



**MINUTES**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION - REGULAR SESSION**  
**THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024, 5:00 PM**

The Historic Preservation Commission convened in regular session at 5:00 PM, April 18, 2024. Chair Greg Koos called the meeting to order.

**Roll Call**

| Attendee Name    | Title                 | Status  |
|------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Paul Scharnett   | Commission Vice Chair | Present |
| Dawn Peters      | Commissioner          | Present |
| Sarah Lindenbaum | Commissioner          | Present |
| John Elterich    | Commissioner          | Present |
| Emma Meyer       | Commissioner          | Present |
| Mark Adams       | Commissioner          | Present |
| Greg Koos        | Commission Chair      | Present |

City Staff present included Jon Branham, City Planner; Alissa Pemberton, City Planner; and Kelly Pfeifer, Assistant Director of Economic & Community Development.

**Public Comment**

No public comment was presented.

**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.*

**Vice Chair Scharnett made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Elterich, to approve the item as presented.**

**AYES:** Koos; Scharnett; Peters; Lindenbaum; Elterich; Meyer; Adams

**Motion passed viva voce.**

Item 4.A. Review and approval of the minutes of the March 21, 2024, regular meeting of the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission.

**Regular Agenda**

*The following item was presented:*

Item 5.A. BHP-06-24 - Consideration, and action on a request submitted by Jim Neeley for a **Certificate of Appropriateness** for overhead garage door replacement, with minor expansion, for the property at 33 Sunset Road, PIN 14-34-402-016.

Ms. Pemberton presented the Staff Report with a recommendation for approval, noting the Architectural Guidelines state historic garages may be altered to accommodate contemporary vehicles. The scale of the opening, the material and the color remain largely consistent with the current visual, which she noted is likely not the original.

Chair Koos inquired of the Applicant whether they had any images of the original door. The Applicant replied in the negative.

Discussion about the likely characteristics of the original door ensued between the Commission and Applicant. Staff stated they were unable to find any images from between the date of construction (1948) and the earliest image in the Staff Report showing the current visual characteristics.

Commissioner Elterich inquired about the construction of the darker panels present in the current pattern. The Applicant indicated they are an applied wood panel.

Vice-Chair Scharnett expressed concerns about the structural stability of the front garage wall with the proposed adjustment. The Applicant provided additional clarification on the intent and process for the project: strip redwood siding and retain pieces, add engineered beam that runs the full width of the garage. Scharnett expressed concern that the scope of work in the provided quote may not meet the subject Code. Ms. Pemberton noted that a building permit will be required for the proposed work and review for compliance with the Code should be a component of that permitting.

Vice-Chair Scharnett noted that the proposal does result in a visual change that is impactful for architecture of the specific property by reducing the impact of the horizontality. The Applicant expressed that they have debated the same concern through the process of the project so far and, for that reason, are considering postponing the project until other projects have been completed.

Chair Koos noted that he had structural concerns when reviewing the project also and sees the concern regarding the change in aspect. Vice-Chair Scharnett noted that the proposed change is at least reversible. The Board discussed possible options for reducing the visual impact of the change.

Commissioner Lindenbaum asked whether the Applicants had received quotes from other companies. The Applicant stated they had sought multiple quotes, but the one submitted with the request was the only one that seemed complete and well-formed enough that they felt they could competently accomplish the job.

Additional discussion about the likely composition and characteristics of the original door occurred between the Board and Applicant.

Vice-Chair Scharnett noted that many of the properties in the surrounding neighborhood struggle with similar issues related to the accommodation of modern vehicles. Commissioner Peters noted that similar properties are being replaced rather than modified.

No other parties were present to provide comment for or against.

Commissioner Elterich noted that, while the change is subtle, it is impactful. Vice-Chair Scharnett agreed, but also noted the greater good as indicated by Commissioner Peters, of allowing continued reasonable use of the structure.

Chair Koos inquired about the life-span of a Certificate of Appropriateness. Ms. Pemberton stated there is not an "expiration date" within current Code and that the Certificate would just remain attached to the property record until such time as a related Building Permit is applied for. Mr. Koos asked for clarification that the final decision would then be based upon the appropriateness of the project that was submitted for permitting, as related to the engineering, and whether the person who reviews those permits is a trained engineer. Ms. Pemberton replied that the current Building Official is a licensed Architect and oversees building permitting.

**Commissioner Meyer made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Peters, to approve the scope of work and Certificate of Appropriateness, with the Condition that a licensed Design Professional review and approve of the final plans prior to permitting.**

**AYES:** Scharnett; Peters; Lindenbaum; Meyer; Adams

**NAYS:** Koos; Elterich

**Motion passed.**

## **New Business**

*The following item was presented:*

Item 6.A. Attached Resource: "Fences in Historic Districts" by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (May 2006).

Ms. Pemberton presented a resource in preparation for inevitable review of new fences on historic properties that will be proposed over the summer months.

Chair Koos noted that the resource has some inaccuracies with the 19th-century design information but is otherwise helpful. Ms. Pemberton noted that the resource helps with understanding the context of appropriate fence design in aspects other than based upon the architectural style of the house. Vice Chair Scharnett noted that the Committee must consider the neighborhood context and existing precedent to help make decisions also.

**Jim Neely (33 Sunset Drive)** stated they are working on proposing a fence for the property and asked the Commission what would be appropriate.

