

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE: May 2, 2018

APPROVED

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: City Council Chambers, Urbana City Building, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois

MEMBERS PRESENT Matt Metcalf, Alice Novak, Gina Pagliuso, Trent Shepard, Kim Smith

MEMBERS EXCUSED Scott Dossett, David Seyler

STAFF PRESENT Kevin Garcia, Planner II; Marcus Ricci, Planner II

OTHERS PRESENT Ilona Matkovski, Pierre Moulin, Dennis Roberts, Ryan Schriefer

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

Chair Novak called the meeting to order at 7:03 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 October 12, 2017 Historic Preservation Commission special meeting were presented for approval.

Chair Novak made the following amendments to the minutes:

- Page 1, Others Present – “Seokw~~a~~oo”
- Page 2, Written Communications – “Letter from Ted Christy, Associate Director for Project Planning in Facilities and Services at the University of Illinois in response to the Commission’s letter regarding Mumford House’s red x in the Campus Master Plan Update”

Mr. Metcalf made the following amendments to the minutes:

- Page 5, Monitoring of Historic Properties, Mumford House, 2nd Paragraph, 2nd Sentence – “He mentioned that last spring he was giving taking a course on “Cultural Heritage” ...”

Mr. Shepard moved that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the minutes as amended. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as amended by unanimous voice vote.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Dennis Roberts approached the Historic Preservation Commission to talk about the plaque that was dedicated to the Cohen Building at 136 West Main Street. It signifies the historical importance of Nat Cohen's personality and work for the Urbana community. Mr. Cohen was an avid musician, an art-associated person, opera singer, and a cigar connoisseur. The building was designed by Joseph Royer.

Mr. Shepard asked if Mr. Roberts had contacted the owner about the plaque. How did it come about for a plaque to be installed on the building? Mr. Roberts stated that he has been promoting the placement of plaques on buildings in the downtown area. There are many uniquely-positioned buildings in the community that were designed by Joseph Royer, so he felt it was important. He talked with Dan Maloney, the owner of the Cohen Building, and Mr. Maloney was interested in purchasing and installing the plaque. He believed it would draw some attention to the revitalization of the building.

Mr. Shepard inquired what the relationship was between Nat Cohen and Sol Cohen. Mr. Roberts explained that Sol was one of Nat's three children.

Ms. Pagliuso questioned if Mr. Roberts had talked with Mr. Maloney about nominating the property for landmark status. Mr. Roberts replied that Mr. Maloney is an advocate for creating a historic district in Downtown Urbana.

6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

HP-2018-COA-02 – A request by Pierre Moulin for a Certificate of Appropriateness to modify approved plans regarding a small number of windows at 1404 South Lincoln Avenue.

Chair Novak opened the public hearing for this case. Kim Smith recused herself due to a conflict of interest.

Kevin Garcia, Planner II, presented the staff report for the case to the Historic Preservation Commission. He began by explaining that the reason for the proposed request was to replace some of the historic windows. He described the window replacements and elevations in more detail. He reviewed the requirements for a Certificate of Appropriateness. He read the options of the Historic Preservation Commission and presented City staff's recommendation for approval.

Chair Novak asked if the Historic Preservation Commission members had any questions for City staff. There were none. Chair Novak opened the hearing for public input. She invited the petitioner to speak.

Pierre Moulin, owner of the subject property, and Ryan Schriefer, contractor for the renovations, approached the Historic Preservation Commission to speak.

Mr. Moulin stated that he did not originally plan to have an apartment unit in the basement. He felt replacing the windows would improve livability. He corrected the staff report saying that they would be replacing three windows instead of two in the basement with new casement windows as shown in Exhibit C of the written staff memo dated April 26, 2018. Another correction was that they planned to use salvaged windows to replace the northwest side windows.

Ms. Novak asked if the muntins or mullions of the new windows were made of wood. Mr. Schriefer replied that they would be aluminum wrapped cladding in the same color as the existing windows. They will look similar to the existing windows with regards to the muntins. He talked about the window wells, and flashing them out to prevent flooding. The windows would not be visible as they would be installing guardrails around the window wells.

Mr. Shepard questioned if the previous owner that filled in the window wells had used something to protect the window or did they just put dirt up against the glass. Mr. Schriefer stated that they had used plywood to cover the window wells and poured concrete over the top of the plywood, so there was a hollow space between the window and the plywood.

Mr. Metcalf asked the applicant to describe the degradation of the original windows. Mr. Moulin explained that the windows were so corroded that he could break any part of the east-side window just by pushing with two fingers.

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

Mr. Shepard expressed approval of the proposed request. The applicant and contractor had researched the windows well. He moved that the Historic Preservation Commission approve and grant the proposed Certificate of Appropriateness in Case No. HP-2018-COA-02 relying on the excellent analysis done by City staff. Mr. Metcalf seconded the motion.

