

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

Special Meeting

4:00 p.m.

September 2, 2010

Location: Council Chamber, Rock Island City Hall, 1528 3rd Avenue, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present () Absent

(X) Steve Andich

() Mark McVey

(X) Bob Braun

() John Strieter

(X) Lendol Calder

(X) Stephen Warren

(X) David Cordes

() Jeff Dismer (Assoc.)

(X) Kent Cornish

() Daryl Empen (Assoc.)

(X) Jane Koski

() Diane Oestreich (Assoc.)

() Linda Anderson (Assoc.)

Staff Present: Alan Carmen, Jill Doak

Others Present: Terry Anderson, Greg Champagne, Julie Hahn, Alicia Shuman, Kate Hotle

Chairman Braun called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of the August 25, 2010 Regular Meeting

Ms. Doak reported that Associate Member Oestreich emailed a correction to the minutes that the Highland Park Tour on Sept. 21 is open to the public and not aimed mainly at Highland Park residents.

Commissioner Andich moved to approve the minutes as corrected for the August 25, 2010 regular meeting.

Commissioner Cornish seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Comment on Special Use Permit Application for 2300 18th Avenue

Ms. Doak passed around a letter provided by Ms. Hahn, the SUP applicant.

Ms. Doak gave the staff report. She said staff recommended the Commission comment to the Rock Island City Council that expansion of non-residential uses on 18th Avenue adjacent to Highland Park will have a negative impact on the residential nature of the Historic District, making the district, which enjoys some of the healthiest property values in the City, more vulnerable to lack of investment due to uncertainty of land use.

Chairman Braun asked if there is anything the applicant would like to add.

Ms. Julie Hahn, 67 Crestwood Terrace, Davenport, addressed the Commission. She said she wanted to make the atmosphere of the veterinary clinic like a home for the animal patients and her son. She said she doesn't want it to look like a conventional clinic in order to decrease the level of anxiety for the patients and the clients. She said the improvements she plans to make will increase the value of the property and won't be detrimental as far as visual effects. In the front, she plans to make it more beautiful. She said the sign will be very small, classic and nothing extravagant. She said she intends to do no structural changes and intends to keep the property as a home and eventually sell it as a home.

Commissioner Cordes asked if the applicant plans on living there.

Ms. Hahn said she will not live there and the upstairs won't be used except for storage or for a space for her young son to play.

Commissioner Andich asked what kind of sign will be installed.

Ms. Hahn said it will be a freestanding sign with garden lights on it, not floodlights.

Mr. Carmen said staff prefers to not see that location converted from residential. He said the Special Use Permit is almost a contractual arrangement with the City that allows the City to control various aspects of the site and business.

Commissioner Koski said there is so much commercial already on 18th Avenue. She said her initial feeling was that a good business is preferable to an empty house or a bad neighbor. She said she does not personally see a problem with the request.

Commissioner Cordes said that if he were going to use a veterinary clinic, then the type being proposed is very interesting and would be appealing. He said he believes Ms. Hahn's intentions, goals and objectives are laudable, but it is the Commission's responsibility to determine whether there is an impact on the Highland Park Historic District. He said he went up to the property and saw that it is very residential in character. He said he also observed that further west the land use is piecemeal, and that what was once residential has been changed incrementally, step by step, and that the impact is not as good as it could be on the historic district. He said Highland Park would be better if there were not commercial there. He said the fact that there have already been some undesirable changes doesn't make it a good reason to make one more. He said this operation as explained would probably not have as much impact as some other commercial development. He also noted that this is not directly across the street from the Highland Park blocks that have residences, but even though it is across from the park, the impact should be looked at in the same way. He said the applicant has done her homework, but it seems to him that there must be another place that meets the requirements of her business that would not have the impact of bringing in a commercial development where there shouldn't be one. He said he would have to vote against the proposed change in use.

Commissioner Calder said the central question seems to be what is the impact to the neighborhood.

Commissioner Cordes said it is an issue of integrity to the District. He said it is part of the historic integrity in being the way it was built, which is as a residential area. He said it wasn't mixed, but was a residential development at the edge of town. He noted commercial nodes were further down the street and that commercial development has had a detrimental impact on the residential quality of the District.

Commissioner Warren said 2300 18th Avenue is not a landmark property. He asked staff to elaborate about the Special Use Permit and what requirements could be imposed.

Mr. Carmen said it is not a landmark and not part of Highland Park. He said the edge of the Historic District is the center of 18th Avenue and extends around the Reservoir. He said a Special Use Permit allows for uses that are not in keeping with the zoning. He said the request is for a business that is not allowed in a residential area. He said signs, parking, employees and customer loads can be written into an ordinance if approved by City Council.

