City of Bloomington Illinois

MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION - REGULAR SESSION
THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2024, 5:00 PM

The Historic Preservation Commission convened in regular session at 5:00 PM, August 15, 2024. Chair Greg Koos called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Sarah Lindenbaum	Commissioner	Present
Mark Adams	Commissioner	Present (Left at 5:46PM)
Emma Meyer	Commissioner	Absent
John Elterich	Commissioner	Present
Paul Scharnett	Commission Vice Chair	Absent
Dawn Peters	Commissioner	Absent
Greg Koos	Commission Chair	Present

City Staff present included Jon Branham, City Planner; Alissa Pemberton, City Planner; John Myers, Assistant City Planner.

Public Comment

No members of the public provided comment.

Chair Koos discussed the demolition review of 615 E. Empire. He stated that he was withdrawing his objection to the demolition after learning more about the situation surrounding the subject structure. He noted that minimal building inspection and enforcement on older structures with Code issues has been completed within the last 20 years and, currently, there is no available funding to aid in their rehabilitation for reuse.

Chair Koos, additionally, discussed his conversations with the City of Bloomington regarding the demolition of 1613 S. Main Street. He stated that rehabilitation is unlikely to occur due to the lack of funding. He noted that the Parks and Recreation Department has concerns about losing their financial allocation if the subject structure is not demolished, due to the scope of the approved project. Documentation of the structure will be provided prior to demolition.

Additionally, he noted that he signed off on the demolition of three other structures since the last meeting. He stated that preservation of the exiting housing stock will play a crucial role in reducing the housing shortage that the City of Bloomington is facing.

Consent Agenda

Items listed on the Consent Agenda are approved with one motion; Items pulled from the Consent Agenda for discussion are listed and voted on separately.

Item 4.A. Review and approval of the minutes of the July 18, 2024, regular meeting of the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission.

Commissioner Elterich made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Lindenbaum, to approve the consent agenda as presented.
Roll call.
AYES: Koos; Lindenbaum; Elterich; Adams
Motion passed (viva voce).

Regular Agenda

The following item was presented:

Item 5.A. **BHP-30-24** - Consideration, and action on a request submitted by Lee Wu for a **Certificate of Appropriateness** for roof and chimney restoration for the property at 812 N. Prairie Street, PIN 21-04-208-004.

Mr. Branham presented the Staff Report noting this is a continuation from the previous meeting. He provided a brief summary of the proposed work and noted that the applicant is applying for both a Certificate of Appropriateness and Funk grant funding. Ms. Pemberton noted the difference between a public hearing and public review, Certificates and the award of funding being subject to public review.

Paul Stauffer, contractor, discussed the proposed project. He noted that he has a passion for the rehabilitation of historic buildings and described his proposed construction methods. He noted that he plans to salvage the brick to restore the chimney and use similar materials when needed. Additionally, he stated the applicant has the intention to care for the building and use accurate techniques to increase its longevity.

Chair Koos made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Elterich, to approve the scope of work and request for a Certificate of Appropriateness, as submitted by Lee Wu, for roof and chimney restoration, on the property at 812 N. Prairie Street.
Roll call.
AYES: Koos; Lindenbaum; Elterich; Adams
Motion passed.

The following item was presented:

Item 5.B. **BHP -31-24** - Consideration, and action on a request submitted by Lee Wu for a **Funk Grant** in the amount of $7,500.00, for roof and chimney restoration on the property at 812 N. Prairie Street, PIN: 21-04-208-004.

Ms. Pemberton discussed the Funk grant funding and stated that there is not enough to allocate the full amount requested. She noted that some previously funded projects may come under budget and recommended the Commission structure the motion to include up to $7,500 to ensure all Funk grant funds are utilized.

Commissioner Adams asked Staff to confirm the fiscal Year Cycle. Ms. Pemberton responded the Fiscal Year is from May 1 to April 30.

Chair Koos noted that we are through approximately three-quarters of construction season.

Commissioner Elterich asked the Applicant's contractor if the previous estimates provided for the project are accurate to what he expects his costs to be. Mr. Stauffer responded the estimates are reasonable and close.

Commission Chair Koos made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Adams, to establish findings of fact that the project is eligible and to approve the request for a Funk Grant in the amount of up to $7,500.00 for the project, subject to funds being available in the budget.
Roll call.
AYES: Koos; Lindenbaum; Elterich; Adams
Motion passed.

The following item was presented:

Item 5.C. Consideration and action to Elect Positions for Historic Preservation Commission leadership.

Chair Koos nominated Commissioner Lindenbaum for Chair. Commissioner Adams seconded the nomination. Commissioner Lindenbaum accepted the nomination.

Chair Koos opened the floor for the Commission to nominate other Commissioners or make comments. No additional nominations were provided.

Commission Chair Koos made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Adams, to elect Commissioner Lindenbaum as Chair of the Commission.
Roll call.
AYES: Koos; Lindenbaum; Elterich; Adams
Motion passed.

Commissioner Elterich nominated Commissioner Scharnett for Vice Chair. Commissioner Adams seconded the nomination. Ms. Pemberton noted that Commissioner Scharnett had previously stated he was willing to continue the position, at the behest of the Commission.

Commissioner Elterich made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Adams, to elect Commissioner Scharnett as Vice Chair of the Commission.
Roll call.
AYES: Koos; Lindenbaum; Elterich; Adams
Motion passed.

