

Approved

MINUTES
VILLAGE OF HINSDALE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

February 6, 2019

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

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

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

Minutes

Chairman Bohnen introduced the minutes from the December 5, 2018, meeting and asked for any comments. Commissioner Prisby asked to clarify if the minutes simply reflect the changes requested by the HPC last month. It was confirmed.

The HPC **unanimously approved** the minutes for the December 5, 2018, HPC meeting, 5-0, 2 absent.

Discussion Item - Hinsdale Historical Society Historic Plaque Program and Historic Tours App.

Executive Director of the Hinsdale Historical Society, Lynne Smaczny introduced herself and updated the HPC in regards to the Historic Tours App. It is online, it's been promoted, it's being used, and people seem to like it, she reported.

Commissioner Haarlow had two questions, and asked why the Historic Plaque Program lapsed. Ms. Smaczny replied that she is not clear why it lapsed, but she believes part of the reason was due to staff becoming unavailable and therefore unsustainable to continue. The second question was, where the data came from in regards to the historic building survey. Ms. Smaczny replied that was an estimate and from all the historic structure surveys. She had 2 summer interns and put them to good use to review all its files and tour guides. Of note, the list was 20 years old and she estimated at least 20% of the homes on the list no longer existed. Commissioner Haarlow stated that he believes this relates to the concern raised at the previous meeting, understanding that the policy document contained out of date figures.

Commissioner Prisby asked if that list was mapped. Ms. Smaczny replied they tried, but it's difficult. However, she noted the 2 major concentrations were just north and south of the train tracks.

Chairman Bohnen expressed that the Hinsdale Historical Society (HHS) has an existing honorary recognition program, which relates to their ordinance review. Ms. Smaczny added that it was an independent program from the HPC program. Additional program discussion ensued regarding the cost of the program and plaques, and perhaps the HPC potentially offsetting the costs. Ms. Smaczny believes the most expensive cost will be marketing at this point. Commissioner Gonzalez mentioned that he could help shop around for the cost of the plaques.

Discussion Item - Village of Hinsdale Historic Preservation Regulations Review

Chairman Bohnen reintroduced the suggested ordinance as produced and presented to the HPC by Mr. Mike D'Onofrio, a consultant hired by the Village. The HPC discussed the cover memo at the last meeting, but did not review the draft ordinance yet.

Commissioner Weinberger proposed to stagger the fees to lower the cost for someone interested in renovating a historic home.

Commissioner Haarlow reviewed that the data is at least 10 years old, and perhaps it should be updated and/or cross referenced with the HHS data. Moreover, it was suggested to use the HHS data versus the current Granacki map/data.

Commissioner Weinberger suggested that we could perhaps ask the HHS to query which homes on their list is in Robbins Park. Chairman Bohnen asked her if she could reach out to the HHS.

Commissioner Haarlow asked about the criterion for a contributing structure.

Chairman Bohnen stated that it is based on a survey that Granacki did.

Commissioner Gonzalez added that he was a part of the process, and recalled that the criteria included elements that pointed to classical architecture.

Commissioner Weinberger stated page 3 includes a definition by the U.S. Department of Interior. On that note however, the list by the HHS may not match this database, and will need to cross check the homes.

Chairman Bohnen and Commissioner Gonzalez believe the criteria should be based on the Granacki document, and if the HPC had to, drive around the neighborhood to see if the homes still exist.

Commissioner Prisby asked if the HPC should start on Attachment D, which is a chart of other communities, and how it defines the review authority of its HPC. He next pointed to page 7, where it lists the recommendations by the consultant.

Commissioner Weinberger suggested reviewing the recommendations together. Also, since the HHS already has a landmark program, the HPC should not establish another “honorary landmark” designation as recommended on page 9. Chairman Bohnen agreed.

Commissioner Prisby recommended to next look at section 4, Landmark Withdrawals on page 10.

Commissioner Weinberger stated that someone who took advantage of the tax freeze program should not be able to withdrawal its landmark status. The HPC agreed.

