MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE: May 6, 2020 **DRAFT**

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT	David Hays, Alice Novak, Gina Pagliuso, Renee Pollock, David Seyler, Trent Shepard
MEMBERS EXCUSED	Kim Smith
STAFF PRESENT	Kevin Garcia, Planner II; Marcus Ricci, Planner II
OTHERS PRESENT	Andrew Fell, Janet Mohr, Bill Rose, Maggie Wachter

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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 March 4, 2020 regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were presented for approval. Ms. Pagliuso noted a typo on Page 6, 5th Paragraph, 7th Sentence. It should read *"It puts her in a difficult situation because she sees that the windows are historical elements that should be kept but she feels that the house wa~~y~~s on its way to being destroyed."* Ms. Pollock moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Shepard seconded the motion. The minutes were then approved as corrected by unanimous voice vote.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Communications received for Case No. HP-2020-EH-01

- Email from Janet Mohr in support
- Email from Amy Podlasek in support

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

HP-2020-EH-01 – A request by Andrew Fell for a Certificate of Economic Hardship at 2 Buena Vista Court to replace original windows, rather than restore the originals, due to the additional expense and time required for restoration.

Chair Novak re-opened the public hearing for Case No. HP-2020-EH-01. Marcus Ricci, Planner II, presented a brief update on the case. He mentioned that the applicant had obtained four additional estimates for window restoration and one additional estimate for window replacement. The difference between the lowest estimates to restore or replace the windows is $19,070.02 plus an additional $1,500.00 due to the extra time it would take to restore the windows. Based on an analysis of the Certificate of Exemption criteria against the additional testaments and expert testimony, City staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve a Certificate of Economic Hardship in this case.

Chair Novak opened the hearing for public input.

Maggie Wachter raised her hand to speak. She stated that if the Historic Preservation Commission allows Mr. Fell to upgrade the windows, it would be encouraging to other property owners at Buena Vista Court to try to keep their homes in good condition. The number of improvements that the applicant has already made to 2 Buena Vista Court has encouraged a new spirit of home ownership in the Buena Vista community.

Janet Mohr spoke in support to the Historic Preservation Commission. She stated that she agreed with Ms. Wachter. Ms. Mohr is new to the Buena Vista community and has felt welcomed. She appreciated the applicant purchasing 2 Buena Vista Court and making improvements to it. She would like to see him be able to proceed.

Andrew Fell, applicant, stated that he was available to answer questions about the additional information that he had provided since the first meeting on March 4, 2020 *(Exhibit A of the May 1, 2020 written staff report).*

Ms. Pagliuso thanked Mr. Fell for taking on the project at 2 Buena Vista Court. She asked if it was his understanding that the Commission was asking Mr. Fell to keep the original interior windows, the storm windows and the screens. Mr. Fell said yes; however, there were never any screens. The storm windows would have to be restored because this type of storm windows are no longer made unless they are custom made. Mr. Fell added that the windows are in-swing casement windows and the storm, screen units are double hung, so it would not do any good for any purpose. Chair Novak stated that she did not remember the Commission asking for quotes to restore the storm windows.

Bill Rose, consulted by the City of Urbana to review the facts in this case, stated that he had submitted his expert testimony in a letter to City staff *(Exhibit C of the May 1, 2020 written staff report)* and would answer questions from the Historic Preservation Commission.

Chair Novak asked Mr. Rose to speak on the topic of energy efficiency with regards to the R-Value. Mr. Rose stated that the R-Value of a double-paned window will be slightly greater than a single-paned sash and single-paned storm window. The difference has to do with the air tightness of the window unit. New windows are built and measured to a standard for air tightness, so it is hard for a craftsman to restore an original window that comes close.

Chair Novak inquired if longevity is considered. Mr. Rose stated that longevity comes down to maintenance, and new windows are made to have lower maintenance requirements than a wood window that has to be primed and painted regularly.

Chair Novak commented that there seems to be conflicting information available between historic windows and replacement windows. Mr. Rose mentioned that there is a Low-Income Weatherization Program. It is run by the U.S. Department of Energy and is applied in the State of Illinois. They have found that there is generally $5,600.00 available to upgrade a home; however, windows are off the table because there is not a payback from new windows. So, he was not "raising the flag" for new windows. Although energy is a growing amount of importance, the issue is still preservation, and it should prevail.

Mr. Shepard asked Mr. Rose to explain the concept between 4-inch thickness of the existing wall and a 7-inch thickness of the proposed wall. Mr. Rose stated that his report was predicated on a drawing in Exhibit A of the application, which showed that the original storm windows sat very much outboard of the wall assembly and that the interior sash sat so much inboard that the windows could swing open entirely back against the wall. The distance between an outside window and an inside window could not be replicated with a single unit. He did not have a recommendation for where a new window would site within the thickness of the wall. He did wonder how new single-unit windows would look from the outside and from the inside. Visually, the appearance of a replacement window would be keeping with what people have been seeing historically at the origin of the home.

Ms. Wachter stated that moisture is also an issue with the original windows. Her bungalow has the original windows. She has been fighting moisture that gets in around the storm windows. She had mold on the wall from the moisture getting in from the rain.

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 stated that it is good to see the costs to compare restoration versus replacement. Having read through the information and considering some of the factors, he felt it was reasonable to grant the Certificate of Economic Hardship.

Mr. Shepard thanked the applicant for his labor of love in making improvements to the house. After reading the minutes from the previous meeting on March 4, 2020 and reviewing the estimates for the various window options, he agreed with Mr. Hays. The difference in cost between rehabbing the original windows and replacing them is significant. Having to replace some windows for code purposes doesn't make sense to have a mixture of old and new. It seems reasonable to grant the Certificate of Economic Hardship.

