

MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Monday, August 10, 2015
City Hall, Room 210
4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Ald. Mark Steuer, Dennis Doucette, Dave Boyce, Susan Ley, Roger Retzlaff

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Jeanine Mead

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jacqueline Frank

ALSO PRESENT: Wess Damro, Cheryl Renier-Wigg, Steve Grenier, Ald. Tim DeWayne, Catherine Chevalier, Tom Chevalier, Jason Flatt, Bill Meindl

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND AGENDA

- a. Approve July 13, 2015 Minutes

A motion was made by R. Retzlaff and seconded by D. Boyce to approve July 13, 2015 Minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.

- b. Modify and adopt agenda

A motion was made by Ald. Steuer and seconded by R. Retzlaff to move 4d. under Design Reviews. All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by R. Retzlaff and seconded by D. Boyce to approve modified agenda. All in favor. Motion carried.

2. DESIGN REVIEWS:

- a. Review and discuss sign permit application for 423 Dousman.

No representative is present at this time. R. Retzlaff would like to see a drawing of the new sign. Sign seems to be larger than other signs in the area with the current measurements being 15'9" long by 6'1" high.

A motion was made by R. Retzlaff and seconded by D. Boyce to postpone consideration and verify with Inspections that the size meets the City sign code. All in favor. Motion carried.

- b. Review and discuss waiver request for 722 S. Quincy St.

C. Renier-Wigg informed the HPC that W. Damro is looking for the HPC to recommend a waiver in regards to the height of the railings on his porch. The porch has already been approved by the HPC; he would like to now install 28 inch railings.

Ald. Steuer stated that 28 inch railings are appropriate for the integrity of the property. He inquired as to any safety concerns the building inspector may have. C. Renier-Wigg added that if the HPC recommends the waiver, the building inspector will work with the owner to make sure the railings are secured and constructed properly.

W. Damro wants to maintain the historic nature of the property by installing the 28 inch railings that would wrap around all three sides of the porch.

C. Renier-Wigg stated the usual height of the railings were between 24-30 inches dependent on the height of the front window sill. She said if the HPC would like the rails to be more in fitting with the neighborhood, they should recommend a waiver to the building inspector.

A motion was made by D. Boyce and was seconded by S. Ley to approve the waiver with consideration to the height of the window sills. All in favor. Motion carried.

c. Review and discuss driveway expansion permit for 703 S. Quincy St.

Catherine Chevalier and Tom Chevalier were present. Concrete was already installed. They replaced and expanded their driveway by adding a concrete slab by the garage. There were no issues with the setbacks. The driveway is in compliance with City Inspections.

A motion was made by R. Retzlaff and was seconded by S. Ley to approve the driveway expansion. All in favor. Motion carried.

4d. Discussion on the state funded renovation of Gray Street.

DPW Director Steve Grenier appeared before the Committee. Ald. Steuer received a letter from Elizabeth Miller, Historic Preservation Consultant in Madison, discussing this project. She wanted to know what buildings in this area were historic. The initial concern was the affect the street expansion would have on the homes. J. Flatt went out and took pictures of some of the homes along Gray Street. The determination is that there would be little to no impact on the properties.

S. Grenier explained that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation is providing the funds for this expansion. With receiving these funds there is an obligation to find any properties that are eligible for or currently listed on the National Registry. That is the intent of this outreach effort. According to the consultant, currently only the church is eligible.

There is a possibility of some widening; the south end of this project runs along Gray Street from Dousman to Velp. Between Dousman and Mather, the right-of-way is only 56.25 feet. Being an older side of the road, it has a narrow right-of-way. It is difficult to get modern accommodations into a 56 foot right-of-way.

The Federal Highway Administration and the State of Wisconsin have Complete Street Legislation, which advocates motor vehicle use. With the Governor's budget bill for 2015, the Complete Street Legislation has been wiped; the money coming in for the street renovations is from the Federal Government. In order to meet accommodations along the street there is a minimum 63-65 foot width. There is a possibility the street could be widened up to 65 feet. It will be discussed with the district alderman and the property owners along the corridor to get some consensus as to how they want the street to look.

If the widening is necessary, it would be confined to the terrace area or the yard behind the existing sidewalk. Preliminary indications from design consultants indicate that no buildings would be affected.

J. Flatt asked if along Mather, if the street is already 60 feet, if it too could potentially be widened. S. Grenier said there have been no decisions made as to how the cross sections will look. There will be an outreach effort with the alderman and a public meeting where multiple options will be presented to the public. Based off of the consensus, they will make a decision regarding the cross-sections. J. Flatt commented that he observed only two properties along Gray Street that were eligible for the National Registry but north of Mather Street is potentially eligible as a historic district-Mather Heights Neighborhood, which could be impacted if they decided to expand the cross-sections.

R. Retzlaff thinks there would need to be some historical research on the transportation network with respect to the neighborhood.

S. Grenier said the desire is to not have impact outside of existing right-of-way. Right-of-way acquisitions, even temporary limited easements, are timely to obtain and the project is scheduled for 2017. If we were to acquire extensive amounts of right-of-way the time requirements would kill the project.

A motion was made by Ald. Steuer and seconded by S. Ley to open the floor for comment. All in favor. Motion carried.

B. Meindl commented that he grew up in the area of Mather and that Gray Street is currently comfortably a two lane street. He does not feel that there is room for widening. He inquired if the intent was to make it a four lane street.

S. Grenier said that they do not intend to make it a four lane street. The project is set for 2017 along with Mather from Vroman to Gray. The intent is to keep them all two lane roads. However, with the Complete Street Legislation requirements we have to provide the ability for bikes and cars to coexist and also have sidewalks. There needs to be a balance between the existing right-of-way with the amenities that are desired within the boundaries of the project that would include parking and bike lanes. Whether or not parking is included is based off of how the alderman and the residents feel. Gray Street has been expedited because of the volume of traffic. The more traffic the higher the deterioration rate.

