

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE
ROCK ISLAND PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Regular Meeting

4:00 p.m.

April 28, 2010

Location: Personnel Conference Room, Rock Island City Hall, 1528 3rd Avenue, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present () Absent

(X) Steve Andich
(X) Bob Braun
(X) Lendol Calder
(X) Kent Cornish

(X) Jane Koski
(X) Mark McVey
(X) Jeff Dismer (Assoc.)
() Daryl Empen (Assoc.)
(X) Diane Oestreich (Assoc.)

Staff Present: Alan Carmen, Jill Doak

Others Present: Linda Anderson, Mike Batz, David Cordes, Brian Hollenback, Deb Kuntzi, Stephen Warren

Chairman Braun called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

Approval of minutes of the February 24, 2010 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Koski moved to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2010 regular meeting. Commissioner Andich seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Presentation to Commissioners Anderson and Sparkman

Chairman Braun presented Commissioner Anderson with a plaque for her six years (for a second time) of service to the Commission. He also acknowledged Commissioner Sparkman.

Case #2010-02 – Consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness for 1625 21st Street, which is located in Highland Park Historic District

Ms. Doak gave the staff report. She said staff recommended the Commission approve replacement of the side porch steps as proposed, removal of the concrete patio and sidewalk as shown in the application, and replacement of an existing concrete sidewalk with a combination of regular concrete bordered with stamped, colored concrete because all requests meet the standards of the *Residential Design Guidelines*.

Mr. Batz, 1625 21st Street, addressed the Commission. He stressed one of the main reasons he and his wife are pursuing the application is the two inch deviation in height for the current sidewalk, which forces stormwater to flow into the basement rather than away from it. He said the neighbor has a front walk using pavers that is not original. He noted there are a number of brick houses in the neighborhood, and the thought was to integrate the house more using the brick stamp pattern. He said it is a very long walk and the brick border will upgrade the visual appearance a little.

Associate member Dismer said he appreciated the drawings. He said one area of concern is the basement window. He asked if the regrading and raised concrete sidewalk will encroach on the window.

Mr. Batz said the original proposal was to extend the porch steps and block the window. He said with the redesign, the steps will go right up to the lower sill on the window. He said he plans to seal the window tightly to prevent water infiltration.

Associate member Dismer asked for clarification on which brick border was being used.

Mr. Batz said it will be the simple border with the brick touching on their sides, just one layer deep.

Associate member Dismer agreed that he liked the simple border best.

Associate member Oestreich asked if there would be a slight pitch of the concrete sidewalk away from the house.

Mr. Batz said he has not asked for that specifically, but will speak with the contractor about it.

Associate member Dismer asked about a railing.

Mr. Batz said the application was revised to take out the need for a railing on the house. However, he agreed that some height might be needed on the wall. He said he would explore placing some additional concrete blocks at the bottom and capping them with the existing concrete.

Commissioner Koski said a strategically placed concrete planter might take care of the fall risk on the wall. She moved to accept staff recommendation regarding the Certificate of Appropriateness application.

Commissioner Calder seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Section 106 Review for 1206/08 19th Street and 1210 19th Street

Ms. Doak gave the staff report. She said staff recommended the Commission comment to the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) that the most significant factors for 1206-08 19th Street and 1210 19th Street are in their context for massing and scale on the block, not for individual architectural or historical associations, and that if replaced with well-designed and compatible new construction, the overall sense of time and place should not be affected in the Broadway Historic District.

Brian Hollenback, Executive Director of Renaissance Rock Island, addressed the Commission. He said the Commission is considering demolition, which is the City portion of the Neighborhood Stabilization Grant, but he noted the new construction is part of the Rock Island Economic Growth Corporation's responsibility in the NSP grant. He said he gave a report to the Broadway Historic District Association board, and allowed the Board to rank which of the new construction designs they liked. He said the recommendation from Rock Island Economic Growth Corporation would be for two designs eventually, probably with slightly larger floor plans that what is shown in the packet.

Associate member Dismer asked what in total is being demolished, with the question that many are not in Broadway.

