

MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
January 25, 2016
City Council Chambers

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting of Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Woodstock was called to order by Chairman Kyle McCoy at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, January 25, 2016 in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Marti Dejon, Jerry Furlano, Rodney Paglialong, Erica Wilson and Chairman Kyle McCoy.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Liaison City Planner Nancy Baker and Executive Assistant Jane Howie.

OTHERS PRESENT: None.

II. INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chairman K. McCoy introduced himself to the Commission and in turn, all Commission members introduced themselves.

N. Baker reminded Commission members about the Illinois Open Meetings Act. Because the majority of a quorum is two members, it is a violation of the Open Meetings Act if two members discuss commission business outside of a public meeting. All members are required to complete the Illinois Attorney General's Opening Meetings Act online training. Upon successful completion of the training, there is a certificate which forwarded to N. Baker. Baker also emphasized that Commission members should not email other members regarding Commission business. Instead, they could contact her and she will furnish appropriate information to all members.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Erica Wilson, second by Rodney Paglialong, to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2015 meeting with the following revisions:

Page 1, GENERAL BUSINESS, first paragraph, second sentence: change "were" to "was."

Page 1, GENERAL BUSINESS, second paragraph: change "Ruvano" to "Rubano, of the IHPA"

Ayes: Marti Dejon, Jerry Furlano, Rodney Paglialong, Erica Wilson and Chairman Kyle McCoy. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Absentees: None. Motion passed.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments from the public.

V. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. 315 W. Judd – Discussion of house at 315 W. Judd Street.

J. Furlano stated that the City had contacted the Building Trades Committee at Woodstock High School regarding rehabilitation of the house but the Committee had determined it is beyond the scope of the program. He asked why nobody wants to take on this property. N. Baker replied that the property is abandoned so the title has not been available. She explained that the owners walked away and left the bank with the mortgage but the bank did not want title and did not want to invest in the property. The property was then sold for back taxes, but that buyer did not realize the condition of the property and failed to take the final actions required to obtain title. The City Attorney has filed the necessary documents to have a judge declare the property abandoned and grant the City title to the property. K. McCoy asked if the title is in the original owner's hands. N. Baker replied that they are still the owners and that the City attorney has been in contact with them and they have no interest in the property any longer; they have signed off on it. It will go to court in February and the judge will say what needs to be done to get the title.

R. Paglialong asked if this will be a lengthy process. N. Baker said this should be the final step in a lengthy process. R. Paglialong asked, once the City obtains the property, how much would the City try to sell it for. N. Baker said the City would give it to someone for \$1.00 if the buyer can demonstrate they have the resources to get the work done. This property has been a nuisance to the neighborhood for a long time. The City Administration feels that action needs to be taken to either renovate or demolish within the next few months. There's a lot to be addressed. R. Paglialong asked who makes these decisions. N. Baker said requests would go to City Council if there is any interest. The City would need to follow a Request for Proposal process to allow anyone interested an opportunity to respond. Commission members suggested contacting groups such as the McHenry County Historical Society.

Commission members discussed the age of the home and their general opinions regarding various features. Member of the Commission said they are more inclined to preserve the home rather than demolish it. They believe the stucco is not original. J. Furlano asked if the home is listed for sale for \$1.00 and there's no interest, then what happens. N. Baker replied that the City will ask the Historic Preservation Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the house. R. Paglialong wanted to know what the timeframe would be from getting the deed to receiving RFP's. N. Baker said nothing is in place yet but it would be a pretty aggressive timeline.

J. Furlano asked what happens if it's demolished, what are rules for re-building. N. Baker said a new design would need to be approved by this Commission. J. Furlano asked if remodeling has to follow historic regulations or if requirements could be loosened to encourage preservation of the structure. R. Paglialong said it's philosophical; we've embarked on a culture of de-valuing our historic infrastructure. We have a responsibility to honor what we have from the past. M. Dejon said she doesn't want to lose the characteristics of these neighborhoods where there are many beautiful grand old houses vs. modern day homes; it loses the flavor of what's in the community. K. McCoy said it's common in neighborhoods to tear down homes, like what they're doing in Naperville. They're demolishing the town's history and replacing it with MC-mansions.

N. Baker said this is a very small lot--only 50 feet but there are Zoning Ordinance provisions for this type of lot so it is still possible to build a single family residence, but it would be difficult.

Commission members agreed that the stucco is not original, needs to be removed and does not need to be replaced with new stucco. R. Paglialong mentioned the house at the corner of Tryon Street & South Street that had been an eye sore for years. The Commission approved the use of Hardie board siding. Members agreed that Hardie Board [fiber cement] siding or wood clapboard siding would be acceptable.

