

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE: May 5, 2021

DRAFT

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: City Council Chambers | Zoom Webinar

MEMBERS ATTENDING REMOTELY: Alice Novak, Renee Pollock, Trent Shepard, Kim Smith

MEMBER ATTENDING AT CITY BUILDING: Gina Pagliuso

MEMBER EXCUSED: David Hays

STAFF PRESENT City of Urbana (Host); Marcus Ricci, Planner II; Lily Wilcock, Planner II; Kat Trotter, Planner I; Andrea Ruedi, Senior Advisor for Integrated Strategy Development; Liggett, Jason, UPTV Manager

OTHERS PRESENT REMOTELY: None

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

Chair Novak called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. 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 April 7, 2021 regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were presented for approval. Mr. Shepard noted a change on Page 3, under HP-2020-COA-06, it should read as such, “Mr. Ricci stated that the exterior stucco...”. Ms. Smith moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Shepard seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as written by unanimous voice vote.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

- Email from Brian Adams regarding the demolition of Champaign County Almshouse/Poor Farm

Ms. Novak asked if the property was located in City limits. Lily Wilcock, Planner II, replied yes. Mr. Ricci added that the property, 1701 East Main Street, is within City limits; however, it is Champaign County property. He noted that the property is not on the City's Demolition Delay list and he could not find it on the Survey list. Because it is not on the Demolition Delay list, it only requires a 10-day waiting period between the time an application is submitted to the time a demolition permit would be issued. Ms. Novak explained that the reason the property is not on the Demolition Delay list is because she never had her class at the University of Illinois survey any historic properties out that far. However, that does not indicate a lack of historical interest in the property. The building was designed by Joseph Royer, so it is serious that Champaign County wanted to demolish it.

There was a mutual agreement of the Historic Preservation Commission members that some action needed to be taken to prevent the property from being demolished. Mr. Ricci stated that he would talk with Brian Adams and contact the Champaign County Board for more factual information. He would also research the Demolition Delay policy for the East Urbana area to confirm whether the property was in the covered area.

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

7. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

8. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

9. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Ms. Pagliuso stated that she noticed a big storage container in the driveway on the Oregon Street side of the Royer House. Also, it appeared to her that the roof on the Grandmother's Cottage

located at 701 South Busey Avenue might have been replaced. Ms. Novak did not recall ever reviewing a minor work request for the roof to be redone.

Mr. Shepard asked if the property had asphalt shingles. Ms. Pagliuso said that it does now. The Commission members discussed the new roof, and Mr. Ricci stated that he would research old pictures and find out if the roof had been replaced.

Ms. Pagliuso reported that the window at 806 West Main Street had been replaced or repaired as the window is no longer foggy-looking.

Mr. Shepard mentioned the Gothic Revival House at 108 North Webber Street. Ms. Novak recalled some minor work that she had reviewed with Kevin Garcia. She was unaware of any of the work having been done though. She asked Mr. Ricci to follow up on this.

Ms. Pagliuso noticed that there is scaffolding equipment at the Knowlton-Bennett Building on the Race Street side. Ms. Novak and Ms. Smith both replied that the owner was tuck-pointing the piers at the top. Mr. Ricci stated that the work might be exempt from the Historic Preservation Commission's review and approval. However, it would not hurt for him to reach out to the owner to inform them that they would need to seek approval from the Commission for any work done that is not considered exempt.

Ms. Pagliuso inquired about the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel. Mr. Ricci stated that he spoke with Haaris Pervaiz of ICON Hospitality, one of the design and marketing firms for the proposed renovations, to inform him of the historic preservation procedures and requirements. There was some discussion about deadlines in the second quarter of the year. Mr. Ricci stated that he had asked the person overseeing renovations to attend a Historic Preservation Commission meeting to give an update on the hotel's plans. Chair Novak asked if the property was under the same ownership. Mr. Ricci said he did not know. Much of what happened with the hotel was out of his purview.

11. STAFF REPORT

Historic Preservation Month Activities:

Proclamation

Mr. Ricci noted that the Proclamation had been drafted and dropped off at the Mayor's Office. It is in the queue for the next City Council meeting.

Historic Downtown and Imagine Urbana Walking Tour Podcast

Lily Wilcock, Planner II, and Andrea Ruedi, Senior Advisor for Integrated Strategy Development, gave a presentation and discussed the following:

- Imagine Urbana By the Numbers
- Upcoming Public Outreach
 - Postcard Mailer to Urbana ZIP codes
 - Texting/SMS Survey
- Scheduled Events
 - Downtown Historic District Walking Tour (throughout May)
 - Bike to School Day (May 5)

- Mother’s Day Bike Ride (May 9)
- Silver Hearts Food Distribution
- Head Start Awareness Walk

Mr. Shepard stated that he had read the written dialog and listened to the recorded readings. He felt that they were well done. He noticed that certain ones did not match up. Mr. Ricci explained that for time constraints, they had uploaded the initial draft transcript, which he had copied directly from the district nomination. He realized that he needed to shorten it, so he revised the scripts which now need to be uploaded so they match the final audio.

Mr. Ricci stated that they hoped to do a second video that features all of the properties in the Historic District. He thought maybe some of the Commission members might be interested in reading some prepared scripts for that video.

