



MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION

5:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 21, 2015
City Council Chamber, Historic Federal Building

Commissioners Present: Commissioners Christina Monk, Joseph Rapp, Otto Krueger, David Klavitter and Chris Olson.

Commissioners Excused: Chairperson Bob McDonell, Commissioners Mary Loney Bichell and John Whalen.

Staff Members Present: Laura Carstens and David Johnson.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairperson Monk at 5:37 p.m.

AFFIDAVIT OF COMPLIANCE: Staff presented an Affidavit of Compliance verifying the meeting was being held in compliance with the Iowa Open Meetings Law.

MINUTES: Motion by Krueger, seconded by Olson, to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2015 meeting as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Klavitter, Krueger, Monk, and Olson; Nay – None; Abstain - Rapp.

ITEMS FROM PUBLIC: None.

ITEMS FROM STAFF: Staff Member Johnson provided a presentation summarizing the area, building counts, and historic significance of the proposed Seminary Hill Residential Historic District, Old Main Street Historic District, Washington Residential Historic District, Fenelon Place Residential Historic District, and the Upper Iowa Street Historic District. He explained what the National Register of Historic Places is, how National Register Districts are created, and why they are important. He reviewed the social and financial benefits of being located in a National Register District. He noted owners of private property on the National Register are free to maintain, alter, manage, or dispose of their property as they chose provided no financial incentives are involved. He explained property owner can sell their property, make changes to their property, or use their property as is normally allowed. He explained the National Register of Historic Places has no effect on how a property is taxed and does not raise a property owner's taxes or tax levy rate.

Staff Member Johnson stated nationwide, there are more than 86,000 listings comprising more than 1.7 million individual resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

He stated Dubuque has 43 properties individually listed on the National Register and 12 districts. He explained Dubuque's first property listed on the National Register was the Dubuque County Court House in 1971. He stated the first National Register District was the Old Main Street Historic District listed in 1983.

The Commission invited public comment on any of the proposed districts.

Nancy Young, 420 Burch Street, questioned what the next steps were in the registration effort and when the district might become official. Staff Member Johnson explained the Historic Preservation Commission will make a recommendation to the State of Iowa at the conclusion of the agenda item. He explained City Council will then review and make a recommendation to the State at their June 15th City Council meeting. He noted the State of Iowa will review the proposed nomination and will make a final recommendation to the National Park Service, who will ultimately decide whether or not the proposed district will be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. He explained that process may take anywhere between three to four months.

John Schreiber, 605 Cooper Place, asked if there is a relationship between National Register of Historic Places Districts and those districts under the control of the City Council. Staff Member Johnson clarified there is a distinct difference between National Register districts and local historic districts. He stated local historic districts have local design review authority for proposed exterior changes to properties as well as demolitions. Whereas, National Register Districts do not have any additional regulatory implications provided a property owner is not utilizing a source of federal funds.

Elizabeth Mihalakis, 1756 Jackson Street, agreed the Washington Neighborhood is historic, noted a number of social concerns with the neighborhood, and asked whether the National Register designation would have a positive impact on the neighborhood. Staff Member Carstens reviewed numerous positive attributes of the Washington Neighborhood and stated National Register designations foster improved sense of pride and helps facilitate personal and financial investment in neighborhoods.

Commissioner Klavitter reviewed how Dubuque's history and unique neighborhoods positively influenced his decision in moving back to Dubuque. He said it also can motivate people to reside in historic neighborhoods and make investments in historic neighborhoods. He stated the National Register designation will in the long run positively affect the neighborhood.

Ms. Mihalakis noted the neighborhood is greatly impacted by an increased number of renters without a personal or financial investment in the neighborhood, which

contributes in an increased amount of crime. She agreed, the neighborhood is historic, but questioned how the designation might impact the area.

Commissioner Klavitter noted the designation will not instantly address her concerns; however, it is another tool that can be used to improve conditions in the neighborhood.

