

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING**

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**APPROVED**

**DATE:** April 6, 2011

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

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

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Scott Dossett, David Seyler, Trent Shepard, Kim Smith

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Alice Novak, Joan Stolz, Mary Stuart

**STAFF PRESENT:** Robert Myers, Planning Division Manager; Rebecca Bird, Planner I;

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Hira Aamir, Stewart Berlocher, George Gasyna, Terrance Hall, Linda Lorenz, Sarah Nixon

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

Urbana Historic Preservation Commission Vice-Chair, Kim Smith, called the meeting to order at 7:00 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 March 2, 2011 Historic Preservation Commission Meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Shepard asked that the names of the two commissioners noted as “absent” in the meeting minutes instead be noted as “excused.” Mr. Seyler moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Mr. Shepard seconded the motion. The March 6 minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

**4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

There were none.

**5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Ms. Smith informed the audience that they were welcome to speak on any matter at that time but noted that there would be an opportunity for public input on the public hearing later in the agenda. No one in the audience indicated they wished to speak. Ms. Smith proceeded to the next agenda item.

**6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

**7. OLD BUSINESS**

There was none.

**8. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**Case No. HP-2011-L-01: An application to designate 404 W. Illinois Street (Ezekial Boyden House) as a local historic landmark, Sarah Nixon and George Gasyna applicants.**

Ms. Smith opened the public hearing regarding this case and asked for the City staff report.

Ms. Bird presented the staff report to the Commission, outlining staff's findings regarding this case. Based on the application and analysis provided, staff recommended that the Historic Preservation Commission find that the landmark nomination for 404 W. Illinois Street conforms with criteria a) and b) in Section XII-5.C of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance and approve the application. She stated that because the application was submitted by the property owners, the Historic Preservation Commission has decision-making authority in this landmark application.

Commission questions to City staff were addressed.

Ms. Smith asked if the applicants, Sarah Nixon and George Gasyna, had any comments on the matter. They had none but said they were available for any questions.

Stewart Berlocher, author of the article, "An Illinois Lincoln Site Rediscovered: The Ezekial Boyden Home in Urbana" addressed the Commission. His research began as part of a project to identify all surviving Civil War era homes in Urbana shown on the 1869 Ruger Panoramic Map of Urbana. Along the way he discovered that 404 W. Illinois Street was a pre-Civil War house moved to this location a century ago, and that the home was connected with Abraham Lincoln. He asked that anyone possessing an original photograph of the house to contact him. Mr. Berlocher then answered questions from Staff and the Commission. He discussed the specific evidence he had uncovered that this house had been constructed about 1850, the evidence that Abraham Lincoln had visited and lodged at the house, and its relocation from 303 W. Elm Street between 1897 and 1900. An important clue was a 1914 article about Lincoln sites in Urbana which refers to the home and its significance. Other evidence includes a postmarked letter in the U.S. Library of Congress addressed

to Abraham Lincoln in care of Ezekial Boyden's residence and documentary references that Lincoln stayed at the Boyden House on September 24, 1858 during the Lincoln-Douglas Debates.

Robert Myers said that he should add that he had been invited by the owners to inspect the house on the interior, including in the attic and basement. Based on physical evidence, he believes the house predates the Civil War. This evidence includes mortise and tenon construction with adze marks showing on beams in the basement, roof decking exposed in the attic using varied width lumber boards up to 24-inches wide (indicating use of first generation timber), and early door hardware in a cupboard underneath the front staircase.

Ms. Smith asked if any other proponents wanted to address the Commission.

Linda Lorenz, 409 W. High St., spoke in support of the Ezekial Boyden House landmark designation. She complimented the current owners for better maintaining the house than previous owners and for being good neighbors.

Ms. Smith asked if anyone else wished to speak as a proponent of the case. There were none.

Ms. Smith then asked if there were any opponents to the nomination who wished to speak. There were none.

Ms. Smith asked if there was anyone else wished to speak. There were none.

Ms. Smith then opened up discussion from the Commission. The Commission briefly discussed the merits of the case.

Following discussion, Mr. Dossett made a motion that the historic landmark application for Case No. HP-2011-L-01 be affirmed by the Commission based on criteria a) and b) under Section XII-5.C of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance, based on the evidence presented and with the findings in the staff report. Mr. Seyler seconded the motion.

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

Dossett- Yes  
Seyler- Yes  
Shepard – Yes  
Smith- Yes

With all Commissioners present in favor, the motion carried unanimously and the historic landmark application for 404 W. Illinois was granted.

With no further discussion, Ms. Smith closed the public hearing for Case #HP-2011-L-01.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

There was none.

## 10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

There were none.

## 11. STAFF REPORT

Ms. Bird reported on the following:

- **The Urbana Landmark Hotel.** The final asphalt shingles for the hotel were approved within the allowances of the Certificate of Appropriateness. Work is expected to start next week.
- **Special Use Permit Application (202 S. Broadway).** The City Council reviewed and approved on April 4 an application to construct a 100-foot radio transmission tower for IMC's radio station (WRFU). Based on their questions and comments at that meeting, the City Council followed closely the comments of the Historic Preservation Commission and Plan Commission and made that part of their deliberations.
- **Statewide Preservation Conference** Mr. Myers reported that this conference themed "Old is Our New Green" will take place June 2-4, 2011 at Lewis & Clark Community College in Godfrey, Illinois. Registration can be completed through [www.iahpc.org](http://www.iahpc.org). He stated that a commissioner training track would be offered and that hoped that Urbana landmark commissioners would participate. Conference and travel expenses can be reimbursed through the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency up to \$400 per community.

## 12. STUDY SESSION

There was no study session.

## 13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Bird asked the Commission to start thinking of properties that should be included in the "100 Most Significant Structures" list, as funded by a CLG grant awarded by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. More details on this topic would be presented at the next meeting.

## 14. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business Mr. Dossett moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Shepard seconded the motion. With all Commission members in favor, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Submitted,

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Robert Myers, Planning Manager