Mr. Seyler stated that he was having a problem with not having the same windows throughout the house. He does not believe it would look good to have some windows open out and some open in. Along with the financial burden to restore the windows rather than replace them, he was inclined to agree with City staff's recommendation.

Ms. Pollock stated that she can see herself split down the middle in what her understanding is of the responsibility of the Historic Preservation Commission and what the practical reality of someone's investment in making improvements to a historic property, especially one that was falling down. She was more inclined to thank the applicant for improving the property and grant the Certificate of Economic Hardship to allow the applicant to proceed and finish the improvements.

Mr. Hays added that there is a concern with moisture. There is a distance where the benefits of having double-paned windows go away. This problem would not be there if insulation was not added to the inside of the house. There is a chain reaction … the need to insulate the house according to a new standard creates a depth problem, which then creates an inefficiency. Mr. Rose stated that new windows are constructed to standards by the National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC). One thing they address is condensation resistance. Air tightness is a real humidity benefit in the summer time. In the winter time, it can benefit energy efficiency. Air tightness is easier to get with a replacement window.

Ms. Pagliuso addressed the two communications received. Ms. Mohr had stated in her email that functional windows would be good to have. Ms. Pagliuso stated that no one on the Historic Preservation Commission suggested reinstallation of non-functional windows. The members were hoping that the original windows could be restored and returned to functionality. Ms. Podlasek mentioned custom wood reproduction windows in her email, and none of the Historic Preservation Commission members were asking for these types of windows to be made. The members were simply asking for estimates on restoring the original wood windows.

Ms. Pagliuso noticed that the lowest cost for restoration was within a couple hundred dollars of the lowest cost for new windows. The energy efficiency would be different. She thanked Mr. Fell for obtaining the additional quotes. Because the house requires insulation and the new 2" x 4" walls, it creates a whole new set of costs that may not be incurred should someone just be looking to restore their old windows. She believed that the additional cost is significant. She hoped that if the Commission grants the proposed request that the original windows are put some place where they can be used.

Mr. Ricci discussed the various costs as shown in Exhibit D: Comparative Cost Breakdown of the May 1, 2020 written staff report. Mr. Hays stated that the Commission members were not ignoring the additional costs, but instead was stating the reason to support the Certificate of Economic Hardship is due to the need to insulate the house when it wasn't before. This case is an unusual circumstance. Ms. Pagliuso was only pointing out that if a person owned a house and wanted to change the windows, the raw costs would be comparable.

Mr. Shepard moved that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the Certificate of Economic Hardship based on the discussion during this meeting, on the written staff report and on the City staff's recommendation. Ms. Pollock seconded the motion.

Ms. Pagliuso proposed an amendment to the motion to add that the Commission's approval was also based on criteria C and E. Mr. Shepard and Ms. Pollock agreed to the amendment.

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

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

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

7. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

8. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

9. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

- Ms. Novak stated that she still needs to write a letter to the University of Illinois regarding the Mumford House and the Dairy Barn Manager**'s** House.
- Mr. Ricci stated that he discovered that Pierre Moulin had two smaller signs rather than one large sign at the ZTA House. Mr. Moulin still needs to submit an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for any permanent signs he is planning to have.
- Mr. Ricci stated that he would follow up with Jonah Weisskopf to submit applications for Certificates of Appropriateness for the permanent railings to be installed on the Freeman House and on the Sutton House.
- Ms. Pagliuso mentioned that she walked around Buena Vista Court and noticed that four bungalows still have the original windows. Mr. Ricci added that of the four bungalows with original windows, two of the houses still had the original storm windows.

11. STAFF REPORT

There was none.

12. STUDY SESSION

Update of Activities for Historic Preservation Month

Mr. Ricci stated that in light of the current pandemic situation, most of the activities that were planned for the month of May have been cancelled. The events planned to be held at the Urbana Free Library have also been cancelled.

He submitted a Proclamation to the Mayor of Urbana so she could proclaim the month of May as *National Historic Preservation Month*. The Proclamation will promote resources that property owners of historic properties can take advantage of. The press release will include links to walking tours, podcasts, and the Lincoln Wayfinding site. As the time goes on and more businesses are able to open back up, they can work on updating the Downtown Urbana walking tour to reflect on the new National Historic District. As the Urbana Landmark Hotel continues restoration, they may be able to still have a tour there or hold a presentation.

Mr. Shepard inquired about the Urbana Landmark Hotel. Mr. Ricci replied by saying that restoration is still in the planning stages. The developers are going to follow the National Park Services requirements if they plan to utilize any federal tax credits. He believed the plans would come before the Historic Preservation Commission for review.

Ms. Pagliuso noticed some of the old pavers have been taken up from The Gather site and piled into two big piles. She had the understanding that one of the reasons the developers liked this site was because of the brick street. She asked City staff to follow up with this. Mr. Ricci believed the developers had to remove the brick street to install some utilities, because they will be developing both the north and south sides of the street. However, he will check with the Public Works Department and the City's Building Safety Division.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Ms. Pagliuso mentioned that she spoke with one of her friends who owns one of the retail spaces on Main Street in Downtown Urbana. Her friend was enthusiastic about having a crew in, so hopefully when COVID-19 is over, the Commission would be able to go in and take a look at the building.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hays moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m. Mr. Seyler seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote.

Submitted,

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Marcus Ricci, AICP
Historic Preservation Commission Recording Secretary