

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE: January 6, 2021

DRAFT

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: City Council Chambers | Zoom Webinar

MEMBERS PRESENT David Hays, Alice Novak, Gina Pagliuso, Renee Pollock, Trent Shepard, Kim Smith

STAFF PRESENT City of Urbana (Host); Marcus Ricci, Planner II; Kat Trotter, Planner I; Liggett, Jason, UPTV Manager

OTHERS PRESENT Chris Enck

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

Chair Novak called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. with Mr. Hays attending at the City Council Chambers. All other members attended via Zoom. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared with all members present.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May 6, 2020 regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were presented for approval. Ms. Pagliuso noted a change to the roll call vote for Case No. HP-2020-EH-01. Ms. Novak had abstained, not voted yes. Mr. Shepard moved to approve the minutes as amended. Ms. Pollock seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as corrected by unanimous voice vote.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Chris Enck raised his hand to address the Historic Preservation Commission. He mentioned that he recently took over management of the Royer House located at 801 West Oregon Street. He is

excited to be tackling some of the deferred maintenance of the house. He stated that he would be talking with the Historic Preservation Commission and City staff more in the future about improving the exterior of the house.

6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

7. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

8. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

HP-2020-COA-07 – A request by Joan Price for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 803 West Main Street to replace a broken second-story front easement window with a double-hung window.

Chair Novak opened the public hearing for Case No. HP-2020-COA-07. Kat Trotter, Planner I, presented the staff report for this case. She stated the purpose for the proposed request, which is to replace an existing broken second story casement window with a double-hung window. She noted the location of the subject property. She reviewed the requirements for a Certificate of Appropriateness according to Section XII-6.C of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance. She read the options of the Historic Preservation Commission and presented City staff's recommendation for approval. She stated that the applicant was available to answer questions.

Chair Novak opened the hearing for public input. She asked if any members of the Commission had questions for City staff.

Chair Novak asked for clarification on the type of existing window that would be replaced with the type of replacement window. Mr. Shepard stated that one existing double-casement window would be replaced with one double-hung window.

Chair Novak asked if the applicant had access to the balcony on the second floor. Ms. Trotter replied no. The applicant had debated installing a door to allow them to walk out onto the front porch. She had decided against it because of financial reasons.

With no further questions for City staff, Chair Novak opened the hearing for public input.

Joan Price, applicant, stated that she had previously received approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission to install a door; however, she found it to be a much more expensive proposition than she had realized. A Pella representative came out and recommended the double-hung window, and it is more economically feasible for her. She added that since then she had found someone who can repair the existing window, which she planned to pursue. She would like to get approval of the proposed Certificate of Appropriateness in case the person cannot fix the existing window.

Mr. Shepard stated that he felt it would look better with the double-hung window so it would match the other existing windows on the second floor. Ms. Price stated that she believed there was a door there at one time, and it was replaced with the existing window. She said that while you try not to change the appearance when you make improvements, sometimes, you have to make changes.

Ms. Pagliuso inquired about the details of the replacement window. Ms. Price stated that she had told Pella to make the window appear to be similar to the other windows. The exterior appearance was not to change. Ms. Pagliuso believed that the primed aluminum would match the storms on the other windows.

Ms. Pagliuso expressed concern that the egress of the proposed replacement window would not meet the typical United States egress requirements. Ms. Price explained that it was a loft area where the existing window is located, not a bedroom.

With no further input from the audience, Chair Novak closed the public input portion and opened it for discussion and/or motion(s) by the Commission.

Mr. Hays moved to approve Case No. HP-2020-COA-07 as presented. Ms. Smith seconded the motion.

Marcus Ricci, Planner II, suggested that the Historic Preservation Commission include language in the motion to allow the applicant the ability to repair the existing window, if possible. Mr. Hays questioned if the suggestion to amend the motion was because City staff was not aware whether repairing the window would be considered a major or minor work. Mr. Ricci explained that repairing the existing window with new glass would be a minor work that could be administratively reviewed and approved by the Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission and the Zoning Administrator. Replacement of the existing window with a double-hung window would be a major work. If the Historic Preservation Commission does not include language in their motion to approve to include the ability to repair the window with like-for-like, then City staff would need to prepare paperwork for Alice Novak, Chair of Historic Preservation Commission, and Kevin Garcia, Acting Zoning Administrator, to sign.

Mr. Hays withdrew his motion for approval. He then moved that the Historic Preservation Commission approve Case No. HP-2020-COA-07 to allow the applicant to replace or repair the existing window. Ms. Smith seconded the motion.

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Mr. Hays	-	Yes	Ms. Novak	-	Yes
Ms. Pagliuso	-	Yes	Ms. Pollock	-	Yes
Mr. Shepard	-	Yes	Ms. Smith	-	Yes

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Shepard noted that he had similar windows that were fogged up, and he was happy to get them replaced when he did. Ms. Price agreed. She stated that they always looked dirty.

9. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

There were none.

11. STAFF REPORT

Marcus Ricci reviewed Certificate of Appropriateness and Economic Hardship cases from 2019 and 2020 that were processed as minor and major works. He presented an update for each case. He talked about work he noticed being done without approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness. These included the following:

1404 South Lincoln Avenue – Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority (now known as Chateau Normand)

Pierre Moulin, owner, installed rental signs in the front yard. City staff contacted him in February 2020 and plans to contact him again to either remove the signs or apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install compliant signs.