A motion was made by Ald. Steuer and seconded by D. Boyce to proceed in the order of the agenda. All in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by R. Retzlaff and seconded by S. Ley to receive and place on file S. Grenier's report and to formulate an answer to the Historic Preservation Consultants letter considering the potentiality of a historic district in the area. All in favor. Motion carried.

3. **CONTINUING BUSINESS**

4. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Discussion on 30-day raze ordinance

R. Retzlaff spoke on the National Trust Preservation Law Publication, "Protecting Potential Landmarks through Demolition Review". There are a variety of methods municipalities can employ to protect the value of historic properties that are under consideration for demolition, which generally means putting ordinances into effect that will require review of any property that the city demolishes. Some of the variables include, the extent of properties being considered, such as buildings 50 years of age or older. If we only look at properties 50 years of age or older, we could be missing some potentially historic properties. When we do the permit reviews every month there's seldom more than three or four demolitions, it would be easy to have a review process every month. We need to consider how long the waiting period needs to be. They can range from 30 days to two years, depending on the action taken by the municipality. The City needs to appoint a reviewing authority. There needs to be established a process for the assessment of the historic significance of a building, not just the design or character, but cultural factors that may be important to the city or people of the region.

The process would need to change. Currently, someone goes to the inspection department, fills out an application for a demolition permit, pay the fee, and sign a liability form. If there is going to be a delay process the owner or agent would have to apply for the permit and then would not be obligated to pay the fee until the demo is approved. The inspection department would submit the application to the reviewing authority. Someone in the City or the owner would need to prepare some provisional documentation of the building that could be submitted with the application. Then the reviewer would make the assessment of the historical value.

Ald. Steuer feels it is important to have a process in place to that the HPC has a chance to look at the project. Some municipalities, such as Oshkosh and Fond Du Lac, have a 10 day waiting period established.

D. Doucette suggested that the waiting period should be tied into the time frame of the next HPC meeting. He suggested a 45 day waiting period.

R. Retzlaff said the HPC cannot prevent something from being torn down but there are steps that can be taken to document and recognize the building. Time frame is not as much of a concern as is the process. He suggested maybe publishing when a building would be demolished so the general public is aware. If the HPC recommends the property to not be torn down, it would then go before City Council for validation.

R. Retzlaff proposed to table the discussion and resume at the next meeting. He would like the committee members to read the publication before the next meeting.

A motion was made by Ald. Steuer and seconded by S. Ley to open the floor. All in favor. Motion carried.

B. Meindl suggested the HPC meet with Cheryl Renier-Wigg, Kim Flom, and Jim Mueller to get their input on the waiting period. Then bring the topic back to the Commission for further discussion, and then maybe present it to the City Council.

R. Retzlaff said that there have already been discussions with C. Renier-Wigg about the process that would need to be put into place. They were able to put together a draft ordinance with a waiting period. The biggest issue is what to do with the waiting period once it is established.

Ald. Steuer would like the Committee to read the publication before the next meeting.

A motion was made by R. Retzlaff and seconded by S. Ley to table this discussion until the next meeting, read the publication and be prepared to discuss how the waiting period can be put into effect and what the goals resulting from the waiting period will be. All in favor. Motion carried.

b. Updates on the Hotel Northland project

D. Doucette stated that there will be further discussion on this topic in the near future. Great progress has been made in the last 15 days. There is expected to be an announcement in the upcoming days getting the project underway.

A motion was made by Ald. Steuer and seconded by S. Ley to receive and place on file. All in favor. Motion carried.

c. Discussion on historic home sales in Brown County

S. Ley stated that there is not much for sale in historic districts other than a couple in the Astor neighborhood. 621 S. Monroe was a 5 bed, 2 bath home for sale for \$54,000. There was a lot of interest in the property and it ended up selling for \$10,000 more than the asking price.

R. Retzlaff took over as chairman; Ald. Steuer had another meeting to attend.

e. Discussion on the PowerPoint presentation that will be given to neighborhood associations, service clubs, business groups, and other interested parties regarding CLG/HP initiatives

R. Retzlaff proposed that this be tabled until the next meeting.

f. Review June Building Activity Report

A motion was made by S. Ley and seconded by D. Doucette to receive and place on file. All in favor. Motion carried.

5. **OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS**

Jeffrey Knudsen appeared regarding his properties at 401 and 409 N. Broadway. He stated that they used to be part of the Broadway/Dousman Historic Walking Tour. When he went onto the website his properties were no longer listed as part of the tour. He wanted to inquire as to why he was no longer part of the tour.

R. Retzlaff and S. Ley both believe that the walking tours are handled through the Chamber of Commerce and recommended he talk with them. J. Knudsen will forward a copy of the link to the website to the Committee members in hopes that they can find out what agency to contact.

J. Knudsen also inquired about how to receive funding assistance for 409 N. Broadway. There are agencies available to provide assistance and would like J. Flatt to provide help. J. Flatt will provide to J. Knudsen an informational email containing the two primary sources that will help fund the rehabilitation of historic properties.

J. Knudsen informed the HPC of the current bidding on a developer to add a parking lot behind his property. He expressed some concerns regarding parking in the area. R. Retzlaff suggested he talk to Planning about his parking concerns. J. Knudsen has already been in contact with the Neighborhood Division.

6. **NEXT MEETING DATE:** September 14, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by S. Ley and seconded by D. Boyce to adjourn. All in favor. Motion carried.