

**VILLAGE OF HINSDALE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
Wednesday, May 3, 2023**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Village of Hinsdale Historic Preservation Commission was called to order by Chairman Bohnen in Memorial Hall of the Memorial Building, 19 E. Chicago Avenue, Hinsdale, IL on Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at 6:34 p.m., roll call was taken.

PRESENT: Commissioners Sarah Barclay, Shannon Weinberger, Frank Gonzalez, William Haarlow, Jim Prisby and Chairman John Bohnen

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Bethany Salmon, Village Planner and Andrianna Peterson, Assistant Village Manager

Approval of Minutes – April 5, 2023

Chairman Bohnen asked for comments on the draft of the April 5, 2023 Historic Preservation Commission meeting minutes. No comments were heard.

Commissioner Haarlow made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Weinberger, to approve the draft meeting minutes of the April 5, 2023 Historic Preservation Commission meeting minutes as submitted. The motion carried with unanimous voice vote of 6-0.

Sign Permit Review

a) Case A-17-2023 – Sign Permit Review – 35 E. First Street – Fuller House – Installation of One (1) Wall Sign

Alex Perry, the sign contractor representing Right Way Signs, was present to address the Commission. Mr. Perry provided a brief overview of the application request to install a halo-lit sign directly on the wood cladding above the storefront windows.

Commissioner Prisby confirmed the building was not being painted as depicted in the rendering.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked about the type of material used for the background of the sign. The wood, which was already installed, is made up of all-weather cladding.

Commissioner Barclay made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Weinberger, to approve Case A-17-2023 – Sign Permit Review – 35 E. First Street – Fuller House – Installation of One (1) Wall Sign. The motion carried with a roll call vote of 6-0 as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Barclay, Weinberger, Gonzalez, Haarlow, and Chairman Bohnen
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Commissioner Haarlow asked the applicant if the conduit installed on the second floor will be painted. It was confirmed that it would be painted in a shade close to the brick color.

Public Meetings

a) Case A-18-2023 – 19 E. Chicago Avenue – Exterior Appearance and Site Plan Review to allow for the construction of a new patio on the south side of the Memorial Building in the IB Institutional Buildings District

Michelle Fisher and Laurel Haarlow, Board of Trustees and Plan Commission liaisons from the 150th Committee, were present along with Mike Wood, from Hitchcock Design, to address the Commission. Ms. Fisher explained the proposed patio project would be a much needed facelift to the existing patio and be meaningful to the Village. The goal of the patio project is to provide a welcoming space, more usable space, and provide a nice space to compliment to the area.

Mr. Wood shared the original patio design from 1927 and explained the current patio is stamped concrete, is cracking in areas, and contains two (2) planters, two (2) shade trees and a generous area for tables. The current patio opens to the south with a seasonal planting bed and mature trees. The northwest corner contains existing utilities that will need to be screened and planting beds from a 2021 planting project that will be maintained. Photos were shared of the existing area.

Mr. Wood explained that the proposed plan resulted from three (3) original plans that were discussed. The proposed project would contain a central space, flanked by two (2) masonry seat walls constructed of brick similar to the building, a sitting area with enough space for six (6) tables and chairs, and a 150th Anniversary pavement seal. The brown bands in the rendering represent reclaimed brick pavers and the proposed patio would be ten (10) feet longer than the existing patio. Similar to the existing patio, the proposed patio would be symmetrical but contain more intimate, garden seating areas off to each side where donor pavers could be placed.

The proposed patio would extend a bit further east to west than the existing patio. Two (2) mature trees would be removed and replaced with new trees and rose plantings on the east and west sides. The edges and middle of the patio could be constructed of blue stone or unilock pavers with a concrete underlayment, sand bed and drainage weep holes. Sample photos were shown of the suggested materials.

Commissioner Prisby asked about the size of the trees that would be added. Mr. Wood suggested a four (4) or six (6) diameter trees be utilized since there are only two (2) trees. The larger the tree, the higher the purchase price and likelihood of failing.

Ms. Fisher explained the deeper and wider patio would create space reading nook spaces for library patrons but still maintained green space. Village-owned sources for reclaimed pavers were researched and inventoried. Ms. Salmon showed samples pavers reclaimed from First Street that are larger in size, more gray in color, and fewer in quantity than the historic red bricks. Ms. Fisher stated the need for durable surfaces that will be long lasting and snow removal will not be problematic.

Ms. Fisher discussed the desire for landscaping to be long lasting, sustainable to climate, and mature but not overpowering to the building. It was noted to be important to the Library that furniture be comfortable and inviting. The outdoor seating should be appropriate in number and adequately spaced.

Ms. Fisher explained that donor bricks might not be the best solution to acknowledge contributions due to the fact they will need to be shifted in time. It was suggested that plaques with donor names be used as an alternative so new donors could be added at later dates without the need to disturb existing bricks.