Staff Member Carstens explained the designation will not address some residents' perception of issues; however, it helps enhance neighborhood pride, appreciation, and improvements in the neighborhood's built environment.

Gene Tully, 448 Summit Street, spoke in support of the National Register nominations, noting he lives in the proposed Fenelon Place Residential Historic District. He reviewed the historic significance of his home, and noted the importance of being a good steward of historic properties and keeping it for future generations. He stated it's an honor to be located in a National Register Historic District, and noted property owners and renters alike live in neighborhoods. He explained the National Register designation may improve personal investment in these neighborhoods. He suggested entry signs bordering these districts to raise awareness of their importance. He noted it's important to be a steward of your home, and also the neighborhood, and be engaged and take pride in the community. Mr. Tully stated he agrees the designations will foster positive improvements in these neighborhoods.

Pat Brimeyer, 1924 North Main Street, stated she lives in the proposed Seminary Hill Residential Historic District. She explained she has done extensive research on the history of her property and neighborhood, and is ecstatic that the District is being proposed. She asked whether there was anything in addition the property owners or residents could do in support of the nomination. Staff Member Johnson suggested residents interested in forwarding their support or any additional concerns are welcome to send them to him and he would be sure those comments were included with information forwarded to City Council and the State of Iowa.

Fran Henkels, 890 W. 3rd Street, stated he lives in the proposed Fenelon Place Residential Historic District. He thanked City staff on their efforts in identifying historic homes and neighborhoods in the community. He commended the Commission in initiating the work. He reviewed how people often comment and take interest in his home, and noted how important it is to acknowledge and appreciate historic places. Mr. Henkels, too, recommended signs acknowledging the National Register Districts be located bordering the districts to recognize these special areas.

Chris Ross, 300 Clarke Drive, stated she is in the proposed Seminary Hill Residential Historic District. Ms. Ross questioned what level of control the City will have over the district. Staff Member Johnson explained the City will not have any additional control as a result of the National Register District. He explained the difference between local and National Register Districts, noting the Historic Preservation Commission only has design and demolition review authority in local historic districts. He noted while there

are benefits to being located in a local historic district, no such designations are being considered at this time. He reviewed the social and financial benefits of being located in National Register Districts, but reiterated there are no additional regulations placed on property owners as a result. He explained peoples' lives will be same after the designation as they are today.

Ms. Ross questioned whether a National Register designation will eventually lead to a local historic designation. Staff Member Johnson stated that is not the case. He clarified the National Register process is completely independent from a local designation process. He stated if an application for a local historic district were ever filed, all the property owners within the proposed district would again be given notice and an opportunity to comment. He reiterated at this time, there are no plans on behalf of the City or Commission to propose a local historic district.

Staff Member Carstens provided a brief overview of the City's preservation program and role of the Commission, noting one of the duties of the Commission is to host public meetings and make recommendations on National Register Districts, even though they have no regulatory authority over them.

Ms. Ross asked what benefit the City gets from National Register listings. Staff Member Johnson noted the City does not receive any direct financial benefit from listing National Register Districts. He explained the most significant benefit for the City is National Register listings help foster personal and financial investment in historic neighborhoods and properties, which benefit the city at large. He reviewed state and local incentives that can help with rehabilitation and restoration projects in historic neighborhoods. In response to Ms. Ross's question, Staff Member Johnson stated it is completely at the property owner's discretion on whether or not to pursue federal, state or local financial incentives.

Staff Member Carstens reviewed the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program and what it means to the city of Dubuque. She reviewed the responsibilities the community has in participating in the CLG Program. She noted communities are expected to survey and evaluate historic neighborhoods and identify potential National Register-eligible buildings and districts. She noted the information collected from those efforts help in preparing tax credit projects and facilitating federally-funded projects. She explained that information is also important in disaster response efforts in the event historic neighborhoods are impacted by a disaster. She noted the recent flooding in Cedar Rapids and difficulties in facilitating the short and long-term response efforts as a result of not having that information available.