Commissioner Warren asked if It's A Kids' World and Ben Farrar Insurance Agency started as Special Use Permits.

Mr. Carmen said some of the commercial uses along 18th Avenue started as authorized uses in an R-4 District. He said there is no longer the authority to do that kind of change under the current Zoning Ordinance. He said there are certain areas of 18th Avenue that are intended to be commercial, residential or transitional. He said he believed this area was intended to be residential. [It was later found that the Future Land Use Map indicates the property at 2300 18th Avenue to be transitional].

Commissioner Cornish asked if the neighborhood can comment as he sees some residents in the audience.

Mr. Carmen said this is the Commission's opportunity to comment and there will be a public hearing before City Council, but the Commission can allow other comments from the public.

Commissioner Andich said he would appreciate hearing from the neighbors as they are closer to the decision.

Ms. Shuman, 1717 21st Street and President of Highland Park Historic Neighborhood Association, said she was just informed of this request this past week. She said she represents a variety of neighbors with a lot of viewpoints. She said the neighborhood has a lot of land uses in the area that they wish were not there. She said there are problems with deliveries, traffic and lots of cars. She said the neighborhood also has houses that are multi-family and they have tried to change the intensity of use for those through rezoning. She said her personal feeling for 2300 18th Avenue is that she can think of worse uses, but it has been sitting empty a long time. She said she feels for the people in the neighborhood around her, and that a change in use can attack the Highland Park neighborhood fiber. She said she weighs pros and cons. She said you have to welcome business, but she wishes it were more owner-occupied.

Chairman Braun said the Broadway neighborhood has gone through the Special Use Permit process for home-based businesses. He said in one instance, the neighborhood gave a letter of support. He said as far as he knows, there aren't any problems.

Commissioner Cordes asked that in those neighborhood Special Use Permits that were granted, whether or not they were home occupations or strictly a business.

Chairman Braun said the businesses were either run by an owner or a renter who lived there.

Ms. Doak noted that the intensity of use is higher for the veterinary clinic than is typically requested in a neighborhood setting, like the examples in Broadway. She said many Special Use Permits in residential areas don't even have customers, and the situation would not be the same here, even as far as adding a four-car parking slab. She added that even with a Special Use Permit, the owner would be able to make interior changes, unregulated except for building codes, which could change the residential nature of the property.

Commissioner Cornish moved that it is the sense of the Preservation Commission that the Special Use Permit request for 2300 18th Avenue would have a neutral effect on Highland Park.

Commissioner Koski seconded the motion.

Commissioner Calder said he could support this motion as it is pretty benign.

Commissioner Koski asked if someone with a lot of teenagers wanted to add a parking slab, would the Commission have any control or comment over that.

Mr. Carmen said the City would only calculate the stormwater grading and drainage permit for this location.

Commissioner Cordes said he would look at this situation a lot different if it were a home occupation. He said then it would still be residential with another use as opposed to an outright conversion to a commercial use.

Commissioner Andich said the motion does not say anything. He said either the Commission should vote for the request or against it.

Commissioner Cornish said his intent with the motion was to say the impact would be neither positive nor negative. He said it doesn't help or hurt the District.

Commissioner Calder suggested a friendly amendment that the request has no adverse effect on the Historic District.

Commissioner Koski seconded the motion.

Commissioner Kent called the question on the amendment.

The Commission voted 6-1 in favor of the amendment, with Commissioner Warren voting against.

Commissioner Andich called the question on the motion.

The Commission voted 5-2 on the motion, with Commissioners Cordes and Warren voting against.

Ms. Doak noted the comments for the Commission will be part of the report for this case for the September 13 City Council meeting.

Commissioner Kent asked if the report will reflect that it was not a unanimous vote.

Mr. Carmen said yes.

Other Business

Ms. Doak said Landmarks Illinois has requested that the Commission consider nominating one or some of the buildings from the 100 Most Significant Unprotected Structures list to their Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties.

Commissioner Kent asked when that decision needed to be made.

Ms. Doak said the applications are usually due in December or January.

Commissioner Kent asked that it be discussed when the Commission has more time to review the MoSUS list and the impact of the nomination.

Ms. Doak noted that the MoSUS project did not receive a Driehaus Award, despite being asked to submit it for the education category by Landmarks Illinois.

There was some discussion about the merit of the book idea versus the website idea for the 2011 grant application.

Ms. Doak said the grants will be due Nov. 29, and waiting until October to discuss them will be difficult.

It was decided the Commission would meet on September 22 to discuss the 2011 CLG grant even if no applications were submitted by the meeting deadline.

Commissioners Andich, Calder and Cornish all spoke about the Chippiannock Cemetery Looney Tour and the good attendance and high quality of the program.

There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan M. Carmen, Secretary
Rock Island Preservation Commission