Mr. Carmen said most of the structures are in the Old Chicago neighborhood, and those have all been approved by IHPA.

Commissioner Koski asked if there are any materials inside worth salvaging.

Mr. Carmen said the City usually works out an arrangement with Habitat ReStore to salvage, providing it is safe to enter the structure.

Associate member Oestreich said she has a serious problem with tearing these structures down. She said she assumes the new construction would not have a foundation and have a width comparable to other structures on the street. She said she really sees nothing wrong with the double house. She said the neighborhood has seen much worse houses come back. She said part of the problem is that these buildings had an owner who wouldn't do anything with them. She said these buildings shouldn't be demolished if they don't have to be. She said she recognizes there are structural issues with 1210 19th Street, but the double house is not condemnable. She said she would rather see the demolition funds put into rehab.

Mr. Hollenback said GROWTH is not involved in the demolition. He said it is more of an initiative from the Inspections Division as to which buildings were recommended for NSP demolition.

Commissioner McVey said he concurred with Ms. Oestreich.

Ms. Anderson (former Commissioner) asked if the City or GROWTH can use the NSP funds for rehab or if it must be used for demolition and new construction.

Mr. Carmen said some of the NSP funds are for acquisition, some are for rehab, and one element is committing \$400,000 for demolition. He said the City came up with a list of potential candidates based on condition, quality, ownership, blight level, abandonment, vacancy status and whether the City was in a position to get a right-of-entry to demolish. He said the City proceeded with GROWTH to look at options. He said it is not a situation where City staff is strongly interested in seeing removal of elements in Broadway. He said the decision to include these two structures was based on the belief there is a less likely opportunity to rehab them at an affordable cost. He said there will not be much ability to do something with them in terms of rehab, and they will continue to be an enforcement issue.

Deb Kuntzi, 842 20th Street, former Commissioner and current president of Broadway Historic District Association, asked how long the two buildings have been empty.

Mr. Carmen said a long time. He said they are in foreclosure and controlled by a credit union.

Mr. Cornish asked if it is practical to assume there will be money available to rehab them.

Mr. Hollenback said no. He said GROWTH is already investing over \$1 million in the Broadway neighborhood. He said the neighborhood has the highest concentration of foreclosures. Under the regulations that come with NSP, the requirement to use prevailing wage pushes investment toward new construction rather than renovation. He said there has to be a cost-reasonable test that must be met so that agencies don't oversubsidize. He said rehab is not financially feasible and an income restriction of 120% of area median income for this size of house makes it difficult to maintain. He said GROWTH has to look at what type of financing gap exists between the cost of the rehab and whether a family making \$70,000 annually can afford the mortgage and maintenance.

Commissioner McVey asked if GROWTH can build a house that will fit the neighborhood and still be affordable to a family making \$70,000.

Mr. Hollenback said prevailing wage lends itself more to new construction.

Commissioner McVey said a 2,000 square foot house will look tiny on the combined lot.

Mr. Hollenback said it might not look so out of place if the house is center and the lot is regraded.

Mr. Cornish said he hopes someone comes along that can put in a lot of sweat equity, or Broadway will get a new house that is affordable, but smaller and not in complete character with the neighborhood.

Ms. Kuntzi said there is a lot of participation in the neighborhood from 20th to 23rd Street, but 19th Street has always been hard to get participation. She said it is a rough block. She said she very recently turned in 20 abandoned cars on 19th Street. She said a new house might give a boost to that part of Broadway.

Associate member Oestreich said the neighborhood association has not seen any participation from the owners of new construction, with the exception of one. She said most of the investment in Broadway is still done with private money. She said structural issues with 1210 may be the death of the building. She asked if the City can attempt to sell the properties if they have a right-of-entry.

Mr. Carmen said the right-of-entry is limited to demolition.

Commissioner Koski said if the house had more appeal, the Commission would be discussing that as an issue. She also said that if it were a good example of architecture in the neighborhood, there would be a better chance of marketing and selling it. She said these two buildings are not particularly appealing and would be tougher to market and sell, especially the duplex.