504 and 508 West Elm Street – Freeman House and Bills House

Jonah Weisskopf, owner of both properties, installed porch railings to meet insurance requirements. City staff contacted him in February 2020 about submitting an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness. City staff will contact him again. Ms. Pagliuso corrected the addresses and names of the houses, which are the Freeman House at 504 West Elm Street and the Sutton House at 502 West Elm Street.

612 West Green Street – Ricker House

The new owner replaced the asphalt shingles on the roof without seeking approval first. Since they replaced like-for-like, it would be considered a minor work. He contacted the new owners about submitting an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness and needs to follow up with them. Ms. Pagliuso stated that she noticed the owners replacing the roof after the hail storm that hit so she assumed the roof replacement was due to the storm.

Chair Novak asked when the new owners purchased the property. Mr. Ricci stated that he believed it was purchased in the spring or mid-summer of 2020. Ms. Novak mentioned that the Ricker House has a perpetual conservation easement with PACA.

Mr. Ricci suggested that they hold a tour of the Buena Vista Court Historic District once all of the improvements are made. They could have an actual walking tour if COVID is over; and if not, then they could possibly have a virtual tour. The homeowners deserve credit and recognition for trying to improve the houses and keep them in intact condition.

Mr. Shepard stated that he liked getting a report on the improvements made to the historic landmark and historic district properties. He suggested that City staff email the Commission members to let them know when any minor work is being done to one of these properties. Mr. Ricci replied that he

could send an email when an application for an improvement is submitted. The other members agreed that this would be beneficial.

12. STUDY SESSION

Outreach to Owners of Historic Landmarks and Contributing Properties in Historic Districts

Marcus Ricci, Planner II, expressed his concern about the current owners of Urbana's local historic landmarks and historic districts making improvements on the outside of the homes without getting approval first. He proposed a three-step Owner Education Program. Step One would be for City staff to create or update an existing brochure informing new owners what type of work could be performed without approval and what type of work would require approval before performing the work. Step Two would be to track ownership of the historic properties and send the welcome brochure to new property owners. Step 3 would be to send the owners a holiday or postcard as an annual reminder that their property is a historic property. Mr. Ricci stated that he needs to structure a semi-annual or quarterly monitoring visit – potentially complete with photos – to verify compliance status.

Ms. Novak thanked City staff for bringing the concern to their attention. It is a problem that any landmarking program has and no one deals with it very well. From a Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA) perspective, there are several properties within the Cities of Champaign and Urbana that are easement properties. There is not a regular monitoring process, so creating one is a good idea.

Mr. Hays suggested that instead of sending a reminder document during the holidays, they should send it out prior to the month of May, which is Historic Preservation Month. This would also serve as an invite to participate in the activities planned to celebrate the occasion. Mr. Ricci felt it was a good idea to tie the reminder to the Historic Preservation Month. Mr. Shepard applauded Mr. Ricci for coming up with the suggestion to send out a reminder.

Ms. Novak inquired about the Certified Local Government (CLG) report. Mr. Ricci replied that an annual CLG report is supposed to be done to not only list what work had been done but to certify the meetings held by the Historic Preservation Commission. To maintain CLG status, the Commission must meet a minimum of four times a year. Mr. Shepard stated that he would like to see a copy of the report when it is finished.

Ms. Pagliuso suggested that the Commission members take on some of the responsibility of monitoring historic landmark and district properties while they are out and about the City of Urbana. It could take one staff person a lot of time to monitor each property. Ms. Novak stated that this would be a good idea. Mr. Ricci asked for volunteers to arrange a task force to monitor the historic properties. Ms. Pagliuso volunteered.

Ms. Novak mentioned that there is a new development on the north side of Main Street.¹ They probably should have monitored the back façade of the historic properties along West Main Street

¹ This development is called "Gather" and is a residential development along the North Lincoln Avenue on the north and south sides of Clark Street. It includes townhouses, apartments, extended-stay rooms, and retail space.

while construction was occurring. Ms. Pagliuso stated that they removed the bricks from Clark Street. Mr. Ricci responded that the bricks were removed to allow for utility work to be performed. Public Works plans to repave the street with the bricks once the work is complete.

Mr. Shepard asked if Norman and Carolyn Baxley sold the Bills House located at 508 West Elm Street. Ms. Pagliuso stated that the Baxleys sold all of their rental properties, which now have JSM Management signs posted on each of them. She wondered if the signs were appropriate. Mr. Ricci noted that this opens up the issue of ownership and property maintenance companies.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mr. Ricci stated that CLG Grants were announced as being available. Applications are due February 15, 2021. If any Commission members would like to propose a project that the Commission would like to work on, please let him know. Ms. Novak suggested that they apply for a grant to create and produce the brochure to send to new owners of historic properties.
- Historic Preservation Month is coming up. He asked if any of the Commission members wanted to work on a project. Ms. Novak stated that she has a student project tailored towards the Main Street Historic District properties that could be done.
- Mr. Shepard inquired about the Main Street commercial buildings. Ms. Novak stated that they are part of a National Historic District. It was not celebrated because it happened around the time that COVID restrictions began. Property owners would be eligible for the 20% tax credit if they did a project to improve their building.
- Chair Novak thanked David Seyler for his years of contribution to the Historic Preservation Commission and using his professional knowledge of carpentry and how buildings are put together. She thanked Mr. Seyler for continuing to post plaques on landmark buildings. The Commission members agreed.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hays moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m. Mr. Shepard seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote.

Submitted,

Marcus Ricci, AICP
Historic Preservation Commission Recording Secretary