Ms. Ross questioned what other incentives besides tax credits might be available to property owners and National Register Districts. Staff Member Johnson explained the State of Iowa can offer a temporary property tax exemption and explained the City of Dubuque may also have additional grant, loan or tax incentive programs available.

Staff Member Johnson reviewed the federal and state historic tax credit programs, noting it is important to fully understand the expectations and benefits. He stated oftentimes with tax credits, the ends must justify the means; however, for those property owners undertaking a substantial improvement to their property, the State Tax Credit Program can rebate up to 25% of your total eligible rehabilitation costs, which is an outstanding incentive. He clarified the State of Iowa will have input in how a property is improved if you are using a source of state or federal money in that effort.

Sara Haggerty stated she owns the building at 84 Main Street in the proposed Old Main Street Historic District. She stated she is extremely excited about the opportunity to extend the Old Main Street Historic District to include her property. She provided some history on the building and family significance. Ms. Haggerty requested if anyone has any history on the Old Main Hotel, she would greatly appreciate it. She stated the National Register designation effort is amazing and Dubuque is an amazing town.

Steve Schadle, 512 Fenelon Place, stated he is located in the proposed Fenelon Place Residential Historic District. He explained he and his wife live at the property, but are also the current caretakers of the Fenelon Place Elevator. Mr. Schadle asked whether the proposed National Register designation could have done anything to improve the scale and design of the recently constructed condominium project at 440 Raymond Place. He noted its size is out of scale with the neighborhood and forced adjacent property owners to extend their buildings to maintain their views from the bluff. He noted if he, or most of the property owners along the bluff were to ever sell their properties, in all likelihood they may be demolished and replaced with larger structures having a similar affect and concern.

Staff Member Carstens explained design review is a benefit of being located in a local historic district, and not something afforded through a National Register District. She reiterated National Register Districts do not impose any additional regulations upon property owners. She stated the National Register District cannot serve as a resource to protect peoples' views. She explained the protection Mr. Schadle was seeking would come from a local historic designation. Mr. Schadle noted if another large structure were constructed along a bluff using federal funding that would engage a design review process and consultation with the Commission. Staff Member Carstens confirmed that would be correct, if federal funding is used.

Mona Burbach, 2539 Jackson Street, stated the proposed National Register Districts are wonderful and an exciting opportunity. She asked where the best place is to start to find out if a specific property has historic significance. Staff Member Carstens suggested she contact Staff Member Johnson first to see what information might be readily available and other opportunities to further research the property. She explained Planning Services staff has also put together a PowerPoint presentation about researching historic properties, which is available on the City's website.

Staff Member Johnson noted there are a number of useful links on the historic preservation page of the City's website, including on-line City directories dating back to the mid to late 19th century, which are an excellent resource for researching genealogy and properties.

Commissioner Klavitter noted the greatest benefit to the on-line directories is they are scanned using optical character recognition which means a person could use a key word search for names and addresses.

The Commission thanked all that participated in the meeting and for taking time to share their thoughts and feelings about the proposed National Register nominations.

The Commission asked whether anyone in attendance was opposed to the proposed nominations. No one expressed opposition.

The Commission again expressed their gratitude for people participating in the process.

Motion by Krueger, seconded by Rapp, to close public session. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye: Krueger, Klavitter, Monk, Olson and Rapp; Nay – None.

Seminary Hill Residential Historic District: Motion by Klavitter, seconded by Olson, to recommend the Seminary Hill Residential Historic District be listed on the National Register of Historic Places based on Eligibility Criterion C. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye: Krueger, Klavitter, Monk, Olson and Rapp; Nay – None.

Old Main Street Historic District Boundary Increase and Amendment: Motion by Rapp, seconded Krueger, to recommend the Old Main Street Historic District Boundary Increase and Amendment be listed on the National Register of Historic Places based on Eligibility Criteria A and C. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye: Krueger, Klavitter, Monk, Olson and Rapp; Nay – None.