The need for proper, consistent, and cohesive lighting for the building was discussed. Currently, Village Hall appears orange in color at night and improvements in lighting should be made. No plan is currently in place for lighting changes but discussions about changes have taken place and suggestions from the HPC are welcome. Commissioners suggested great care be taken with introducing LED lighting. The need to continue to move forward with the patio, despite some details not fully agreed upon, was discussed.

Commissioner Weinberger stated that she preferred using reclaimed brick instead of donor bricks to better keep with the idea of preservation and the ease of adding future donors to a plaque instead of pavers or even trees that will need replacing. The request was made to maintain consistency with current and proposed benches. Commissioner Weinberger liked the look of bluestone but acknowledged the maintenance required with very frequent weeding and the potential for pavers to shift and flake.

Commissioner Gonzalez agreed with the maintenance concerns of bluestone. Commissioner Prisby suggested less maintenance would be needed if the bluestone was set on a base. He expressed that the iron furniture proposed will always sit unevenly on pavers.

The Commissioners agreed that natural material be used and not a unilock type paver, something more "old world" is preferred. Chairman Bohnen suggested that more pavers than actually needed for installation be purchased so that replacement bricks will match.

Ms. Fisher asked Mr. Wood for clarification on the base of the patio. Mr. Wood stated the plan included a concrete base with sand underlayment due to this being a heavily used public space. Mr. Wood discussed the use of salt during winter months would be a factor to consider for the chosen material since it can speed the rate of deterioration of natural materials. Ms. Haarlow added that the current method of snow removal includes a brush on a heavy piece of equipment and the weight of the machine needs to be considered for potential damage. Mr. Wood agreed to provide samples of potential natural materials that could be utilized. Chairman Bohnen suggested some sources of alternative natural paver materials and resources.

Commissioner Prisby requested some details about the seating wall. Mr. Wood stated the seating wall would have a concrete footing to the frost line, a brick veneer to match the building, and a limestone or precast coping. The coping would contain frequent notches in the cap to deter skateboarders.

Commissioner Barclay asked about where trash cans would be placed and how would they look. Mr. Wood explained the current trash receptacles are along the wing walls. He feels they should be placed strategically to prevent unpleasant smells to those using the area, perhaps near the entrances to ensure users are aware of the location. The need for the trash cans to match the benches, as they do in the current downtown area, was stressed.

Ms. Fisher stated a need to properly screen the existing mechanicals and it was suggested that tall yews be planted to blend with other plants. Commissioner Haarlow suggested that the preference is to install year round plantings for screening and that would require some of the 2021 plantings to be relocated. The area near the Library window wells on the west side might be a suitable location since it currently looks barren. Commissioner Haarlow expressed the need for plantings to be year-round so they still look nice during the months of November to April. Mr. Wood explained that the landscape plans presented tonight were loosely drawn with the intention to more thoughtfully design a landscape plan after tonight's comments. Ms. Haarlow shared that the space around the library window wells needs to be planned carefully as it is a safety concern for children, particularly during events like Uniquely Thursdays.

In response to Commissioner Haarlow's inquiry about the seal, Mr. Wood explained it would likely be bronze or precast, where cost differences and winter salt will be factors to consider.

Commissioner Haarlow clarified that the Library is funding the outdoor furniture and asked what donors would be contributing to. Ms. Fisher stated that the donor contributions would fund the general overall patio rebuild.

Commissioner Weinberger asked about the timeline of the project. Ms. Peterson stated that in order to get it to the Village Board in August, the goal would be to bid the project in July. The construction would begin after Labor Day and the project would be completed in a couple of months before the holiday events. The request for donors will be made once the final project proposal is determined. It is estimated the project will cost \$400,000, depending on bids and some funds from capital improvements earmarked for this project will be utilized.

Chairman Bohnen asked if the intent is to have a portion of the project to be paid by donors. Ms. Peterson shared that the percent of the project that is donor funded will be discussed at the Board level once the cost of the final plan is determined. Ms. Fisher believes there is appeal for donations based on the numerous uses of the space, including the Library, Uniquely Thursdays, and The Farmers Market.

Commissioner Prisby asked what regularly scheduled events use this area. Ms. Peterson stated that the area is used for the Memorial Day procession, various Library and the Parks Department events during the summer months, overflow of the Tree Lighting ceremony, and the daily use of people using the space for reading or gathering.

Commissioner Prisby asked if needs for current and future planned events have been considered such as lights, electrical connections, and sound systems. Ms. Peterson shared that drainage improvements have been considered as well as electric for special events and daily use by Library patrons.

Commissioner Haarlow suggested the randomly spaced lamp posts be re-located to a more symmetrical pattern and supported the idea of improving the current night lighting of the building. The idea to incorporate fixtures and design features to discourage vandalism or minimize damage was discussed. Commissioner Gonzalez suggested the consideration of security cameras to discourage vandalism. Ms. Peterson responded that concern can be discussed.

