

**MINUTES OF A RESCHEDULED MEETING**

**URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**DATE:** June 10, 2021

**APPROVED**

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

**PLACE:** City Council Chambers | Zoom Webinar

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**MEMBERS ATTENDING REMOTELY:** David Hays, Alice Novak, Renee Pollock, Trent Shepard

**MEMBER ATTENDING AT CITY BUILDING:** Gina Pagliuso

**MEMBER EXCUSED:** Kim Smith

**STAFF PRESENT** City of Urbana (Host); Marcus Ricci, Planner II; Kat Trotter, Planner I

**OTHERS PRESENT REMOTELY:** Susan Appel, Shirese Hursey

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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 May 5, 2021 regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were presented for approval. Ms. Pollock moved to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Pagliuso seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as written by unanimous vote.

**4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

- Letter from Brian Adams regarding the Champaign County Poor Farm, aka Alms House

## 5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Susan Appel, of the Preservation and Conservation Association, addressed the Historic Preservation Commission regarding the Champaign County Poor Farm. She asked if any of the members had knowledge of whether there was an active movement to demolish the building. Marcus Ricci, Planner II, recalled that it was included in the proposed FY22 budget for the Champaign County Board, which could be changed at any time. It does show some level of intent to demolish the building. Ms. Pagliuso read an email written by Brian Adams including the proposed budget that confirmed it would cost \$900,000 to demolish the building.

Mr. Shepard asked about the timeframe for fiscal year 2022. Chair Novak replied that FY22 would begin July 1, 2021. Mr. Shepard commented that the demolition could occur as early as next month.

Ms. Pollock asked if permits would need to be requested before the building were demolished. Mr. Ricci stated that a demolition permit would be required, and there is a 10-day waiting period after a demolition permit has been applied for. Mr. Shepard asked if Champaign County, as a unit of government, was exempt from the demolition delay. Mr. Ricci said that he was not aware of them being exempt.

Ms. Pagliuso talked about the criteria for a property to require a 45-day waiting period for demolition. The criteria included 1) Zoning - must be zoned residential, 2) Historic Potential - the property must be included in the City's historic resources inventory, and 3) Age – must be 75 years or older. All 3 criteria must be met in order to initiate the 45-day waiting period. She added that the Demolition Delay Ordinance is very specific to a geographic area, which ends at 1403 East Main Street. The Champaign County Poor Farm is located in the 1700 block of East Main Street, outside of the geographic area. She suggested that the City review the ordinance to see if there was interest in preserving historic properties that are located outside of the specific geographic area mentioned in the ordinance.

Mr. Shepard asked if Ms. Novak's class at the University of Illinois had surveyed the Champaign County Poor Farm. She replied that they had not, because it is outside the area on the map that was drawn. Ms. Pagliuso believed the map might be of the specific geographic area she was talking about.

Mr. Ricci stated that the Champaign County Poor House is zoned R-6 (High Density Multiple-Family Residential). It did not appear to have been surveyed and was not located in the historic survey area. However, it is old enough to be considered. If the property was surveyed, it could be added to the Demolition Delay List. Properties are surveyed by Ms. Novak's class or by the Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA).

Chair Novak stated that her class did a survey two years ago to look at buildings that could have been missed. Mr. Ricci stated that he would work with her to get the inventory of surveyed properties updated.

Ms. Pollock inquired about the block numbers included in the South Broadway area. She stated that she lives in a house in the area that was built in 1893 by Charles Webber. Ms. Pagliuso stated it is on Page 5 of the Demolition Delay Ordinance.

Ms. Pollock asked what it meant to have a property in the boundary area. Mr. Ricci stated that it means her property meets the historical potential in criteria #2 and if she wanted to demolish her house, she would have to wait 45 days.

Susan Appel asked if there would be any consideration if a National Register nomination was in process for the Champaign County Poor Farm. She stated that there is a nomination started but it has not been completed yet. She asked if the nomination would clarify that the property would be surveyed. Chair Novak said yes. Ms. Appel stated that the Poor Farm is a significant structure, designed by a significant architect, and it is over 100 years old.

Mr. Ricci stated that the ordinance talks about the historic resource inventory and he wondered what constitutes a “valid survey.” He would research this and notify the Commission members by email.

## **6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

## **7. OLD BUSINESS**

There was none.

## **8. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

There was none.

## **10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

There was none.

## **11. STAFF REPORT**

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH ACTIVITIES:**

#### **Downtown Walking Tour Podcast**

Mr. Ricci gave an update on the podcast. He mentioned that the podcast is up and running. He still needs to make corrections to the script. He also stated that one local business owner was interested in being included in the next podcast. He plans to have all of the contributing properties in the Downtown Historic District included in the second podcast to focus more on the historical aspects than the Comprehensive Plan future aspects.

Mr. Hays complimented the podcast and its functionality. He viewed it as a living document and asked if it would be easy to add new content and to insert new stops. Mr. Ricci said the PocketSights platform is conducive to adding new stops and reconfiguring the route. He stated that the only limiting factor at the moment is staff time.

Ms. Pagliuso asked about the Whittaker Building. She stated that the owners of the building were unaware that the podcast existed, and that she would like the owners to be informed when they are mentioned in the podcast. Mr. Ricci stated that he spoke with a co-owner of the Whittaker Building, and the person said that since they were not in a place where they hoped to be that they wanted to wait to do an interview. He stated that staff could send snail mail to the property owners expressing that their buildings are being included in the historic properties podcast.

### **Historic Preservation Month Proclamation**

Mr. Ricci mentioned that Mayor Marlin recorded the proclamation for the May 2021 Historic Preservation Month on-site across from the Princess Theater/Cinema Gallery. It can be viewed on the City's UPTV YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CuSEw3R5dE>).