Commissioner Prisby jumped ahead to page 7, and reviewed Option 1 and Option 2. Based on the document, Option 2 would add 8 additional applications.

Commissioner Weinberger believes it'd be easier if they had guidelines to review.

Chairman Bohnen stated they are trying to add the design standards document into the draft ordinance to include some actual criteria.

Commissioner Weinberger reviewed how inconsistent the process has been by using her window permit and outdoor patio permit as an example.

Chairman Bohnen asked the HPC if this means the review should be concerned over what's visible from the street.

Commissioner Weinberger asked if Option 1 could be crossed out. Commissioner Prisby replied we already did.

Chairman Bohnen asked the HPC if it would be concerned about a landmarked home from all sides.

Commissioner Gonzalez stated in his opinion, you have to allow for some flexibility.

Commissioner Prisby stated, what's important is in the landmark document, and what features are significant. If it's not mentioned in the document, he does not care about the back of the house.

Commissioner Weinberger warned to not cancel out things the HPC will regret, and would like to keep all angles of review on the table for an opportunity to talk about compromise and good faith.

Chairman Bohnen stated we need standards, or the approval would be inconsistently based on the makeup of the board at the time.

Commissioner Weinberger agreed that we need guidelines and on the same token, not to strike anything the HPC could review.

Commissioner Prisby asked Commissioner Gonzalez for his thoughts on an applicant requesting to add a farmhouse style with siding behind a brick federal style home.

Commissioner Gonzalez replied that he sees his point.

Commissioner Prisby stated perhaps design standards would prevent this.

Commissioner Weinberger pointed out that some of the demo requests are due to the terrible additions constructed over the years.

Chairman Bohnen reiterated the need to incorporate the design standards into the ordinance.

Commissioner Prisby stated that he is not opposed to amending the approval authority to allow village staff to approve Certificate of Appropriateness (CofA) for certain improvements, but the HPC would need to establish the boundaries that trigger a review.

Chan asked what about for noncontributing structures.

Chairman Bohnen replied that is off the table, and Commissioner Gonzalez agreed.

Chan stated so we've determined that a CofA does not apply for noncontributing structures.

Chairman Bohnen replied the only issue with that is the question of what will be built in its place.

Commissioner Haarlow agreed, and stated he would not dismiss this so quickly.

Chan replied, however, the new construction would still require a CofA.

Commissioner Prisby stated so at some level we'd still review it. A discussion ensued in regards to how to reach the applicant before plans and drawings are completed for review.

Chairman Bohnen reiterated the need for standards to review applications for a CofA.

Public Comment

Bryan Bomba, introduced himself as a resident of Hinsdale for nearly 30 years, and a real estate broker with a unique background in that he is an expert in residential property valuation with an SRA designation. He shared his concern regarding an escalation in authority by of the committee and that it could have a negative impact on the valuation of residential property value. As such, his question is to what extent has that consideration been given in the development of this proposed ordinance.

Chairman Bohnen responded that he too is a realtor, a lifelong Hinsdale resident, and that the HPC is also concerned about property values. He expressed that the HPC's mission and belief is that there is value in preservation, not only in property values but in the Village itself. For example, the downtown has become a brand that distinguishes Hinsdale. The lack of a transit oriented development enhances the distinction from other suburbs. The historic district is one of the HPC's primary concerns, and has been deteriorating for years during the teardown phenomenon. The HPC feels the answer to property values is to prevent a South Barrington in southeast Hinsdale. In 2000, the homeowners in Robbins voted to establish a historic district which means everyone in the district bought or should have known their home is in a historic district. As an example, a new Belgium farmhouse style would affect the homes next to it, and they have property rights also Chairman Bohnen explained. The homes in the Robbins district are protected by the current ordinance, but perhaps haven't been followed very strictly. To that end, this is why the HPC is revisiting the ordinance. This is not reviewed with a disregard to property values, to the contrary, the HPC is very concerned with property values, Chairman Bohnen stated. The larger homes will be challenging, and perhaps rather than tearing it down to construct new, renovating a historic home through the tax freeze program may be the answer.

