



APPROVED

**MINUTES OF THE PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING OF JULY 16, 2014
CITY OF ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS**

The Rock Island Preservation Commission held its regularly scheduled meeting in the City Hall Council Chambers at 1528 – 3rd Avenue, Rock Island, Illinois. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Colleen Vollman at 5:31 PM. Present were Commissioners Brent Bogen, Kent Cornish, Anthony Heddlesten, John Strieter and Colleen Vollman. Associate Members Linda Anderson Jeff Dimer, Daryl Empen and Diane Oestreich were also present. Commissioner Lo Milani arrived at approximately 5:40 PM. Commissioners Lendol Calder, Craig Kavensky and Sue Swords were absent. Also in attendance were Ben Griffith and Brandy Howe.

AN ORDER APPROVING THE WRITTEN AGENDA

The Commission considered the matter of approval of the written agenda. Commissioner Bogen made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Strieter seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the agenda.

AN ORDER APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 16, 2014 MEETING

The Commission considered the matter of approval of the minutes of the April 16, 2014 meeting. Commissioner Cornish made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Strieter seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes as presented.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER ANTHONY HEDDLESTEN

Chairman Vollman introduced new member Anthony Heddlesten to the Commission and asked him to tell everyone a little bit about himself.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

Chairman Vollman opened the floor for nominations of Chairman and Vice-Chairman, asking the Commissioners to make their nominations separately.

Commissioner Strieter nominated Kent Cornish for Chairman. Commissioner Cornish stated that he had served two terms and respectfully declined. Associate Member Oestreich stated that while she couldn't nominate, she would recommend Brent Bogen as Chairman. Commissioner Strieter nominated Brent Bogen for Chairman and he accepted. Chairman Vollman asked if there were any other nominations and none were made. Commissioner Strieter moved to close nominations for Chairman. Chairman Vollman asked the Commissioners to vote by show of hands and Brent Bogen was unanimously elected Chairman.

Chairman Vollman then asked for nominations for Vice-Chairman. Commissioner Strieter nominated Colleen Vollman for Vice-Chairman and she accepted. Chairman Vollman asked if there were any other nominations and none were made. Commissioner Strieter moved to close nominations for Vice-Chairman. Chairman Vollman asked the Commissioners to vote by show of hands and Colleen Vollman was unanimously elected Vice-Chairman.

Following the election, Commissioner Strieter asked Planning staff to review the terms of the Commissioners and Mr. Griffith provided a summary of the Commissioners whose terms were due to expire in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

COMMENT ON A VARIANCE FOR 544 – 23RD STREET, ROCK ISLAND (LEVI HAVERSTICK HOUSE)

Next there came before the Commission comments on a variance request for 544 – 23rd Street in Rock Island, a locally designated landmark, known as the Levi Haverstick House. Ms. Howe provided a brief review of the staff report that had been included with the meeting packet. She stated the applicant has requested a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals to allow a decorative metal fence in a front yard 60 inches in height in lieu of the maximum 42 inches. The applicant is also requesting to allow the fence to extend all the way to the corner of the property, located on a corner lot, in lieu of maintaining the 25-foot sight distance triangle as required by Code. Ms. Howe stated that the applicant had not provided any photos or details of the proposed fence and the applicant had indicated they needed the taller fence and larger front yard area for their dog.

There was much discussion of the height and location of the proposed fence. The Commissioners were concerned with the height, especially since the house next door has an existing fence 42 inches in height. They felt that the 60-inch high fence would look disproportionate and out of sync with others in the area. Some Commissioners stated they could perhaps go along with a fence 48 inches in height, but it would depend on the type and configuration of the fence and its materials. They referenced taller decorative metal fences in the neighborhood and why they seemed to be appropriate at their specific locations.

The Commissioners expressed concern with the location of the fence at the corner of the property. Commissioner Heddlesten stated the boulevard was much narrower along 6th Avenue than along 23rd Street and was concerned about visibility being further impaired at a corner that was already challenged. Mr. Griffith explained that the City Engineer had been

asked to conduct a site visit to evaluate the corner and how the proposed fence may impact visibility, stating that Planning staff had not yet received his comments.

After further discussion, Commissioner Milani made a motion to recommend limiting the fence to 42 inches in height, clarification of the setbacks and property lines, and to provide photos and details of the proposed fence when the Certificate of Appropriateness is submitted for review. Commissioner Heddlesten seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ON PRESERVATION ORDINANCE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (SECTION 11-91)

Chairman Vollman stated that the discussion of the statement of purpose was placed on the agenda at the request of Associate Member Anderson in an e-mail about what the Commission should be doing. She then asked Associate Member Anderson to explain. Associate Member Anderson stated that the Commission should promote historic preservation and that there had been many missed opportunities in the last few months. She had proposed a list of items to move forward, including: develop a Preservation Plan for Rock Island; investigate a program that would foster appreciation and encourage sympathetic rehabilitation of our nationally significant World War I neighborhood based on concepts described in the Historic Chicago Bungalow Initiative; promote National Register Historic District nominations based on the survey data compiled by James Jacobsen; review our supplies of walking brochures, investigate ways to make them more accessible to hand held digital devices, and develop a brochure to promote their use; develop a presentation piece that answers the question “Why Preserve?”; professional development for Preservation Commissioners; and establishing a “demolition by neglect” ordinance.

