

Approved

MINUTES  
VILLAGE OF HINSDALE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

January 9, 2019

Memorial Hall – Memorial Building, 19 East Chicago Avenue, Hinsdale  
6:30 P.M.

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Chairman Bohnen called the meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to order at 6:30 p.m. on January 9, 2019, in Memorial Hall in the Memorial Building, 19 East Chicago Avenue, Hinsdale IL.

Present: Chairman Bohnen, Commissioner Prisby, Commissioner Gonzalez,  
Commissioner Williams, and Commissioner Haarlow  
Absent: Commissioner D'Arco and Commissioner Weinberger  
Also Present: Chan Yu, Village Planner

**Public Comment**

Ms. Carrie Kenna introduced herself and stated that she has an interest in the review process of the new regulations for the certificate of appropriateness and landmark status.

Chairman Bohnen reviewed the background of the new historic preservation regulations, which was compiled for about 5 months by a consultant, Mr. Mike D'Onofrio. He explained that this is the first time the HPC will be looking at it. Due to the Open Meetings Act, the HPC will be using the public meeting as a workshop to review the draft document. Mr. Bohnen welcomed Ms. Carrie to sit through the discussion, and assured her that there will not be a vote on the subject matter tonight.

Ms. Carrie Kenna stated that she wanted to make sure that she is on record, reviewing that she has read the material and is concerned for one section. Point 4 on the Certificate of Appropriateness, as she understood it, meant that the HPC would have final authority, versus the current advisory status for the applications in the Robbins District.

Chairman Bohnen reviewed that the consultant's recommendation included only the structures that are contributing to the historic district. He also reviewed the process and the final decision is by the Board of Trustees.

Ms. Carrie Kenna reflected her concern on the affect it would have on the homeowner, potential buyers and home builders, if it changed from an advisory role to anything beyond that. She also added it is not very clear how decisions were made after an application is denied, and to that end, asked, what are the guidelines. It was also her recollection that the HPC was specifically not set up to give authority over design elements, and advisory only, it was the intent, and it should stay that way. She also requested that the homes this new ordinance would affect be notified.

Chairman Bohnen stated it is conceivable if there is a marked change in the definition of the HPCs purview, it is typical that a notice is sent within 250 feet for the proposed subject property. To that end, the thing to do would be to notify the homes in Robbins that are contributing structures.

Ms. Julie Laux asked the HPC what percentage of the homes are contributing structures in the Robbins Historic District.

Chairman Bohnen stated 69% of the homes, when the survey was completed, but acknowledged that this percentage does not exist today.

Ms. Julie Laux stated that she would agree that the draft code would have a significant economic impact on the current homeowners.

Mr. Jim Garber expressed that the draft code would hurt real estate prices in the Village and would be opposed to the mandatory aspect of it, in particular, the potential design/material requests by the HPC. This may cause potential buyers to look outside of Hinsdale.

### **Minutes**

Chairman Bohnen introduced the minutes from the December 5, 2018, meeting and asked for any comments.

Some of the Commissioners requested to add context as to why the Certificate of Appropriateness was denied for Case HPC-08-2018. Commissioner Prisby also added that he voted in favor of the new construction request, thus it should be corrected. The HPC **requested to table** the minutes for the February HPC meeting.

### **Discussion Items**

Chairman Bohnen reviewed the Granacki report, which has criteria, addresses, and details that took place before the ordinance. Discussion ensued in regards to the relatively old data, and concluded it should be a goal to update the survey.

Commissioner Gonzalez suggested the new survey contain a photograph of the home to compare “then versus now”. Chairman Bohnen suggested that in addition to updating the website information, an updated version of the pamphlet be published as well. Commissioner Williams will reach out to the 2018 summer intern to determine if he would be interested and available in assisting with the process of the new survey.

It was discussed and determined the best way to begin the discussion of changes would be to do a fast page by page discussion of items that Commissioners had concerns about. The first discussion item discussed by the HPC was fees. Commissioner Williams requested that fees include the cost of the survey and signage needed to make people aware of the Historic District boundaries & the significance of the district. It was felt that people are unaware of this information currently.

The question was asked about the increase in fees & what items would be included in the fee. Chan explained the cost would include the cost of publication (lengthy wording of legal descriptions can cost hundreds of dollars) and cost of the transcriber. Chairman Bohnen added he'd like to see the fees include other items suggested by HPC such as education and signage.

Discussion took place as the origin and accuracy of the number of homes in the report. It was determined the numbers are quite possibly out of date and need to be re-surveyed for an accurate & current count.

Commissioner Williams asked the question about review for non-contributing homes being demolished & replaced by a new home- would it be discussed? Would a certificate of appropriateness be issued? Members of the HPC agreed that it would be reviewed because the new home would now be part of the streetscape of the existing district.