New Business

Commissioner Koos noted that, due to receipt of reports on the condition of Holy Trinity Church and Rectory, the status of the Designation should be discussed prior to moving on to scheduled New Business. He stated the representatives of the Peoria Diocese had initially requested to continue the hearing at the Planning Commission due to the condition of the property and the cost of rehabilitation. He noted that the Peoria Diocese has conducted an architectural study, which concluded that the Rectory was in hazardous shape, but restorable. The report discussed issues with the foundation and other serious concerns. Commissioner Koos stated that in the reports the Church was considered to be in much better condition. He noted the total cost to rehabilitate both structures is approximately $7 million. Additionally, he stated, from the report, the Rectory needs a considerable amount of funding immediately, while projects to preserve the Church can be phased over a period of time.

Chair Lindenbaum noted the difference in priority costs within the report.

Ms. Pemberton discussed the Planning Commission's role in the Zoning Map Amendment portion of the Designation process. She mentioned that the Planning Commission is reviewing the Zoning aspects and evaluating the public good components of applying the restrictions of the Historic Preservation District, which is granted through the S-4 overlay.

Commissioner Elterich stated that he does not understand why the financial components are an issue in the rezoning. Ms. Pemberton responded that the condition of the structures should be the main focus of the discussion for the HPC and Staff wants to verify whether any of the new information impacted the HPC's determination on criteria #10 (§ 44-804B(2)(j)) for the consideration of nominations. She discussed the differences between the Rectory and the Church, noting that the Church is clearly preservable, while the Rectory has larger underlying issues and may not be considered preservable by some.

Commissioner Koos stated he disagrees with the Rectory as a "not preservable" structure and stated his understanding of the report is by spending $2 million the building could be in good shape. Ms. Pemberton noted that is with the understanding that much of the original material would be replaced.

Ms. Pemberton stated that Commissioner Elterich's opinion that finances should not be a consideration is correct, from a preservation standpoint. However, when reviewing zoning, there is a test of public good and finances may matter when determining appropriateness.

Commissioner Koos stated he believes Council will be reluctant to apply the S-4 overlay if the property owner rejects. He noted that the intent of the S-4 designation is not an opt-in program.

Commissioner Koos related comments from Vice Chair Scharnett. Vice Chair Scharnett commented that the costs discussed in the report do not consider the social costs, noting that the building is an architectural landmark and is a part of the gateway into downtown. The local significance of buildings has an impact on the community.

Commissioner Koos discussed the potential of applying the S-4 overlay to just the Church and not the Rectory, due to the difference in existing condition. He noted that split-zoning a parcel is not feasible. Ms. Pemberton responded it is possible to split zone a parcel; other existing in the City (not as split S-4 zoning, but as underlying zoning) but it is not common or recommended practice. Commissioner Koos inquired about previous discussions related to split-zoning S-4 overlays. Ms. Pemberton responded that those discussions were regarding Public Right-of-Way, which technically has no ownership. She noted that an alternative to split-zoning that would still differentiate protection of the structures could be the S-4 overlay could still be applied to the entire parcel, but the effecting Ordinance could state which structures are contributing and noncontributing.

Commissioner Koos stated both structures are very important buildings to preserve and protect. He noted that Bloomington has lost multiple George Miller buildings in the past, so it important to preserve the existing ones.

Chair Lindenbaum summarized that everyone on the Commission agrees the two buildings should be preserved. She inquired about any further action the Commission can take to support their designation and preservation efforts. Commissioner Koos responded, stating that attending the September 4th Planning Commission meeting is appropriate. Additionally, he noted the architectural studies that were conducted for the properties appear to be in good faith and lay out a pathway to preserving the buildings.

Commissioner Elterich stated that he does not have confidence that the Peoria Diocese will preserving the building. Commissioner Koos agreed, noting that it is the people of the local parish who have cared about the structure and raised over $3 million over 15 years. He noted that the amount of money the Historic Preservation Commission can grant is small in comparison to the overall scope of expense for building maintenance and repair.

Commissioner Koos asked if there is any action the Historic Preservation Commission can take and if Staff can reflect this conversation at the Planning Commission meeting. Ms. Pemberton responded that, procedurally, the only action the Commission can take as the Applicant is to speak at the public hearing or withdraw the application. She stated that Staff will reflect this conversation in the memo and presentation to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Koos reiterated that these structures are important to Central Bloomington and the broader community. He noted that the subject structures are part of what makes Central Bloomington an attractive place.

Chair Lindenbaum inquired about attending the Planning Commission meeting. Ms. Pemberton stated that it would be an appropriate action for the HPC to attend the meeting and explain the opportunity that S-4 Designation provides, per § 44-804B(4)(c). Explaining the benefits the S-4 Designation provides may help the Planning Commission understand how to apply the criteria for evaluating zoning map amendments.

Commissioner Elterich stated they should be encouraging us and not fighting the designation. Commissioner Lindenbaum added that the goal should be for public perception of the Commission as partners rather than adversaries.

Commissioner Adams left the meeting at 5:46PM.

The following item was presented:

Item 6.A. Discussion related to the Community Preservation Plan priorities and resources.

Due to a lack of Commission Members, the Commission decided to continue this discussion at the next meeting.

The following item was presented:

Item 6.B. Discussion related to the survey of City-Owned historic properties.

Due to a lack of Commission members, the Commission decided to continue this discussion at the next meeting.

Adjournment

Commissioner Elterich made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Koos, to adjourn the meeting.
Roll call.
AYES: Koos; Lindenbaum; Elterich
Motion passed (viva voce).

The Meeting Adjourned at 5:50PM.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

Sarah Lindenbaum
Sarah Lindenbaum, Chair

Alissa Pemberton
Alissa Pemberton, Staff Liaison