Mr. Cordes (Commissioner with pending reappointment), said there was a big argument in East Davenport about a developer tearing down something significant to build something new. He said tearing down something old to put in something new doesn't work in a historic area. He said there is a request for demolition for two buildings. He asked what is the level of integrity of each building, what is the loss of integrity, what is the significance of the buildings individually, what is the impact to the overall integrity of the district, what is that level

if the buildings are demolished and replaced. He said nobody wants to get on the bandwagon to tear down buildings. He asked if the Commission thinks the request is approvable. He asked what is the significance and what will the loss of the buildings do to the overall integrity of the district.

Associate member Dimer said the most damaging consequence is if they are demolished and left demolished. He said GROWTH has a plan. He said he thinks a design can be made for an appropriate home to fit on the two lots. He said some potential buyers might want the additional property and not the traditional small lot that is characteristic of much of Broadway and this block. He said the new construction with the larger lot would have some desirable marketing potential in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Calder said he only purchased his Broadway home because the larger lot came with it.

Associate member Dimer said there are ways to have a small house have a larger presence on a wide lot. He said there has to be a mechanism for the new infill. He noted the two historic properties are not outstanding and one may not be structurally sound. He said he is in favor because the positives outweigh the negatives.

Commissioner Cornish said he is not sure either alternative is optimal. He said the probability of finding someone to rehab either of the properties is less than zero. He said if the status quo were maintained, the city and neighborhood will find this house in even more deteriorated condition. He said he favors the staff recommendation also.

Mr. Carmen reminded the Commission that their action is a recommendation to IHPA in Springfield. He said the agency will make the decision, and the Commission does not have veto authority.

Ms. Kuntzi said the Broadway board did not take a vote on these two properties, although they were informed of the possible demolition. She said the board did not have a problem with the demolitions.

Mr. Stephen Warren (pending new appointee to the Commission) said demolition sounds fine, but it is linked to the designs offered. He asked what if something really atrocious goes up.

Mr. Hollenback said GROWTH will come back to the Commission and IHPA for review of elevations, materials and scale.

Ms. Doak said the new construction review is also a recommendation to IHPA, but local comments are very strongly considered by the state agency.

Commissioner Cornish asked if it is possible the funds will dry up. He asked how confident everyone is that new construction will occur.

Mr. Hollenback said the money is committed. He said it is just a question of whether the new construction will occur on this lot or another one.

Ms. Anderson said if the Preservation Commission's role is to preserve the district, then demolition is the last resort. She said she wouldn't want the decision to reflect that demolition is better than nothing. She said you have to go as far as you can to avoid demolition. She said a block with infill does look different.

Chairman Braun said he lives two blocks away, and would love to see something new. However, he said it is changing the character of the street to take down two larger houses and put in one smaller one in a block that has seen no demolition. He said if these properties are not in danger of collapse, they should be preserved. He said if a private owner came in and wanted to tear down two houses, what would the commission say?

Mr. Cordes said the Commission would have no ability to comment on the demolition of two houses by a private owner in a National Register district.

Mr. Warren said the condition the properties are in now indicates they are pretty obviously not going to be rehabbed. He said no one is going to buy a duplex in that condition and rehab it profitably. He said when you take in the overall picture, it makes more sense to take them down. He said in a perfect world, we would save

them. He said that is not on the table now. He said it is tear them down or watch them continue to deteriorate. He said that is the best of two bad options.

Commissioner Koski said thank goodness there is this option. She said it will perhaps stem the slide of the neighborhood. She called the question.

She moved to accept the staff recommendation for 1206-08 and 1210 19th Street.

Commissioner Cornish seconded the motion. Commissioners voted 5-1 in favor of the motion, with Chairman Braun voting no and Commissioners Andich, Calder, Cornish, Koski and McVey voting yes.

Associate member Oestreich said it would be good if the people on this block could be engaged.

Ms. Doak urged the Commissioners to comment on the new construction plans submitted.

Mr. Cordes said the first three are all good, but each has a minor element that could be improved.

Mr. Hollenback said he would take all comments by the end of June and provided his email address.