K. McCoy asked if anyone had talked to neighbors regarding the disposition of the property. N. Baker said the neighbors are concerned about the impact on their homes. They wouldn't be opposed to having the house demolished. M. Dejon asked if the house is structurally sound? N. Baker answered that the foundation doesn't look good. It appears that the southwest corner is just floating. Some of the stone is gone. As of a year ago, there weren't any big cracks in the interior plaster or water stains on the walls, at least that could be seen above the debris; and no condensation on windows. Now there is condensation. Things could have changed a lot in one year. K. McCoy recommended that if City Council decides to tear it down, the more historic elements such as the bannisters, trim, windows, and original hardwood floors should be recovered, to be used for other homes that are going to be restored. Would the City Council be willing to delay teardown so that someone who does restoration projects could salvage some of these items? M. Dejon mentioned that perhaps the City could recoup some of the demolition costs by selling some of the salvageable items in the house. R. Paglialong recommended contacting Landmarks Illinois and asking about recommendations for endangered/distressed property.

In response to a question regarding whose responsibility it is to create a plan to preserve the structure, N. Baker responded that if the Commission thinks the home needs to be saved, then the top priority is to find a buyer. R. Paglialong asked if the Commission needs to find a buyer. K. McCoy said one of the major hurdles was that the deed was not available. However, once the deed is available, there may be some interested for \$1.00.

In response to questions from the Commission, N. Baker stated that interested parties would have to have to be able to demonstrate a combination of experience and financial resources to accomplish the work in a timely manner. In response to questions regarding promoting the availability of the property, N. Baker stated that the minimum requirement is publication of a notice in the newspaper and posting on the website. Requests for Proposals could also be mailed to specific people or organizations. E. Wilson said there may be organizations that would be interested in the county or the Chicagoland area.

R. Paglialong asked who has been contacted so far. N. Baker that there have been minimal contacts up until now because there is no title. She noted that the Commission is the only entity to express interest in trying to save the structure. K. McCoy replied that the Commission tries to preserve homes, buildings, anything historic in our community. E. Wilson agreed that many of these items look horrible, but a lot of it is cosmetic stuff that it is not insurmountable. If there was no mold one year ago and barely any water stains, then there may be good bones under all the stuff. It's just difficult to see right now. Perhaps a cleaning company could be hired to clear out the house and make it more attractive and to see what really needs to be done. N. Baker said

she doesn't think the city will spend any more money on it, as they've already spent a lot. E. Wilson said it's hard to see beyond the garbage. K. McCoy recommended seeing this out. Get the deed in hand, do a Request for Proposal, publicize it, see what comes from that process - and give it another one to two months to potentially save a historic home. Commission members agreed that the City should allow three months from the date the deed is obtained to find a buyer before considering demolition.

Commission members discussed whether or not the porch needs to be retained. The consensus was that the porch is not original and could be removed. E. Wilson said this may be one of the earlier structures in town and since there are not that many of those in the area, it is worth preserving as an example of that time period. R. Paglialong moved to recommend that the City allow three months from the time it obtains the deed to 315 W. Judd to find a suitable buyer for the property before proceeding with a demolition request. M. Dejon, seconded the motion. Ayes: Marti Dejon, Jerry Furlano, Rodney Paglialong, Erica Wilson and Chairman Kyle McCoy. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Absentees: None. Motion passed.

VI. STAFF UPDATES:

N. Baker said the restored wood windows in the Sheriffs' House are in. The contractor is looking for hardware for some of them. The jail windows have been delayed by the manufacturer. She is working on a plan of attack for the courthouse windows as there are a lot of things wrong with them. They are losing glass, have broken glass, and the sash are falling apart. The best approach is probably a combination of restoration and replacement sash. Blue Ribbon Millwork will be providing information regarding Marvin replacement sash that will duplicate the historic configuration. The window project will likely have to be completed in phases.

The City is currently accepting applications for next year's façade program until February 5th. Baker explained that the façade program is open to any property owner in the TIF district. The City reimburses up to 50% of the cost of the project. The Commission will be asked to review proposed projects that require the Commission to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness.

R. Paglialong asked about the Old Courthouse Advisory Commission. N. Baker said their first meeting was last Monday. The agenda included direction from the Mayor, explanation of the Open Meetings Act, discussion of priority projects, and discussion of public involvement. There are nine Commission members.

R. Paglialong asked about the status of Benton Street Tap project. N. Baker answered that they've submitted building plans and the plans are approved; however, they haven't picked up their permits yet. She thinks they're planning to go ahead.

VII. DISCUSSION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

K. McCoy asked for discussion of future agenda items. N. Baker said there may be façade project requests and courthouse window discussion. K. McCoy said the Commission should discuss progress with finding a buyer for 315 W. Judd Street. In response to a question regarding access to the Judd Street house, N. Baker stated that no one can be in the house at this time. Once the City has title, interested parties can contact Code Enforcement Officer Rob Walkington, but they will be entering at their own risk.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion made by Rodney Paglialong, second by Marti Dejon, to adjourn this meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission to the next meeting at 7:00 p.m. on February 22, 2016. Ayes: Marti Dejon, Jerry Furlano, Rodney Paglialong, Erica Wilson and Chairman Kyle McCoy. Nays: None. Absentees: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Howie
Executive Assistant