Ms. Pagliuso moved to amend the motion to add a notation that the three windows, not two, on the north side of the basement would be replaced by new windows. Mr. Shepard, as mover, accepted the friendly amendment to his motion. Mr. Metcalf, as seconder, accepted the amendment as well. Roll call on the amended motion was as follows:

Mr. Metcalf	-	Yes	Ms. Novak	-	Yes
Ms. Pagliuso	-	Yes	Mr. Shepard	-	Yes

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Smith rejoined the other Commission members at the dais.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Potential National Register District in Downtown Urbana

Mr. Garcia stated that Planning staff had begun the process of applying for Downtown Urbana to become a historic district on the National Register. However, staff has become inundated with numerous cases and other tasks that have consumed their time, so they were not able to get the nomination put together at this time. There is a lot of support in creating a district downtown.

There is approximately \$5,000 in a historic preservation fund, and Planning staff would like to get approval from the Historic Preservation Commission to use those funds to hire a consultant to write the nomination. This would allow the City to move forward with the nomination.

Chair Novak explained more details about the fund. T-Mobile constructed a cell phone tower without going through the Section 106 process, which is the Review and Compliance process for actions involving federal or state money. As a result of the litigation against T-Mobile, the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission received \$5,000. Mr. Garcia added that while \$5,000 may not be enough to get the entire nomination put together, it would help. There are many resources available, and it is a matter of putting the information together and making sense of it in nomination form.

Ms. Pagliuso wondered if there was anything as a Commission they could do to help with the research. Ms. Novak explained that there was a group of volunteers who wanted to help but sometimes it is hard for volunteers to make time to put forth the effort.

Mr. Shepard asked if there were any local consultants that the City could hire to help with the nomination. Ms. Novak was sure that there are consultants available within the State of Illinois. She did not know of anyone locally in Champaign or Urbana. The buildings have already been surveyed.

Ms. Novak asked how many buildings would be included in the nomination. Mr. Garcia said around 40 buildings. Ms. Novak stated that it would require a description for each building or it could be a spreadsheet with details.

Ms. Pagliuso inquired what the City envisioned the district to be. Mr. Garcia replied that City staff had the former Illinois Historic Preservation Association (IHPA) review a map of the downtown area. After having discussions with IHPA staff, they came up with the following district: the Kirby Firestone building east to Broadway Avenue and a little north from there. The proposed district would be the core of Downtown Urbana.

Ms. Novak expressed concern about spending the \$5,000 and not having a finished nomination. She asked if it was possible for Planning staff to send out a request for proposal (RFP) without accepting a response. Mr. Garcia stated that he would need to research it.

Mr. Metcalf suggested that they have different levels of the process; for example, one person could write all of the descriptions. This would require identifying the different steps and doing an estimate, which would require some staff time. Once most of the leg work was done, then volunteers could tie it altogether. Ms. Novak commented that she would support that.

Mr. Shepard said that there was no point in hanging on to the money. He could not see a better use for it than getting a start on a nomination for a historic district in Downtown Urbana. He would be in favor of using the money to make progress on a nomination of this kind.

Ms. Smith wondered if other communities have ever hired consultants to work on writing nominations. If so, then they would know about how much the cost would be. Mr. Garcia stated that he has contacts at the State Historic Preservation Office to see if there had been any similar endeavors.

The Commission unanimously agreed to allow City staff to use the funds to hire a consultant to begin writing a nomination for a Downtown Urbana Historic District.

8. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

9. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Buena Vista Court

Chair Novak recalled Louise Kuhny speaking during the Audience Participation portion of their previous meeting about seeing if there were any existing codes allowing the Historic Preservation Commission to require improvements to historic properties. Buena Vista Court is a historic district on the National Register as well as a local historic district. Mr. Garcia said that he would research this.

Mumford House

Ms. Pagliuso reported that she attended a charrette for the University of Illinois Campus Master Plan Update. She got all kinds of assurances that the Mumford House was protected.

Mr. Metcalf thought it might be worth inviting the new Historic Preservation Officer for the University of Illinois to attend one of the Commission's meetings.

Royer House at 801 West Oregon

The Historic Preservation Commission briefly discussed the Royer House.

Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority House

Mr. Garcia reported that he accompanied a city inspector to check on the progress of the improvements being made. The work is progressing very nicely. Ms. Pagliuso stated that she walked around the house and was happy to see all of the changes being made.

11. STAFF REPORT

There was none.

12. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Novak stated that, although the Commission did not have time to pull together planned activities for Historic Preservation month, she and Brian Adams would be hosting an evening in the Champaign County Archives at the Urbana Free Library on Wednesday, May 9, 2018 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. They would be helping people research their properties.

Brian Adams would be presenting on Joseph Royer on Thursday, May 3, 2018 at the Champaign Public Library from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. He will also be presenting on the architect, Nelson Strong Spencer, on Thursday, May 24, 2018 at the Champaign Public Library from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m..

14. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Shepard moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous voice vote.

Submitted,

Lorrie Pearson, AICP
Historic Preservation Commission Recording Secretary