

**MINUTES OF A RESCHEDULED MEETING**

**URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**DATE:** March 2, 2022

**APPROVED**

**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Zoom Webinar

**MEMBERS ATTENDING REMOTELY:** Alice Novak, Laura O’Donnell, Gina Pagliuso, Trent Shepard, Angela Urban

**MEMBERS ATTENDING AT CITY BUILDING:** David Hays

**STAFF PRESENT** Marcus Ricci, Planner II; UPTV Camera Operator

**OTHERS PRESENT REMOTELY:** A list of public audience is not available.

**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 with all members present.

**2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

There were none.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the February 8, 2022, rescheduled meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were presented for approval. Ms. O’Donnell suggested a correction to the minutes to show David Hays as the member who attended the meeting in person rather than Gina Pagliuso, who was excused from the meeting. Chair Novak noted a change to the spelling of Karen Kummer’s name in Paragraphs 2 and 3 on Page 3. The correct spelling is Kummer; not Kumer. Mr. Shepard suggested changing “partner” in Paragraph 6 on Page 3 to “party”. He also suggested changing “obviate” to “obviates” in the last paragraph on Page 7. Mr. Shepard moved to approve the February 8, 2022, rescheduled meeting minutes as corrected. Mr. Hays seconded the motion. Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Ms. Novak	-	Yes	Ms. O’Donnell	-	Yes
Ms. Pagliuso	-	Abstain	Mr. Shepard	-	Yes
Ms. Urban	-	Yes	Mr. Hays	-	Yes

The February 8, 2022, minutes were approved by a vote of 5-0-1.

**4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

- Email from Cope Cumpston regarding Case No. HP-2022-COA-01

**5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

There was none.

**6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

**7. OLD BUSINESS**

There was none.

**8. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**HP-2022-COA-01 – A request by The University Group, represented by Nathan Palmisano, on behalf of Pierre Moulin dba Chateau Normand, LLC, for a Certificate of Appropriateness to erect a property rental sign at 1404 South Lincoln Avenue.**

Chair Novak opened the public hearing for this case. Marcus Ricci, Planner II, presented the staff report for the case to the Historic Preservation Commission. He began by stating the purpose for the Certificate of Appropriateness request and noting the history of the subject property. He talked about the proposed signboard and reviewed the requirements for a Certificate of Appropriateness. He read the options of the Historic Preservation Commission and presented staff's recommendation for approval with the condition that *Construction be in general conformance with the Site Plan and Sign Design attached to the written staff report.*

Chair Novak asked if the applicant was available to answer questions. Mr. Ricci stated that he did not see the applicant or representative for the applicant on the list of public attendees. Chair Novak asked if anyone else had comments or questions. There were none, so Chair Novak opened the public hearing for discussion and/or motion(s) by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Ms. Pagliuso expressed concern about calling the proposed sign a "rental sign" and that by doing so, it would create a violation of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance as rental signs must be removed within 14 days after the sale or rental of the property. Mr. Ricci stated that the only signs permitted in the R-7, University Residential, Zoning District are property rental signs and subdivision signs. Staff interpreted that there is almost always at least one vacancy in an apartment building so staff has no way of enforcing rental signs being removed if there are no vacancies. Mr. Shepard responded that the City Council should amend the Ordinance if it is not enforceable.

Mr. Hays stated that rental signs are normal in the City of Urbana. It was how he tried to find a place to live when he first moved to the City of Urbana. Many times he would see a sign and call the apartment management to be told that they had no vacancies. Ms. O'Donnell added that in this situation, many times she believe the apartment management would refer a person to another building they manage. In essence, the management company uses rental signs as advertising signs. Ms. Pagliuso pointed out that advertising signs are not permitted in the R-7 Zoning District. Mr. Ricci stated that part of the problem is the zoning district that the property is located in.

Ms. Pagliuso asked if a monument sign would be allowed in the R-7 district. Mr. Ricci explained that a monument sign is only allowed in the R-7 if the use is considered to be institutional.

Mr. Shepard asked about the second requirement for a Certificate of Appropriateness. He asked if the Staff Analysis referred to two trees that were newer on the property or if the property owner was planning to plant two new trees. Mr. Ricci replied that the Staff Analysis refers to two trees that were installed last year.

Mr. Shepard asked if the Historic Preservation Ordinance has any language about sign sizes. Mr. Ricci said no. Mr. Shepard asked what the maximum size of the sign could be. Mr. Ricci said the maximum size allowed is 10 square feet. The proposed sign is 4 feet wide by 2-1/2 feet in height, which includes the outcropping skyline of the building image. So, the square foot of the proposed sign is exactly 10 square feet.