Mr. Shepard noted the following errors in the podcasts he listened to:

1. The Princess Theatre podcast mentions that it had been converted to a gallery. He felt it should also say that it had been converted to office space too.
2. The Rose Bowl written dialog has “being” twice.
3. The website tour map never loaded on his screen. Ms. Wilcock said that she had the same problem; however, it works on the podcast app.

Ms. Novak inquired as to what had been done to promote the app. Ms. Wilcock replied that a press release was supposed to go out today; however, she had not seen it yet. There was a Facebook event scheduled too.

Ms. Pagliuso asked if the podcast was posted on the City website. Ms. Wilcock said not yet, but it will be posted on the main website page soon.

Mr. Shepard asked if the Historic Preservation Commission would be able to provide input on the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Wilcock said yes. Ms. Ruedi added that input from the boards and commissions is a big piece of the education component of the comprehensive planning process. She mentioned that we were still in Phase I of the Community Engagement Phase. The hope is to begin doing community outreach in person more.

Mr. Shepard asked about Ms. Ruedi’s role. Ms. Ruedi replied that she in the Executive Department and her role is to work full-time on the Comprehensive Plan with Ms. Wilcock. She had also been working on some economic development issues as well.

Mr. Ricci shared the “Experience Downtown’s Urbana’s History by Going on a Walking Tour” flyer that would be posted on social media and in windows of Downtown Urbana businesses.

Historic Property Activities

Certificate of Appropriateness – Status of Work

- HP-2020-COA-07 (806 West Main Street) – Mr. Ricci stated that, according to Ms. Pagliuso, the window appeared to be replaced. He would check to see if a building permit had been completed and report back.

- HP-2019-COA-01B – 2 Buena Vista Court – Mr. Ricci stated that there was still no change made to the exterior plaster repair.
- HP-2020-COA-2 – 4 Buena Vista Court – Mr. Ricci stated that he would contact the owner regarding the exterior stucco repair.
- HP-2021-COA-01 (8 Buena Vista Court) – Mr. Ricci stated that owner Henry Strehlow was still working on repairing the exterior stucco.
- HP-2020-COA-09 – 801 West Oregon Street, Royer House – Mr. Ricci stated that he needed to contact the new owners to remove the posts. He would also ask about the shipping container in the driveway and about the roof on the Grandma’s Cottage.

Status of Compliance Violations

- 1404 South Lincoln Avenue, Chateau Normand – Mr. Ricci stated that The University Group property management company still needed to submit a revised application for a Certificate of Appropriateness. They need to provide a description of the sign, where it would be placed on the site and how it would meet the criteria.
- 502 and 504 West Elm Street – Mr. Ricci mentioned that he had spoken with Jonah Weisskopf. He planned to submit Certificate of Appropriateness applications to replace the stair railings on both houses and to install a porch railing on the Sutton House at 502 West Elm Street.
- 612 West Green Street – Mr. Ricci stated that he has contacted the new owners about retroactively submitting an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work being done on the roof, and needs to send them an application.

Mr. Ricci noted that the City Clerk’s Office confirmed that they will continue to pay the cost of the fees for legal ads for public hearings for historic preservation cases. He also stated that his summer project was to bring owners of historic properties up to speed with the requirements of the historic landmarks and districts.

12. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Ricci reported on the following;

- Dr. Ellis Subdivision Historic District – City staff has been working with a group of residents in the subdivision on creating a new historic district. Dr. Ellis Subdivision is bounded by Bradley Avenue to the north, Goodwin Avenue to the east, Ellis Drive to the south and Carver Drive to the west. There are 146 properties – all residential homes and one new funeral home (which may or may not be included). Over 60% of the homeowners in the area have signed in support of a historic district. He anticipated holding neighborhood meetings to educate the residents and owners what the requirements and responsibilities of being part of a historic district would be.

Mr. Ricci inquired about the relevance of the form, “Historic District Preference Form”. Ms. Novak suggested that Mr. Ricci look at the original case file for the West Main Street Historic District that was denied to see if the form had been signed by each individual

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homeowner in the nominated district. She mentioned that Mr. Ricci could also contact Rob Kowalski, who served as the Planning Manager for the City of Urbana, at the time the case was reviewed and denied.

Mr. Ricci stated that he was contacted back in August of 2020, and again recently by some of the homeowners in the subdivision. They would like to focus on the cultural importance of this subdivision rather than the architectural significance of the homes. The neighborhood was mostly single-family homes built in the 1960s.

- Independent Media Center – Mr. Ricci stated that he was drafting a letter to the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency to get approval for the installation of an accessibility ramp on the north side of the building. Mr. Shepard asked about the elevator on the south side, and Mr. Ricci stated that he would inquire about the use of the elevator. He also stated that the ramp would be funded by Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds.
- Planning Interns – The City was looking to hire interns. Part of their responsibilities might include working on the outreach and education project or applying for a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant to create more podcasts.
- Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA) Events – Ms. Novak mentioned the Archi-Treasures, which is a scavenger hunt activity for Historic Preservation month. She also suggested that people check out the overhaul that PACA did on their warehouse.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Smith moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m. Ms. Pollock seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote.

Submitted,



Marcus Ricci, AICP
Historic Preservation Commission Recording Secretary