Comment to Planning Commission on Preliminary PUD Amendment for 321 24th Street

Ms. Doak gave the staff report. She said staff recommended the Preservation Commission comment favorably to the Planning Commission regarding the reduction in the number of residential units; addition of the commercial/retail space on the first floor of the historic office building; construction of a covered entrance and common room space on the south façade; and changes to the parking lot, traffic flow and building footprint as amended from the Preliminary PUD, along with the variance need for parking space.

Associate member Oestreich asked if the old plan is dead or if the wings that were in the December 2008 PUD will ever be built.

Mr. Hollenback said the wings will probably not be built. He said the project is targeting 1st Army families. He said family-sized units have a waiting list at One Moline Place. He said they don't want to cluster low-income.

Commissioner Calder asked if 3rd Avenue will be repaved.

Mr. Carmen said it will stay as is for now.

Mr. Hollenback said curb cuts on 3rd Avenue will be eliminated.

Commissioner McVey asked about parking for the commercial space.

Mr. Hollenback said it will probably have parking to the north. He said there are some environmental issues that may require that area to be paved over. He said they will get more specific with parking when the end use is known.

Mr. Cordes said he is happy the scale is not as massive as previous PUD.

Associate member Oestreich said she wishes more of the parking were in the back.

Associate member Dimer said he likes the aspect with the green and the children's garden to the north.

Commissioner Cornish moved to accept staff recommendation.

Commissioner Andich seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Hollenback noted for the Commission that the project may revisit historic tax credits retroactively, but the many interior changes seemed to prohibit it at this time.

Associate member Oestreich asked how many commercial entities will be in the building.

Mr. Hollenback said one or two, depending on space needs. He said just the envelope will be developed at this stage.

Mr. Carmen left the meeting.

Discussion on 2009 CLG Grant

Ms. Doak gave the staff report. She said there has been a request sent to IHPA to amend the 2009 CLG grant, which was for a market feasibility study. She said the Artspace project was partially paid before the grant period and the conclusion of the project is unlikely to move forward before September 30, 2010, which is the end of the grant. She said the City has therefore requested to use the remaining \$12,500 for a condition assessment for the exterior of the building. She said this would still be very useful in marketing the building, or the City could use it for short- or long-term stabilization. She said local architects and engineers would be asked to bid on the project for what the City could obtain in terms of the condition assessment priorities guided by the National Park Service Preservation Brief on mothballing buildings.

The Preservation Commission was in general agreement that this was a good plan.

Discussion on 2010 CLG Grant

Ms. Doak gave the staff report. She said the award for the grant for the weatherization workshop was smaller than the request, and the budget had been amended to reflect the smaller grant amount. She asked the commissioner members for a consensus on the amended budget and work scope.

There was agreement to eliminate the bus tour, the gratuities and slightly reduce most other line items.

Ms. Doak asked commission members to recommend a LEED-certified engineer who could address mechanical systems for historic buildings. She said work would progress on the grant over the next several weeks, and the signed grant agreement would be returned to IHPA tomorrow.

Illinois State Historical Society Award for MoSUS Project

Ms. Anderson gave the report. She said the Commission received an award of Special Achievement, which she believed was the highest category of award they provided. She said most of the awards were for books or scholarly publications. She said there were some nice compliments about the project.

Ms. Doak thanked Commissioner Anderson and her husband for attending on behalf of the Commission.

Annual Historic Preservation Commission Seminar

Ms. Doak said this would be a good conference to attend, particularly since it has a topic complimentary to the weatherization workshop the Commission will be sponsoring in August.

Associate member Oestreich and Commissioners Koski and Cordes indicated that they might be interested.

Ms. Doak said there will be scholarships offered through IHPA and the CLG program and to let her know for sure if interested.

CLG Report

Ms. Doak reminded Commission members to turn in their resumes and educational activities for the CLG Report. She said the report will be on the May agenda.

There being no other business, the Commission adjourned to enjoy cheesecake with outgoing member Linda Anderson.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan M. Carmen, Secretary
Rock Island Preservation Commission