The inclusion of smaller projects, such as fences, was brought up by Commissioner Prisby. For example, how can smaller projects that meet local ordinances but not fit historically with the historic homes and streetscape of the district be evaluated or prevented? Should these smaller projects be included in the review process, incurring large fees, to preserve the streetscape? Discussion continued where to draw the line for required evaluation (side yards included?).

Commissioners went on to discuss what types of projects visible from the street would be included in the review process such as driveways & fountains. The HPC expressed the need to find a balance between high cost of review with the desire to evaluate projects impacting the character of the district and its streetscape. Possible guidelines were discussed to define "small projects" such as the size of the required foundation or the volume of a "structure". The HPC discussed the idea of when evaluating "structures" becomes evaluating landscape. The idea of a lower fee for these "smaller projects" be set to help keep the cost in line with the size of the project was discussed. It was agreed the fees should not be a deterrent to the process.

The HPC moved on to discuss briefly the "appeals" portion of the document and further discuss the "withdrawal" process. All agreed that language would need to be further discussed and revised. The HPC specifically discussed the idea of defining a "financial hardship" and the difficulties associated with proving a hardship.

Stemming from the challenges the group was considering about "financial hardships", discussion followed about the agreed upon goal of the HPC to be pro-active & education based to provide homeowner relief rather than reactive & restrictive. With that goal in mind, further discussion took place about how to retain & obtain future landmarks of homes without limiting the potential sale of the homes. The HPC began to discuss how that idea might look from a legislative point of view.

Commissioner Haarlow suggested that a set of guidelines be designed outlining potential and specific areas of relief that homeowners and potential buyers could look to in an attempt to avoid a complete "leap of faith". Chairman Bohnen agreed. Commissioner

Prisby added that the set of guidelines for potential relief could be tied to non-conforming code. Further discussion took place and Chairman Bohnen asked members to read and review the DRC guidelines available on line for the next session to determine if that information will be useful to further the development of relief guidelines.

With the idea no final decisions made tonight, the HPC continued the very quick “read through” of the document continued. Brief comments were made to identify points to re-visited and changed at a future meeting.

The HPC spent some time discussing the final step to withdraw from land mark status, specifically review by the Village Manager. Some brief discussion took place and Commissioner Williams expressed concern that the recommendation of the HPC presented by only the Chairman may not reflect the views of all HPC members. Commissioner Williams felt the input of the entire HPC was very important in the process and felt all views should be presented the Board of Trustees. Chairman Bohnen suggested that a report prepared by and reflecting views of the entire HPC be delivered to the board by the HPC Chair, members of the HPC agreed this would be appropriate.

Discussion again re-visited the idea of the Village Manager as part of this process. The concern was related to if that person was the most relevant person to be involved in the final approval of the withdrawal process. The HPC agreed that three (3) entities (allowing for a majority) would make a recommendation to the board. The first entity would be the HPC Chairman Report in which the entire HPC would be a part of creating that document. The second entity would be the Zoning & Public Safety Chairman report in which the entire ZPS would be a part of creating that document. It was suggested the third entity to bring a recommendation to the board be the ZBA, replacing the Village Manager as a more relevant entity in the process. The ZBA chair would bring a report that the entire committee would be a part of creating. The HPC agreed having reports reflecting various committees would bring a larger, more diverse group of input than a single chairperson presenting to the Board.

The HPC continued the fast read thru and began discussion on the Honorary “Feel Good” landmark designation. The need to clearly state that this type of designation would not result in any tax relief was necessary was agreed upon. Discussion clarified that this type of designation was available to all homes in Hinsdale, even those outside the historic district, with the purpose to encourage people to think consider preservation for their Hinsdale homes and to generally view preservation in a more positive manner.

Commissioner Williams raised the question about a need for a public hearing since the designation was only “honorary” and would come with a dated plaque and require some other standards. It was pointed out that a benefit of having a public hearing would be to educate the public and foster positive attitudes toward preservation. The HPC members welcomed the opportunity to welcome the anticipated constant flow of folks for short presentations and awards for homes in & outside of the historic district.

Due to time constraints, Chairman Bohnen wrapped up the discussion of this topic by stating a need for standards to be developed and careful, thoughtful discussion to continue to take place on this topic to result in a product that functions well.

Commissioner Prisby, in an unrelated topic, asked for more time to work on illuminated signs in the Village. The HPC discussed the importance of attending the next upcoming Plan Commission meeting related to the backlit- internally lit signs in the B-2 district.

### **Adjournment**

The HPC unanimously agreed to adjourn at 8:26 PM on January 9, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Jennifer Spires, Community Development Dept.**