmarking even if they are not the owner, and despite the owner's original intentions for the house. Mr. Berti stated the rules had not been changed, simply put into place. He felt that had our community done that a long time ago there would be more landmarked properties. Mr. Stanko had no further questions for Mr. Berti.

John Dorsey, 301 W. Locust, spoke in support of the Halberstadt House landmark designation and hoped that the property could be restored to help preserve the integrity of that neighborhood. He lives less than a block away from the property and has seen the house decline in condition. Mr. Stanko asked if Mr. Dorsey felt the church has done some good things in that neighborhood. Mr. Dorsey stated the church has done good things, but the Halbertstadt house has not been maintained as other homeowners in the neighborhood have done. Mr. Stanko asked if the lack of maintenance was true before the church acquired the property. Mr. Dorsey answered no. Mr. Stanko asked if Mr. Dorsey knew who owned the property before Canaan Baptist. Mr. Dorsey answered no. Mr. Stanko had no further questions for Mr. Dorsey.

Linda Lorenz, 409 W High St, spoke in support of the Halberstadt House landmark designation, expressing the necessity to retain the beauty of the neighborhood. Mr. Stanko verified the location of Ms. Lorenz's house and its distance from the Halberstadt House. He asked if her house had been landmarked. She stated there had been some alterations so it may not qualify for landmarking. Mr. Stanko had no further questions for Ms. Lorenz.

Gina Pagliuso, 806 S. Vine, spoke in support of the Halberstadt House landmark designation. She stated she really enjoys viewing old houses and asks that the church reconsider its plan to demolish and that the house be landmarked. Mr. Stanko noted that Ms. Pagliuso lives a fair distance from the house. She agreed, but stated she drives by the house every day. He asked how long she had been aware of the house. She stated she has lived in the town for two years. Mr. Stanko had no further questions for Ms. Pagliuso.

Carolyn Baxley, 510 W Main St, spoke in support of the Halberstadt House landmark designation based on its wonderful architecture and historical value. Ms. Baxley collected 30 signatures in an hour of people who are in support of landmarking the house. She presented staff with the petition.

Mr. Stanko confirmed Ms. Baxley's active status in historic preservation issues in this city and asked if her house was landmarked. Ms. Baxley stated no. He then asked if the Halberstadt House is such an important house, why has there been such a delay in the landmark designation nomination? Ms. Baxley stated that the ordinance is fairly new and the process of nominating a house takes a lot of time and research that most people don't have. Mr. Stanko asked how far she resided from Canaan Baptist Church. She stated she lives about a block away. He asked if she felt Canaan has done positive things in the neighborhood. She stated that they have done some positive things, but also some negative things such as lack of property upkeep. Mr. Stanko asked what her perceptions of the church's parking issues were. Ms. Baxley summarized why she doesn't think there is a problem with parking. Mr. Stanko had no further questions for Ms. Baxley.

Ms. Novak stated she had no further public input cards in support of the designation.

Darrel Foste, 409 W. Main St, stated he did fill out a card and wanted to speak as neutral in the case of the landmark designation. He explained his issue was not with the structure itself, but the land it is sitting on. He stated that this house is constructed right next to Boneyard Creek, and ground subsidence along Boneyard Creek is making repair impossible in some cases. His own house a block away has had serious problems with shifting foundation and walls due to underground subsidence. It's impractical to ask property owners in this situation to keep sinking money into properties in this situation. Mr. Stanko had no questions for Mr. Foste.

Ms. Novak asked if there was anyone else who wished to speak as a proponent of the case. There were none.

Ms. Novak then asked the property owner and his representative to speak at this time. She also stated that Mr. Adams was welcome to remain at the table.

Mr. Stanko addressed the Commission. In his opening statement he discussed the origin and impact of the church on the community, the types of additional properties purchased by the church over the years, and their significant parking issues. He stated that the Halberstadt House specifically was bought with the intent to demolish and use for additional parking. He noted that the church invested money and intended to restore the Urbana Armory to use for its academy but it was demolished at the direction of the City of Urbana. Ironically, the church now faces landmark status on a house they bought specifically to demolish for development purposes. Mr. Stanko stated he would talk about the condition of the house, what maintenance has been done over the years, and the expense to further maintain it. He stated that he hoped the Commission would choose not to recommend approval after hearing all the evidence. He then presented a packet of exhibits to the Commission.