Commissioner Prisby suggested down lighting from trees be used as fixtures that decrease the likelihood of damage and adding lamp posts at the perimeter. Thoughtful planning and a mixture of light sources should be used to create an inviting space that helps users feel safe. The benches and seat wall could be illuminated with ambient lighting.

Commissioner Weinberger stated the design looks fabulous and gives the space its importance without taking away from it. Ms. Haarlow stated that it was important to match the benches in this area with those in Burlington Park to reflect the original concept of the spaces being one large area.

Chairman Bohnen acknowledged that although the plans are not completely final, it is important that the Commission provide feedback such as no donor bricks, the use of natural materials, but feels comfortable allowing some design latitude to allow the project to continue to move forward.

Public Comment

No public comments were shared.

New Business

Commissioner Weinberger requested that staff keep the HPC apprised on the concern related to keeping the bricks on Sixth Street.

Chairman Bohnen reminded the group that First Street was reconstructed using brick pavers. Storm but not sanitary sewers were part of that project and it was determined that concrete corners would prevent trucks from rolling the base. Chairman Bohnen stated that brick streets are important to the streetscape and to the residents. Opinions on how to reconstruct Sixth Street should be based on aesthetics, historic preservation, and monetary factors. Although brick streets have a larger cost up front, the longevity is great. Chairman Bohnen stated the conversion about brick streets should take place in this arena.

Commissioner Weinberger agreed that brick streets are part of the Historic District and changes to them should come before the HPC.

Commissioner Haarlow stated that with the Historic Overlay District, there is a renewed sense of historic preservation, but the Commission is only advisory and ultimately residents can build what they wish because Hinsdale is not home rule. However, if the Village is not willing to maintain the streets they own in a historically accurate way, then the Village should not ask residents and business owners to maintain the historic nature of the property they own. Commissioner Haarlow stated that the streets are contributing structures and the Village should not consider reconstruction with materials other than the historic brick they are currently, even if that means the project is delayed for several years until adequate funds are secured.

Commissioner Prisby stated that the Village needs to set the example of historic preservation if they are going to ask resident to be respectful of it as well. Commissioner Gonzalez agrees and stated that the Village will be unrecognizable in twenty (20) years if small bits of historic characteristics are slowly being removed.

Commissioner Haarlow asked for an update on the Chippendale railing on top of the building. Ms. Peterson reported that as part of the budget process, an estimate was obtained late last year to replace the railing at the cost of approximately \$96,000. The project has been identified, but funding is not secured at this time. Ms. Peterson stated that the process for an approved design to obtain an updated bid would need to be complete before requesting donations. Ms. Salmon clarified that because the building is landmarked, a Certificate of Appropriateness would need to be approved before the railing could be installed.

In response to Chairman Bohnen's question about funding for the project, Ms. Peterson stated that the approved budget reflects the project fully funded by donations. Commissioner Haarlow confirmed that no Village money has been allocated for this project at this time. He suggested combining the railing project fundraising efforts with those for the patio rather than waiting five (5) years for the centennial of the building to fund the railing when other needs may arise.

Commissioner Weinberger agreed on the project of installing a railing made of composite wood and noted that historical photographs should be part of the fundraising efforts for the patio. One fundraising effort could take place for the 150th Celebration. Commissioner Haarlow suggested part of the donor campaign include the concept that the original building was entirely constructed from donations of all but two (2) residents at the time, and today's residents are the custodians of the current building. The Commissioners were in agreement that it made more sense to combine both projects into one (1) fundraising effort.

Old Business

a) Amendments to Title 14 – Status Update

Ms. Salmon stated that seven (7) more properties will be up for consideration next month with more in the queue for the next round. Ms. Salmon believes that the addition of homes to the list has generated some buyer interest. Applications for the incentive program are in the works and should be ready soon. Staff also hosted a zoom event to promote the program that was attended by approximately thirty (30) realtors and recorded with the intent of sharing it with other professionals that were unable to attend.

b) Robbins Park Historic Gateway Signs

Staff reports that work continues with the sign contractor and an update should come soon.

Commissioners shared their appreciation for staff and the efforts made in the past and continuing to support historic preservation and that changes have been noticed in resident interest and support of preservation efforts. All agreed that education to the public about the voluntary nature of the overlay program and the message that the program does not result in a landmark status must continue to be greatly emphasized.

Ms. Salmon reported that some real estate agents that attended the zoom meeting have already inquired about adding client properties to the overlay district. It was also noted that the Historical Society has been a great help with the program.

Adjournment

Commissioner Weinberger made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Prisby, to adjourn the regularly meeting of the Village of Hinsdale Historic Preservation Commission meeting of May 3, 2023.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m. after a unanimous voice vote of 6-0.

ATTEST: _____
Jennifer Spires, Community Development Office