Bryan Bomba asked if there is a provision that addresses impact on residential property valuation in the consultant's report.

Commissioner Prisby responded no, and that the HPC needs to have the consultant review and analyze the property values of the homes in the 12 communities in the report.

Chairman Bohnen stated that when the ordinance was passed, he believes the majority of the people in the Village thought preservation would enhance property values. However, he recognizes that not everyone might agree with that, in particular, if you are building new houses.

Bryan Bomba stated that he believes there is overlap in our thinking. The question is, what the impact on residential real property values is, not that it is negative. And it is prudent and responsible to have that as an integral question as this ordinance is being reviewed.

Chairman Bohnen replied that he doesn't disagree with that at all.

Commissioner Prisby stated the conversation has already started.

Vince Priest introduced himself as a resident since 2007, and has had 10 houses in that time. He has bought, improved and sold the homes, and that is his experience. He stated his experience is "real world", and has made a profit on each transaction. He explained that the older homes, when put money into them, does not get the return as the new homes. And if the property is forced to go before a committee to decide what can be done to it, he doesn't understand why and doesn't know if he'd buy a home knowing if a group of 6 people can tell him what he can do to the home. He believes his judgement is as good as the HPC's judgement. He believes he knows what sells and what people want. He reiterated that he doesn't understand how this committee is benefitting the Village at large.

Commissioner Prisby stated that he needs some time to give him an appropriate answer. He explained that he also has real world experience, been an architect for 26 years, builder for 9 years and grew up in Hinsdale. And as a designer, has completed approximately 20 houses in the district. From his consulting experience, he understands that if an investment of over 50% of the value of the home is necessary, it's not worth it. This ordinance discussion is only the 2nd one by the HPC and he does not know which direction it will go.

Vince Priest clarified that what he is hearing is that this group can tell me what I can do with a home in the district, and he doesn't understand why.

Chairman Bohnen replied because the HPC represents the people on either side of this.

Vince Priest replied that he is on both sides as well.

Chairman Bohnen stated that the HPC is not concerned about what sells, which is for general consumption. On the other hand, the HPC knows what sells in the current market. And each time a new house (current style of board and batten and black windows) is built to sell, it does not enhance the historic district. He believes one should view this more globally, as a district.

Commissioner Weinberger added that there is a provision to appeal the HPC's decision, so there is a process. She also expressed this is in the early stages of discussion, the HPC appreciates his input and it will be a part of their discussion.

Commissioner Prisby stated that the HPC wants to be advisory from a design standpoint, and would recommend an applicant to consider design guidelines that gives you the flexibility to do all sorts of great things and very marketable.

Commissioner Haarlow stated the Village is non-home rule and could not anyway. But also reminded to Chairman Bohnen's point, the HPC is not charged to help someone turn a profit.

Vince Priest stated that he'd like to be viewed as a homeowner, and his aforementioned thoughts are the same as an investor.

Carrie Kenna stated a landmarked home should be reviewed as a whole. However, she believes the advisory component in the current code must have been established for a reason. In other communities, a mandatory/binding decision was established from day one. She also reviewed that the area is a reflection of what the new buyer wants. She also added that she doesn't know how to reach people before they start designing for a new addition or home. In conclusion, she asked the HPC to consider the people's right to choose.

Chairman Bohnen stated, the core question is, when the topic of preservation comes up is, whether or not the Village as a whole has an appetite for preservation. What the HPC has found is, the historic downtown when it was established, was that a lot of people valued preservation and heritage.

Commissioner Prisby added one last thing to Vince Priest, that he was one of the persons against establishing a village-wide code for design standards. While the HPC ordinance is a different case, he assured that his concerns will be considered during the ordinance review.

Adjournment

The HPC unanimously agreed to adjourn at 8:42 PM on February 6, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chan Yu, Village Planner