After asking Mr. Stanko how long he would need to present his case, Ms. Novak called for a two minute recess. Following the recess Ms. Novak called the meeting back to order.

Mr. Stanko called his first witness, Rev. B. J. Tatum, Canaan Baptist Church. Mr. Stanko asked general questions regarding the church's background. Rev. Tatum summarized the church background and history in terms of its location and use. The church was purchased in 1977. Mr. Stanko then identified on a map the church and nearby properties owned by Canaan Baptist Church, and how each property is used. Mr. Stanko asked if the church had been renovated over time. Rev. Tatum described in detail the renovations that had taken place. Mr. Stanko asked how many members Canaan Baptist Church has on its roster. Rev. Tatum stated the church sees about 500 to 700 people a week. That includes Sunday services as well as all activities offered through the week. Mr. Stanko then asked about the number and types of services offered on Sundays and specific questions regarding programs offered by the church. Rev. Tatum described the different types and times of the Sunday services as well as the many activities and ministries provided by the church. He gave reasons why the church provides the services and programs that it does.

Mr. Stanko then asked about the long-term plans for the property in question. Rev. Tatum stated that the property were purchased for demolition and use for parking. That is still the present plan. Mr. Stanko asked if anyone was aware of the historic nature of the Halberstadt House when it was purchased. Rev. Tatum stated that the previous owner did not give any historical background on the

house. He also added that the owners of all of the additional properties purchased by the church came to the church and offered to sell their property in order to assist the church with its needs. Mr. Stanko asked if parking had been a longstanding issue for the church. Rev. Tatum described many of the problems that exist due to lack of parking. He stated that parking issues have deterred some people from attending the church.

Mr. Stanko asked when and in what condition was the house when it was purchased. Rev. Tatum stated it was purchased in June 1999 and was in terrible shape at the time. He summarized the many repairs and renovations done to the property, and the large amount of man-hours required to complete this work. Mr. Stanko referenced pictures in the exhibit packet as Rev. Tatum explained the state of the house. In the exhibit packet Mr. Stanko called attention to a written quote to demolish the house dated February 18, 2010, and that the church was then beginning the demolition process. Rev. Tatum stated that one of the reasons they had not demolished it yet was because there were three tenants whose leases had not yet expired. They were waiting until the leases were up before having the house demolished. Mr. Stanko asked if the church has tried to maintain this house since the time of purchase. Rev. Tatum stated that they have, but while doing what needed to be done to the house, they did not plan to invest a lot of money into it since it was purchased for the purpose of demolition. Mr. Stanko asked if the church has spent a significant amount of money repairing and maintaining the house. Rev. Tatum stated yes. Mr. Stanko asked if the church has gotten estimates on some repairs needed for the house. Rev. Tatum stated yes. Mr. Stanko noted on the inspection report from Bash/Pepper Roofing Company, the inspector concluded it would be too costly to repair this building. Mr. Stanko reviewed some of the estimates done by other contractors. Mr. Stanko asked if refurbishing and renting out the house is consistent with the mission of the church. Rev. Tatum stated that it is not, because his church is investing in people, and for them to do anything that distracts from that is not in line with their mission. The money spent to repair or renovate the house would take away from empowering people. Mr. Stanko asked if Rev. Tatum took over a mortgage when he purchased the house, and had obligations to pay it down. Rev. Tatum stated yes. Mr. Stanko asked if that was another reason the demolition has been delayed. Rev. Tatum stated yes, that the congregation has sacrificed to purchase the property that was intended for demolition to provide parking. He said the church is not against preservation as evidenced by over \$200,000 spent on plans to renovate the Urbana Armory Building. Mr. Stanko asked if someone were to ask to have the house moved would Rev. Tatum have a problem with that. Rev. Tatum stated no, in fact he would encourage that. Mr. Stanko asked if he saw the property as being a part of the future expansion of the church, whether as a parking lot or some other structure. Rev. Tatum stated yes.