Mr. Jaan Sturgis of 717 – 22nd Street, Moline, approached the podium to speak. He asked if there was an overhead of the preservation ordinance’s statement of purpose and Mr. Griffith gave him a paper copy.

Commissioner Milani commented that the general condition of housing stock in Rock Island was in distress, historic or not, and that many homeowners simply did not know how to perform basic maintenance and routine upkeep of their homes, in addition to some homeowners who had physical and financial limitations. He stated that the City is constantly citing properties that did not meet minimum codes and that probably even his own home could be cited if examined closely, giving an example about a collapsed basement wall due to improper direction of drainage downspouts.

Associate Member Empen stated that with all the new building materials available on the market now, it may be appropriate to review them and provide guidance to homeowners.

Associate Member Oestreich stated that there were a large number of houses built before 1960 and that 60-70% could be considered historic, but many could fall prey to demolition by

neglect. She cited Detroit for having a large number of historic houses which had become vacant and abandoned and had no idea about how to prevent it from happening or reversing it.

Commissioner Heddlesten stated that educational materials should be made available for anyone interested in historic preservation. Chairman Vollman referenced the Renovate QC website and there was a brief discussion about the website, its contents and who was using it. There was discussion about the City providing assistance to owners of historic properties, whether in the form of a grant or low-interest loan that could be a revolving loan fund for historic properties and their restoration and maintenance. Several funding sources were discussed, including a CLG grant from IHPA, a hotel tax which could be split for maintenance and demolition, and other potential funding sources such as the City, the State and Landmarks Illinois.

Mr. Sturgis asked what percentage of Ms. Howe's time was devoted to historic preservation. She answered that it was hard to say, but depended on what was submitted for the Preservation Commission to review and act upon for their meeting agendas, adding that lately, it had been 10-15%. A lengthy discussion began amongst the members about how much current staff time was being devoted to historic preservation compared to previous staff members.

Commissioner Milani suggested writing a column for the Argus on various home maintenance topics such as "why are downspouts important?" and the like give homeowners, not just those who owned historic properties, basic home maintenance information. A lengthy discussion began amongst the members about how to go about writing a column for the newspaper and other ways to get information out to the public, including use of the Renovate QC website and social media.

Chairman Vollman stated that the Commission had discussed several of these items over the past several months and still haven't been able to decide what direction to take. She proposed that the Preservation Commission meet every month hereafter to figure it out or else there's just no point. She asked the members if they would be willing to come to the meetings prepared to discuss these items. Chairman Vollman said she would reach out to IHPA and find out about status of CLG grants for the upcoming year and asked Commissioner Milani if he would be willing to contact the Argus to find out about writing articles discussed earlier. There was a short discussion amongst the members about this idea and all agreed to meet and discuss these items whether there were any other action items to review on upcoming agendas or not.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Griffith was asked why the house on 9th Avenue which the Commission had provided comments to IHPA had not been demolished. He explained that the SHPO had sent two separate letters requesting additional information and comments from the Preservation Commission over a five month span. By the time it had finally been cleared for demolition by

the SHPO, it had to be removed from the demolition list, since bids had already been submitted and the demolition process begun. Mr. Griffith had no explanation as to why the SHPO had not simply requested all the information, including comments from the Preservation Commission in their first letter, because if so, the house would already have been demolished instead of continuing to be a nuisance to the adjacent neighbors.

Associate Member Anderson commented that the Public Works Department did a great job on the brick streets in the Highland Park neighborhood by the school and that the Preservation Society was scheduling a walking tour of the Wallace Grove (Audubon) neighborhood.

Mr. Griffith stated that no applications had been submitted for the August 20th meeting but while the deadline for landmarks had passed, the deadline for COA's was not until the following Tuesday. He asked the Commissioners to complete their Open Meetings Act training if they hadn't already done so and to forward their certificates to him or the City Clerk. Mr. Griffith reminded everyone about the upcoming training on August 27th at St. John's Lutheran Church and that everyone would be receiving a postcard reminder in the mail with specifics. He concluded by asking everyone to be mindful of any *ex parte* communications and to contact the Planning Office with any questions regarding any items on upcoming agendas.

EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR APPOINTMENT OF ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Chairman Vollman asked the Associate Members to leave the Council Chambers so the Commissioners could discuss their re-appointments. After the Associate Members had left the Chambers, Commissioner Cornish made a motion to re-appoint Linda Anderson, Jeff Dimer, Daryl Empen and Diane Oestreich as Associate Members for another year. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Milani and the Commissioners voted unanimously to re-appoint all four Associate Members for another year.

ADJOURNMENT

Seeing that there was no further business to discuss, Chairman Vollman asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Milani made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:58 PM which was duly seconded by Commissioner Heddlesten. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Preservation Commission would be August 20, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Griffith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and "G".

Ben Griffith, AICP