## **HISTORIC PROPERTY ACTIVITIES:**

### **Certificate of Appropriateness – Issued and Not Issued**

- *1404 South Lincoln Avenue* – Mr. Ricci mentioned that he emailed the property manager and asked for the sign posts to be removed. As of this meeting, the posts were still there, so he planned to follow up with a Zoning Ordinance Violation Warning.

Chair Novak asked if the owner was still the same. Mr. Ricci said that as far as he knows Pierre Moulin is still the owner. Mr. Shepard said that he would contact Mr. Moulin and ask him to remove the sign posts.

- *502 and 504 West Elm Street* – Mr. Ricci stated that the owner, Jonah Weisskopf, emailed sketches for the stair and porch railings. Mr. Weisskopf wanted to do the stair railings in vinyl at 504 West Elm since that is what is already there. It would be unreasonable to require a higher-quality material from what existed when the house was landmarked. On the other hand, the gingerbread bric-a-brac at 502 West Elm is made of wood, so it would be reasonable to require wood material for the stair railings. Ms. Pagliuso noted that on the City's website, there were pictures of 502 and 504 West Elm Street posted of when they were landmarked. Neither property had porch railings in the pictures. She did not know if the pictures were older than when the two properties were landmarked, or if the pictures were added when porch renovations were done after being landmarked. Mr. Ricci stated that he would research and determine if the porch railings existed when the two properties were landmarked.
- *Ricker House* – Mr. Ricci said that he had been in contact with the owner, Dan Newman. Mr. Ricci gave Mr. Newman a deadline of June 2, 2021 to submit a Certificate of Appropriateness application for the roof replacement; one has not been submitted as of this meeting. Mr. Ricci stated that he would proceed by issuing Mr. Newman a Zoning Ordinance Violation Warning.

- List of Other Properties with no status change including:
  1. *2 Buena Vista Court* – stucco repair
  2. *4 Buena Vista Court* – stucco repair
  3. *8 Buena Vista Court* – stucco repair
  4. *801 West Oregon* – waste container on west side of house is a dumpster being used for interior renovations; sign posts are still on the property
  5. *1404 South Lincoln Street and 502 West Elm Street* – old sign posts and cabinets are still on the properties
  6. *806 East Main Street* – casement windows appeared to be replaced; house is for sale

Ms. Pagliuso mentioned that the Lindley House was also for sale. She asked how we could alert new homeowners when they purchase a historic landmark property. Mr. Ricci stated that the easiest thing to do would be to put together a cover letter and brochures to give to the realtor when a landmark property is put up for sale letting them know to inform interested buyers that there are benefits to owning a historic property.

Ms. Pagliuso asked if owners of historically-landmarked properties received free building permits. Mr. Ricci said that this is not codified in the City's Schedule of Fees, but he was trying to work on this as time allows.

Ms. Pollock wondered if it would be possible to tag or flag the property record cards for historical properties at the Township Assessor's Office. Appraisers and realtors pull records at the Assessor's Office on properties that are for sale. If there was a flag, then they could include that in their report. Mr. Ricci stated that he would speak with the Cunningham Township Assessor, Wayne Williams, and see if there was a way to do this. He mentioned that the City began using CitizenServe to keep records on all of the properties in the City. CitizenServe flags historical properties, so if someone applies for a building permit or a demolition permit, City staff is notified that the property is historically relevant.

Mr. Shepard asked if the historical status could also be included on the title for properties. Mr. Ricci stated that it should already show up on the title, because ordinances for historic landmarks and districts are recorded with their address and parcel identification numbers (PINs).

Mr. Shepard felt it would be difficult for someone to not discover in the purchasing process that the property they intend to purchase is of historical value. Ms. Pollock explained that the title research happens further into the purchasing process. She would like for interested buyers to learn about a property's historical value sooner.

#### **Dr. Ellis Subdivision – Historic or Neighborhood Conservation District**

Mr. Ricci stated that City staff was considering a Neighborhood Conservation District for the Dr. Ellis Subdivision rather than a Historic District. The reason was because a Historic District requires an added level of environmental review by the State Historic Preservation Office when state or federal funds are used for projects in that district. This would slow the process down even when it involved emergency repairs, rehabilitations or renovations. The Neighborhood Conservation District application does not trigger the same added review.

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Mr. Ricci said that the representatives of the Dr. Ellis Subdivision simply want acknowledgement of the cultural or historical aspects of their neighborhood. They did not want anything stopping the neighborhood from getting improvements approved. So, City staff will continue to work with them to pursue a Neighborhood Conservation District.

### **Urbana Landmark Hotel**

Mr. Ricci noted that City staff had been in contact with the building owner, Icon Hospitality, LLC. They were hoping to submit Certificate of Appropriateness applications soon in order to meet their development agreement timeline.

Chair Novak mentioned that they have two vacancies on the Historic Preservation Commission. Kim Smith chose not to be reappointed. She stated that if the hotel starts to move quickly, the Commission would need enough members to have a quorum to hear the Certificate of Appropriateness cases.

### **Other Discussion**

Chair Novak asked if there was anything that the Commission members could do to reduce the workload of City staff. Mr. Ricci said that the members could record podcast features. The members could also draft and review paragraphs for the podcast scripts. He mentioned that the monitoring of the landmarks was helpful, too.

Ms. Pagliuso mentioned the roof was replaced without approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the Gothic Revival Cottage located at 108 North Webber.

## **12. STUDY SESSION**

There was none.

## **13. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were none.

## **14. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Hays moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted,



Marcus Ricci, AICP  
Historic Preservation Commission Recording Secretary