Mr. Stanko returned to the topic of the Urbana Armory. He asked Rev. Tatum about the money put into the building and the purpose for the building at the time of purchase. Rev. Tatum described in detail the investment and plans for the building along with problems encountered in proceeding. Rev. Tatum commented how ironic it was that the church spent so much money to preserve the Armory which ended up being demolished, and now they are fighting over a building that was purchased solely for the purpose of demolition. Mr. Stanko asked if the lot where the Armory was located could be of use to the church. Rev. Tatum stated since it's located in a flood zone, it would not be cost effective to build anything on it. The most cost effective option would be to tear down the Halberstadt House and combine the two, providing access from three streets.

Mr. Stanko asked if Rev. Tatum had anything else to say regarding the property or the plans to landmark it that hadn't been discussed. Rev. Tatum stated no, but wanted to comment on the intrusive nature of this nomination. He stated that he was offended by how the nomination was carried out. The application was not brought to the church directly before submittal. It's the height of insensitivity to just be sent letters and felt the church should have been approached directly. Rev. Tatum stated there should be a revision to this ordinance that allows anyone to nominate a property that they do not own or have an interest in. Mr. Stanko had no further questions for Rev. Tatum.

Ms. Novak asked Mr. Stanko if he had any additional evidence or witnesses.

Mr. Stanko stated he wanted the Commission to take notice of what the zoning of this property was and is. It was rezoned after the Downtown to Campus Plan from B-4 (Central Business District) to R-5 (Medium High Density Multiple-Family Residential). He also wanted the Commission to note that it is located in the Boneyard Creek District and the floodplain. Mr. Stanko stated he had people in support of Canaan's position sign a statement, showing their opposition and reason for opposition. He submitted them to Ms. Bird as Exhibit 25 and 26. Mr. Stanko's last exhibit included a letter from Albert Williams.

Ms. Novak asked Mr. Adams if he had any questions. Mr. Adams stated that there are a number of historic buildings in our city that may not be recognized as such, so the Ordinance in place allows them to be recognized and remain a part of the city. He acknowledged the work done by Canaan in the community and hoped that they would realize the structure is unique and rare and should be preserved. He also stated he did send a letter to the church regarding the nomination but never received a response.

Ms. Novak stated she would be calling additional opponents up and that Mr. Adams could remain at the table in the event he would like to question them. She read the names of people who chose not to speak but who opposed the application: Mattie Gray, Marion Knight, Mark Jones, Linda Randall, Wally Wynn, Kimberly Brown-Riley, Brandon Trice, Lori West, Charles Pettigrew, Ritchie Drennen, James Lusk, Lakeith Brooks, and Willie Summerville. Ms. Novak then called names of opponents who wished to speak

Jeff Johnson, a resident of Mahomet, but employed at BLDD Architects in Champaign, stated he was representing Canaan Baptist Church as well. He described himself as passionate for architecture and preservation but commented on the lack of discussion on people and the community. Mr. Johnson stated the Ordinance has value, but the issue becomes whether the value is with the people or a building. He stated he is not against historic preservation, but there would be more value in supporting the people at Canaan Church instead of preserving the Halberstadt House. The repairs needed for the house quoted by contractors are roughly \$100,000. That money would be about the cost of turning around the lives of 10 to 12 men through Canaan's Men's Safe House drug addiction program. The money going to repair the house would have to come from Canaan's other programs. Which one is more important for the community?

Albert Williams, representative of Canaan Church, 107 Goldenrod, Savoy, read a statement regarding the church's mission and intention for the property in the purchase.

Alisha Lowery, member of Canaan, addressed the Commission on behalf of the parishioners of the church. She commented on the ministries of the church and their impact on the community. She asked the Commission not to remove the church's option to expand and provide future opportunities for development. She asked the Commission to deny the request for landmark designation.

Ms. Novak asked if there was anyone else from either side who wished to speak. There were none.

Ms. Novak asked if Mr. Adams would like to make any summary statements as the nominator. Mr. Adams reiterated that in terms of the Ordinance, this house is a great historic and architectural value and is worthy of landmarking. The church does great work, but a lot of people in the neighborhood are interested in our history and architecture. The various interests of the community should be recognized and shared. Mr. Adams urged the Commission to support the nomination.

Mr. Stanko asked if he could add to earlier information by making a closing statement. Ms. Novak stated she would allow it but would also allow Mr. Adams to have the final word as per the bylaws.

