

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE: March 1, 2023

APPROVED

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ATTENDING: David Hays, Alice Novak, Laura O'Donnell, Dennis Roberts, Angela Urban, Andrew Weiss

MEMBERS EXCUSED Trent Shepard

STAFF PRESENT Marcus Ricci, Planner II; UPTV Camera Operator

OTHERS PRESENT: Matt Geimer, Victoria Norrington, Emily Repetewski, Andres Vazquez

1. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

Chair Novak called the meeting to order at 7:04 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 November 2, 2022, regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was presented for approval. Mr. Roberts moved to approve the November 2, 2022, minutes as presented. Ms. Urban seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

4. PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Roberts inquired about the status of any conversation or presentation about the downtown design future. Mr. Ricci explained that Kevin Garcia, Principal Planner, brought a list of priorities to City Council a few months ago. One item on the list was the Downtown Historic District Design

Guidelines. City Council expressed some interest; however, it was not placed as a high priority. After discussing this topic with Mr. Garcia, they decided to invite the members of the Historic Preservation Commission to work together to research and brainstorm some ideas for the foundation to create a set of guidelines.

Mr. Roberts asked if any of the other members would be interested in helping with this project to please contact him. Mr. Hays noted that it would be beneficial to include other experts outside of the Commission.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

9. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Mr. Ricci mentioned that the Lindley House was purchased. The new owner had previously expressed interest in continuing the use as a bed and breakfast inn. The new owner plans to do some renovations and is aware that he will need to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to doing any work.

11. STAFF REPORT

There was none.

1. STUDY SESSION

Potential Historic Preservation Month Activities

Mr. Ricci talked about past activities in previous years. Together, the Commission and City staff brainstormed ideas for an activity or more for this year. Some of the ideas included the following:

1. A pocket tour and/or a walking tour,
2. Downtown Historic Royer walking tour,
3. Working with the African American Heritage Trail group to set up a tour of local historic sites in Urbana,
4. Buena Vista Court Tour
5. Landmarks Tour
6. Greek House Tour
7. Guest Speaker to give a Lecture

Mr. Ricci stated that City staff is willing to assist with advertising and press releases, printing, arranging transportation, etc.; however, the Commission members need to be the coordinators and organizers of any activity/activities they choose to do.

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Emily Repetewski approached the Historic Preservation Commission to speak. She stated that the discussion on Buena Vista Court was interesting with retro-fitting suburbia and land mix use development.

Andres Vazquez approached the Historic Preservation Commission to speak. He asked if the City considered vacant buildings/properties, especially old fraternities and sororities, as public nuisances for the City government or as opportunities to improve the community. Chair Novak replied that the Commission sees them as opportunities. The sorority house was on the market for years prior to being purchased and renovated. Mr. Hays added by talking about the Burnham Mansion in Champaign. There is so much potential when viewed for uses outside of their original use.

Ms. Novak pointed out that the University of Illinois had the largest number of greek houses in the country with 80 houses. They are beautifully, architecturally designed buildings with particular styles. They are a significant aspect of our community. It doesn't matter what the use was in the past; they are incredible, well-built buildings.

Ms. Vazquez talked about the expansion of trees along city blocks in Urbana. Have there been any issues with the expansion of trees blocking the historic nature of some of the facades of historic buildings? Mr. Weiss stated that he was not aware of any issues.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hays moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted,



Marcus Ricci, AICP
Historic Preservation Commission Recording Secretary