Washington Residential Historic District: Motion by Olson, seconded by Klavitter, to recommend the Washington Residential Historic District be listed on the National Register of Historic Places based on Eligibility Criteria A and C. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye: Krueger, Klavitter, Monk, Olson and Rapp; Nay – None.

Fenelon Place Residential Historic District: Motion by Klavitter, seconded by Krueger, to recommend the Fenelon Place Residential Historic District be listed on the National Register of Historic Places based on Eligibility Criteria A and C. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye: Krueger, Klavitter, Monk, Olson and Rapp; Nay – None.

Upper Iowa Street Historic District: Motion by Krueger, seconded by Olson, to recommend the Upper Iowa Street Historic District be listed on the National Register of Historic Places based on Eligibility Criterion C. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye: Krueger, Klavitter, Monk, Olson and Rapp; Nay – None.

Motion by Klavitter, seconded Krueger, to receive and file the two emails in support of the nominations. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye: Krueger, Klavitter, Monk, Olson and Rapp; Nay – None.

HPC Work Plan Progress Report: Staff Member Carstens noted the information being provided to the Commission was provided to City Council at their May meeting. She explained Planning staff wanted to share the information and progress to date on the work plan items with the Commission. The Commission thanked staff for preparing the information, noting it was helpful.

Staff Member Carstens asked whether there were any additional updates or questions for the report. The Commission asked about the update to those work plan items that were being addressed by former Commissioner Schlarman. She noted the Commission requested Planning Services staff check in on the status of those projects as well as her intent in July. Staff Member Johnson explained he did have a conversation recently with Ms. Schlarman, and it is still her intention to pursue those work plan items on her own when time allows. He will check in again with Ms. Schlarman in July. The Commission clarified the Ordinance adoption and enforcement work plan item is a closed issue, and is interested in knowing Ms. Schlarman's intentions with the public spaces in historic neighborhoods work plan goal.

The Commission questioned the status of the discussed Economic Impact Study. Staff Member Johnson noted he did have an opportunity to speak with Donovan Rypkema about potential content and cost associated with an Economic Impact Study for Dubuque. He noted Mr. Rypkema would be very excited about the opportunity and recommended any economic impact study for Dubuque be framed around the three sustainability pillars. He noted the focus of the economic impact study would be on the economic prosperity pillar; however, the report would also address the social and cultural as well as environmental contributions preservation makes to the community. Staff Member Johnson stated Mr. Rypkema estimated a project of that scope would range between \$35-40,000 depending on the level of involvement from local staff. Staff Member Johnson stated that a project of that magnitude would need to be leveraged with grant funds and would also have to be tested with the City Manager.

The Commission thought expanding the study to include all elements of sustainability might also increase funding opportunities.

The consensus of the Commission was to expand the scope of the Economic Impact Study to address all elements of sustainability while focusing on the economic benefits, and to test the study and its content with the City Manager.

Commission and staff discussed how frequent the narrative updates on the work plan would be provided to the Commission.

Staff Approvals: Planning Services staff provided the updates of projects approved in April and May, and described the approved work at 1163 Highland.

Building Services Historic Preservation Enforcement Report: Staff Member Johnson provided updates to the Building Services Department's remaining enforcement action in historic districts.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSION:

Commission Terms: Commissioner Olson noted she recently received a letter from the City Clerk's Office asking if she would like to re-apply for her position on the Historic Preservation Commission. She noted she had previously submitted her resignation and questioned if there was anything more she needed to do. Staff Member Carstens noted that is a letter that is automatically generated and forwarded to Commissioners with expiring terms and there is nothing more she needs to do. Staff Member Carstens clarified that Commissioner Olson is not resigning; rather, her term is simply expiring and she is not seeking reappointment.

The Commission discussed current vacancies, and Planning Services staff noted current recruitment efforts by the Planning Services Department as well as ongoing efforts by the City Clerk's Office.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Carstens, Planning Services Manager

Adopted