Mr. Stanko shared his concern that the Commission has to look at criteria specified in the Ordinance, but he wants them to consider the discussion of the church's mission, the condition of the house, and the Church's development plans. He pointed to one of the criteria that the property be "worthy of" rehabilitation, restoration and preservation. He stated that a lot of the evidence presented raises doubts if it is indeed worthy of landmark designation. He understands there is a Certificate of Appropriateness and Certificate of Economic Hardship processes for demolition of landmarks, but why put Canaan Church through that? He concluded by referencing the map of Canaan's properties. The Halberstadt House is located right in the middle of their campus and development plan. He asked the Commission to consider all the things Canaan has done through its missions and development of the neighborhood.

Ms. Novak asked Mr. Adams if he had any closing remarks. Mr. Adams stated that one benefit of landmarking is for students and other people interested in studying architecture. Just as Canaan benefits the community, landmarking houses that have historical value can benefit people who have other interests in the community.

Ms. Novak asked for Commission discussion and/or motions.

Mr. Dossett made a motion that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the City Council that 104 N Central Avenue, the Eli Halberstadt House, be designated as a local landmark based on criteria a, b, and c of Section XII-5.C of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance: specifically that the property qualifies based on its documented significance as part of the architectural, civic, cultural, economic, educational, political and social heritage of the community; is associated with an important person in local history; and is representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period, style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials, and which retains a high degree of integrity.

Ms. Stuart seconded the motion.

Ms. Novak asked for any discussion by the Commission.

Mr. Shepard said it was difficult to ignore the architectural detail, integrity of the house, and the fact it was lived in by a former mayor of Urbana. He also commented on the location and setting. According to the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps Mr. Halberstadt's grain mill was on the opposite side of Boneyard Creek from the house. Given the wonderful historic integrity of the house today one can imagine looking across the creek and seeing his mill.

Ms. Smith commented that the mission and achievements of Canaan Baptist Church are wonderful. But a commissioner's role is to evaluate nominations for historic designations and make a recommendation to forward to the City Council. She stated that based on the criteria written in the Ordinance, the Halberstadt House meets several criteria. She stated that the house is a great representation of Italianate/Eastlake architectural styles, and it retains its original location, construction methods, design, and materials. Ms. Smith also commented on its representation of an important person in our community history. She stated that for these reasons she would vote in favor of the landmark designation.

Ms. Stolz stated that the consideration of criteria for historic landmark designation are specific and narrow and must be adhered to. She also commented that she understood the costly upkeep. She stated she would vote in favor of the landmark designation.

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

Mr. Dossett-yes
Ms. Novak-yes
Mr. Shepard-yes
Ms. Smith-yes
Ms. Stolz-yes
Ms. Stuart-yes

With all Commissioners in favor, the motion carried unanimously. Ms. Novak closed the public hearing.

Ms. Bird stated that this case is scheduled to go before the City Council on September 20 at 7:00 pm.

7. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

8. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

9. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

There were none.

11. STAFF REPORT

Ms. Bird reported on the following:

- **Certificate of Appropriateness for 312 West Green Street** was administratively reviewed and approved. The Certificate of Appropriateness was for painting and possible siding of the house.
- **Training Opportunities- Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference-** The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency will host a day long historic preservation training session in conjunction with the Building Expo at Navy Pier in downtown Chicago. Scholarships are available for attendees. Attendees will also receive a free entry ticket to the Building Expo. Additionally, NAPC has a one day Commission Assistance Mentoring Program (CAMP) in Dubuque, Iowa similar to the one Ms. Bird attended in Grand Rapids. There is a small budget for training of Commissioners and scholarships are also available. Ms. Bird requested for anyone interested in either opportunity to contact her.
- **The Historic Lincoln Hotel Landmark Nomination** was continued until the Committee of the Whole meeting on September 13, 2010 at 7:00 pm.
- **Study Session-** A study session on the benefits and challenges of historic preservation will be made before the Committee of the Whole meeting on September 13, 2010 at 6:00 pm.

12. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

14. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business Mr. Dossett moved that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. With all Commission members in favor, the meeting adjourned at 9:46 p.m.

Submitted,

Robert Myers, Planning Manager