

**MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION**

5:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 17, 2020

Virtual Meeting

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and mandates for social distancing, this meeting was conducted virtually.

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Bill Doyle; Commissioners, Melissa Daykin Cassill, Brandi Clark, Christina Monk, David Klavitter, and Joseph Rapp.

Commissioners Excused: Craig Reber, Rick Stuter, John McAndrews

Commissioners Unexcused: None.

Staff Members Present: Wally Wernimont and Chris Happ Olson.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Doyle at 5:32 p.m.

MINUTES: Motion by Klavitter, seconded by Daykin Cassill, to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2020 meeting as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Daykin Cassill, Klavitter, Rapp, and Doyle; Nay – none; Abstain – Monk.

ACTION ITEMS:

Demolition Request

Applicant: City of Dubuque, Housing & Community Development Dept.
Address: 574 Loras Boulevard
Project: Demolition
District: West 11th Street Historic District

Commissioner Brandi Clark entered the meeting.

Staff Member Happ Olson outlined the procedure for demolition of the building. She noted that John McAndrews removed his request to purchase the property. She reviewed that the property is a contributing building to the West 11th Street Historic District. She said the application is similar to the application reviewed at the November 2020 Commission meeting. Differences include a memo from the application for the re-submission and a letter from John McAndrews. She explained that the Commission should use the demolition permit criteria, under consideration for the Political Subdivision of State, as they had already determined that the structure was architecturally and historically significant at the November 2020 meeting.

Housing Inspector Shane Hoeper, presented the application, noted the reason for Mr. McAndrews withdrawing his application related to being unable to meet the housing code. He described that habitability issues for the property included low ceilings and narrow stairways, and said it was unusual as a condition pervasive throughout the property, with the ceiling height in the structure being less than the required seven feet. Hoeper noted that it would not meet the International Building Code for the property and a rental license would not be issued for the property.

Ben Pothoff, Housing Inspection Supervisor, said that the City Manager has asked Housing to establish a 21-year covenant to the property, requiring owner-occupancy for the term if City of Dubuque funding is utilized. He noted that only the Code Official has the ability to approve a modification. Pothoff has said that historically a modification has not been approved in the past for ceiling heights.

Commissioner Monk noted she was not at the last meeting. She reviewed the information from last meeting and is informed of the request.

Commissioner Rapp noted that if anybody wanted to seriously adapt the building, they might likely have to cut through the ceiling and create a one-floor house.

Commissioner Daykin Cassill, stated that without any individuals that have come forward to rehabilitate it, she saw no other option than the one presented.

Commissioner Klavitter stated that it is not known whether there are other people available to rehabilitate the structure.

Chairperson Doyle said that the described state of emergency at the building has been overstated.

Motion by Monk, seconded by Daykin Cassill, to approve the application as submitted using the criteria 16-10-5 (G). Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Daykin Cassill, Monk, Rapp, Clark, and Doyle; Nay – Klavitter.

ITEMS FROM PUBLIC: None.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSION:

Commissioner Klavitter expressed his desire for the Commission to review the demolition process, noting concern that many demolitions have come before the Commission in the past year and that there are conflicting interests on the City's part. He expressed desire to examine the City's policies around the acquisition of and approach to historic properties, in order to be more proactive and prevent the need for demolition. He included the review of code in that discussion, to be more flexible when historic properties are involved.

Discussion ensued among staff and the Commission regarding the different demolitions that came before the Commission in 2020. Discussion included 1025 Bluff Street, which was not reviewed by the commission because of the emergency.

By request of Staff Member Wernimont, Staff Member Happ Olson provided an update regarding the Loras Boulevard explosion in September 2020 and the condition of the buildings on Loras Boulevard. She discussed the impacts of COVID-19 to the supply chain, and described the added stresses on that supply chain and contractor availability that was a result from the devastating Derecho sweeping across Iowa in August. She described that in addition to building materials, contractors were in short supply. She used the example of plexiglass for curved storm windows, and how because of the current need during the pandemic for businesses to use it for safe interaction with the public, it is essentially not available at this time. She explained to the Commission the process where staff is able to sign off on many repairs if they are in compliance with the City's Architectural Guidelines and that she has been working with a number of owners. She said she is continuing to work directly with owners and with Housing inspectors to help facilitate the permit process and repair.

ITEMS FROM STAFF:

Heritage Works/City Discussion: Following the previous discussion, Staff Member Happ Olson discussed a December meeting of City staff and staff and volunteers from Heritage Works, the preservation non-profit organization in Dubuque. This meeting was initiated by a request from John Gronen, a board member with Heritage Works, and the topic ranged from education, emergency response, design review and code enforcement. She noted that Interim Building Services Manager Cori Burbach suggested a quarterly meeting to explore a private/public partnership and said that an additional meeting would happen in January. General discussion ensued about the ability to form a partnership to help better educate the public and strengthen the ability to protect resources in Dubuque.

Draft Historic Preservation Commission Workplan for 2021: Staff Member Happ Olson explained that the Certified Local Government report, due annually in March, requires a Commission workplan. She referred to the memo and 2020 plan included in the packet, which is approved by the Commission and City Council. She noted that she would bring back a draft 2021 workplan at the January 2021 Commissioner meeting for review and input.

The Commission discussed the workplan. Happ Olson noted there are two goals over three pages in the plan: Outreach & Education and Survey & Registration Projects. Staff Members Happ Olson and Wernimont discussed the shifts in the Commission's role to one that is more of public education, allowing staff to perform design review when that design conforms with the Architectural Guidelines.

Joseph Rapp left the meeting at 6:26.

Outreach & Education: The Commissioner discussed historic preservation month, architecture days, and the award program. Staff and Commissioners reviewed the differences between the 2020 work plan and the proposed work plan. The Commission discussed the impact from Covid-19 with the Preserve Iowa Conference shift from in-person to virtual which was not to Dubuque's benefit by not bringing people to the community. Commissioner Klavitter expressed a strong desire to bring the conference back to Dubuque in 2022 and offered to help advocate for it. Staff Member Wernimont said the City would look into the possibility.

The Commission discussed the desire to explore some virtual content sessions on subjects such as window restoration, neighborhood history (in association with neighborhood groups), using it as a teaching opportunity for issues like design review. Happ Olson noted that with partnership, the cost and effort for these types of sessions are minimal when compared to a day-long in-person event like the 2019 Preservation Fair.

Survey & Registration Projects: Happ Olson reviewed progress on progress and status of the projects listed on the plan.

Happ Olson conveyed that she would incorporate suggestions in a revision which she would bring back to the next scheduled meeting for review.

Ken Kringle Awards: Happ Olson reminded the Commission that at their January meeting they would be asked to submit suggestions for the Ken Kringle Awards 2021, and that staff would also bring forward suggestions. She noted that with partnership with the Dubuque County Historic Preservation Commission and Dubuque Main Street, the plan is to have an in-person ceremony while also preparing to present a live virtual ceremony if needed. This approach differs from the 2020 ceremony which was pre-recorded.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Klavitter, seconded by Daykin Cassill, to adjourn the December 17, 2020 Commission meeting. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Daykin Cassill, Monk, Klavitter, McAndrews, Stuter, Rapp, Reber, Clark and Doyle; Nay – none.

The meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Wally Wernimont, Planning Services Manager

1/21/2021
Adopted