

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE: June 7, 2017

APPROVED

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Scott Dossett, Matt Metcalf, Alice Novak, David Seyler

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Gina Pagliuso, Trent Shepard, Kim Smith

STAFF PRESENT: Lorrie Pearson, Planning Manager; Kevin Garcia, Planner II

OTHERS PRESENT: Pierre Moulin

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

Chair Novak called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Chair Novak requested to add “*Summary of Preservation Month*” under Old Business. There were no objections.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May 17, 2017 Historic Preservation Commission special meeting were presented for approval.

Mr. Dossett moved that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the minutes as written. Mr. Metcalf seconded the motion. The minutes were then approved as written by unanimous voice vote.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Mumford House Letter

Kevin Garcia, Planner II, presented the letter that Chair Novak drafted to the University of Illinois regarding the indication of removal of the Farm House, also known as the Mumford House, and the Manager's House in the University of Illinois Experimental Dairy Farm Historic District in the updated Master Plan for the university. The intent of the letter was to encourage the University of Illinois to rethink the removal of each building.

Mr. Dossett mentioned Mr. Shepard's email recommending corrections of some typos. Ms. Novak responded that she welcomed the changes to the letter, and asked if anyone else had any changes they would like to see be made.

Mr. Metcalf suggested separating the properties into two paragraphs and possibly including more background about the historical significance of each. He also suggested that a copy of the final letter be sent to the descendant of the Mumford family that originally lived in the house. Ms. Novak agreed to all of the changes and stated that she would send a copy to the descendant.

Summary of Historic Preservation Month

Chair Novak thanked Mr. Metcalf for giving a great lecture and tour. She noted that there were about 30 people on the tour. Mr. Garcia showed pictures of the tour. Mr. Dossett asked that the pictures being posted on the City's website under Historic Preservation Month Activities.

Brian Adams and she led a session on how to research a property using the archives at the Urbana Free Library, and there were about 20 people who attended. She felt that the Historic Preservation Commission should be doing more activities outside of the month of May to whatever extent they can. In fact, the Library staff suggested that the Commission members hold additional sessions in the future.

8. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

9. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

ROYER HOUSE

801 West Oregon Street

Mr. Garcia stated that he contacted Green Street Realty, and they did not post the “Clubhaus” sign in front of the Royer House. Green Street Realty sent out an email to their tenants requesting that the sign be removed.

11. STAFF REPORT

Potential National Register District in Downtown Urbana

Mr. Garcia stated that this came about because of some conversations between City staff and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency staff and also because Dan Maloney, who purchased the Cohen Building, was in the process of working out a redevelopment agreement with the City and expressed interest in keeping the architectural features of the building intact and inquired about potential historic tax credits that could apply to his project.

Mr. Garcia reviewed the steps in the process for designating a district for the National Register. There are two options to complete the nomination. The first would be to hire a consultant or intern to assist with researching properties and writing narratives, and the second would be to complete the work in-house with assistance from volunteers. Chair Novak stated that while she would like to see the nomination completed as quickly as possible, there was still some time.

Mr. Dossett inquired about the progress in creating a Downtown Design Review Overlay District. Mr. Garcia responded by saying that City staff had been meeting with property owners and begun creating design guidelines. Lorrie Pearson, Planning Manager, added that Mr. Garcia was working on both the potential National Register District nomination for Downtown Urbana and the potential Downtown Design Review Overlay District. With the July 29th deadline for the National Register nomination coming soon, Mr. Garcia would need to focus primarily on preparing the nomination. Therefore, the Downtown Design Review Overlay District would need to be put on hold temporarily. Mr. Dossett believed that it was more important to work on the overlay district as it would be the true protection for the downtown area by having more restrictions for what property owners would be allowed to do than a listing on the National Register would. Ms. Novak pointed out that if a building owner chooses to apply for tax credits through IHPA once a historic district had been approved, then it would buy the City five years of protection against changes that would be unwelcomed. Sometimes there are grants available for improvements to properties on the National Register, but it takes a while to get a property added to the list.

Mr. Metcalf inquired if the City had any resources that outline other cities within the state or the region that would show what the success was. He believed that the broader governing body would want to see it as well. Ms. Pearson replied that there would definitely be an outreach component to this. It is very important to make sure people understand that this would not be a mandatory restriction and that it would only be a benefit. Having the success stories from other cities would definitely help with the outreach.

Mr. Dossett wondered if it would be helpful for the Historic Preservation Commission to hold a special meeting. There are forty properties, which meant lots of pictures. Ms. Pearson felt it would be more effective to go to where people are rather than ask them to come to us. So, she imagined more personal outreach.

Ms. Novak commented that since there is a huge difference in the detail of the documentations, it would be helpful to see shorter descriptions that include materials, height of the building, etc. There are two main sections that make the case for the properties for a district: the description section and the historic section. Writing shorter descriptions would be a quicker way to write the nominations for 40 properties. If several people helped to write the nomination, then it would help. She mentioned that they could spread the word and try to get people together for a couple of evenings, have people focus on particular buildings and make a history of the different businesses that were located in those buildings including dates, and in a couple of nights they would have some information on each of the buildings in the proposed district.

Mr. Dossett moved that the Historic Preservation Commission support Planning staff's effort to create a National Register of Historic Places District in Downtown Urbana. Mr. Seyler seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 4 to 0 unanimously.

12. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Historic Preservation Conference

Ms. Novak announced that the "*Past Forward*" conference would be held in Chicago and is being sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as well as by other partner organizations in the State of Illinois. Mr. Metcalf added that it is scheduled for November 14th thru 17th. Mr. Garcia mentioned that if anyone wanted to attend, please let him know. He believed it would be cheaper to register as an organization than it would individually.

Mr. Metcalf thought it might be a good place to resource additional information about National Register of Historic Districts. Ms. Novak added that another good resource would be the *National Main Street*. They keep lots of statistics.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Dossett moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Metcalf seconded the motion. With all Commission members in favor, the meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Submitted,

Lorrie Pearson, AICP
Historic Preservation Commission Recording Secretary