Ms. Pagliuso asked about the height of the sign from the ground. Mr. Ricci stated that the maximum height of a property sale/rental sign in the R-7 Zoning District is 10 feet. The Historic Preservation Commission could add a condition to the Commission's decision regarding the height of the sign from the ground. The Commission members agreed that the sign should not block the view of the building. Ms. Pagliuso found in the attachment to the application that *"the sign is free-standing in the yard and will not exceed more than 4' total height which will not affect the building height."*

Mr. Hays talked about the differences between the proposed sign and the sample sign mentioned in the written staff report, which is located at 808 South Lincoln Avenue. The sample sign is larger than the proposed sign and the property is zoned R-5. He measured the sign, and it is 20 square feet. He stated that the sign is so prominent that it is hard to see the building. Mr. Ricci responded that staff is currently working with the property owner to bring the sign into compliance. He stated that a property sale/rental sign is a type of sign that is allowed without a permit if it complies with the regulations in the Zoning Ordinance. However, sometimes, people think they are following the rules and regulations and put in a non-compliant sign because they are not required to get a permit for the sign, which would include review by city staff for compliance with the ordinance.

Mr. Hays asked if the Historic Preservation Commission could regulate the design of the sign. The Commission talked about the image and font size of the lettering on the sign.

The Commission discussed the possibility of reducing the size of the sign allowed. Mr. Ricci noted that if the Commission only allows a smaller-sized sign, it would reduce the amount of information that can be on the sign.

Chair Novak stated that the size of the sign and the design of the print could have an adverse impact on the historic property. Mr. Ricci stated that the proposed sign fits all of the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. However, it sounds like it would not be befitting of the historic landmark. Mr. Hays said that the proposed sign would be intended for marketing and is meant to stand out; therefore, he did not believe it was within the scope of the Historic Preservation Commission to regulate. However, they could regulate the height of the sign from the ground. He mentioned that having a double-faced sign oriented east-west would be preferable, so that it was perpendicular to

the street. The Commission agreed this would be more desirable even though they would see the post that the sign would be connected to.

Mr. Ricci suggested giving the applicant the options of changing the orientation of the sign to be perpendicular to the street or to have a smaller sign parallel to the street. Mr. Hays stated that both options would minimize the impact within the view of the building. Chair Novak stated she was opposed to giving them an option and preferred re-orienting the sign to be perpendicular to the street.

Ms. Urban wondered if they should request the applicant to install the sign closer to Vermont Avenue. Mr. Hays stated that this would allow a person to take a clear picture of the front of the building without the sign being in the way.

Ms. Urban moved that the Historic Preservation Commission approve Case No. HP-2022-COA-01 with the following conditions: In order to minimize the impact of the viewshed of the historic landmark, 1) the sign be re-oriented to be west-east and 2) the sign be relocated further south in addition to the condition recommended by staff that the sign be in general conformance with the Site Plan, Sign Design, and Application in the written staff report. Ms. Pagliuso seconded the motion. Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Ms. O'Donnell	-	Yes	Ms. Pagliuso	-	Yes
Mr. Shepard	-	Yes	Ms. Urban	-	Yes
Mr. Hays	-	Yes	Ms. Novak	-	Yes

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

There was none.

**10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

There was none.

**11. STAFF REPORT**

**PUBLIC INPUT AND ITEMS OF INTEREST**

Mr. Ricci reviewed the following items listed on the written staff report:

- HPC Member Update – There is still one vacancy on the Commission.
- Champaign County Regional Planning Commission will be hosting training this summer at no cost.
- Dr. Ellis Subdivision Update

**HISTORIC PROPERTY ACTIVITIES**

**Certificates of Appropriateness in Progress or Review**

- 210 South Race Street – Mr. Ricci stated that work has continued on the interior, particularly on the model rooms.

**Zoning Issues**

- 502 and 504 West Elm Street - Mr. Ricci mentioned that he still needs to review the railing designs with Chair Novak.
- Ricker House – Mr. Ricci stated that he needs to discuss the roof with Chair Novak.

**12. STUDY SESSION**

There was none.

**13. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Ricci announced that staff is hoping to hold a Downtown Walking Tour as part of the American Planning Association – Illinois Chapter Mobile Workshop on June 10, 2022. This will be open to the attendees of the workshop. However, staff is hoping to have a trial run that will be open to the general public in May for Historic Preservation Month.

Mr. Shepard talked about the letter from Cope Cumpston and that she had sent it to the Historic Preservation Commission members who have email addresses listed on the City of Urbana website. Mr. Shepard thought it would be good for all the members to have an email address listed if they would like to be open to the public.

**14. CLOSED SESSION**

**To Consider Security Procedures, Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(8)**

The Historic Preservation Commission continued the approval of the September 1, 2021 Closed Session minutes to the next in-person meeting.

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Hays moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted,



Marcus Ricci, AICP  
Historic Preservation Commission Recording Secretary