Chair Koos expressed concern over hiding the overall visual characteristics of the neighborhood and property, since the Designation was partially based upon the vista and landscaping. He stated fencing may take away from the natural features. Vice Chair Scharnett agreed with Chair Koos and stated that it may work against the current trends of the neighborhood. Ms. Pemberton offered

Staff assistance in identifying appropriate solutions that would comply with the Architectural Review Guidelines.

*The following item was presented:*

Item 6.B. Rust Grant Discussion

Ms. Pemberton reminded the Commission that next meeting will involve the consideration and approval of the Rust Grants. She noted that the total amount of requested funding is greater than the amount allocated to the budget and the HPC will need to be prepared to discuss and decide which projects will receive funding.

Vice Chair Scharnett stated he will not be able to attend the May meeting but will provide notes and comments on each project to aid consideration.

Ms. Pemberton asked the Committee if there were any changes to the process they would like to see. Commissioners Lindenbaum and Peters noted that there may be changes that were noted in last year's minutes.

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the FY24 Rust Grant review meeting and noted that commercial and residential distinction was used to aid in prioritizing funding. Ms. Pemberton noted this was difficult to translate into a quantifiable criterion due to mixed-use buildings, but that the Rust Grant was designed to assist business owners in the downtown district.

Committee Member Dawn noted that visibility is an important aspect. Ms. Pemberton asked how they would like to incorporate visibility into the prioritization calculations. Vice Chair Scharnett stated that it would be easiest to use primary and secondary façade to help calculations instead of percent visible from Public Right-of-Way. Chair Koos agreed with Vice Chair Scharnett.

Commissioner Lindenbaum stated prior funding should be considered. Vice Chair Scharnett agreed stating that it should be a major consideration. Commissioner Eltrich stated that it should not be a major consideration. He noted that the projects that are tied for funding should be decided based on the aesthetics of the project and the need for the project.

Ms. Pemberton stated staff can provide the funding history of properties. She noted that it is important information but should not be a qualification/disqualification piece.

*The following item was presented:*

Item 6.C. Jens Jenson Bridge Discussion

Chair Koos broached the subject and asked for updates.

Ms. Pemberton responded that Staff has been in contact with the Town of Normal and the City's Department of Engineering and Operation Services (DOES). She stated that an

important distinction was made, that it is considered a “culvert” instead of a “bridge,” in the engineering report. She noted the report stated that water was passing under the bridge successfully and there were no indications that a weight limit was needed. Additionally, she stated that there were visual issues, however, the report found there were no structural issues. She communicated a statement from DOES, indicating that the City does not have the funds for visual restoration of the façade, however, it is feasible to provide a permit for a private interest to do the work. She noted one of the key questions remaining from the Commissions’ original discuss is how and why “S-4 Designation” could be applied in this case. She explained that the “S-4” Overlay Zoning cannot be applied to the structure because zoning is applied only to private property. The structure is not only not on private property; it is in a right-of-way which technically belongs to the public (not the City), while the City does take responsibility for the maintenance of such.

Ms. Pemberton noted a few possibilities for moving forward, and the benefits and drawbacks of each, which included: 1) the City allowing private interests to pursue restoration work on the façade pieces, 2) moving the bridge to private property where protective zoning could be applied, or 3) pursuing vacation of the right-of-way to create a private street which could then have the protective zoning applied.

Chair Koos stated that a change of Ordinance may be necessary to allow the Historic Preservation Committee to designate landmarks outside of zoning, and noted other structures that could be preserved. Ms. Pemberton explained potential procedural issues related to the original construction of the HPC and the structure and obligations of the City’s Preservation Ordinance as a Certified Local Government. Ms. Pfeifer stated broader HPC purview might be accomplished but would require significant restructuring of the Code. She stated that she would bring the Commission’s request to Administration. Additionally, she explained the difference between Right-of-Way and Lots of Record to illustrate how different possible solutions might work or fail to work.

Jim Neely stated that, for a while, it was believed that the properties adjacent to the culvert owned the bridge. Additionally, he expressed concern regarding construction traffic. Ms. Pfeifer and Ms. Pemberton noted that condition could change which alternative(s) provide the best pathway forward. Ms. Pfeifer asked them to seek associated deeds and easements so Staff can evaluate whether the bridge is *already* private property. She will continue to look at how the culvert may be addressed.

Chair Koos asked the Commission if they wish to look at the broader issue of the landmarking City of Bloomington Property. The Commission generally agreed they would like to explore this broader issue of the preservation of historic resources with the City.

Ms. Pfeifer said she would investigate options with Administration. Chair Koos responded that he will contact Landmarks Illinois to see if they have any recommendations.

*The following item was presented:*

Item 6.D. Historic Preservation Month

Chair Koos notified the Commission that City Council will be celebrating Historic Preservation Month this upcoming May. He stated there will be a proclamation by the Mayor at the May 13<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting.

Vice Chair Scharnett asked about the Preservation Awards. Ms. Pemberton stated they are looking to re-establish the program in the next year or so, possibly in coordination with the Old House Society and Town of Normal.

*The following item was presented:*

Item 6.E. George Miller House

Commissioner Peters stated she toured the home and it is in rough condition. She noted the owners are looking to preserve the structure. Chair Koos responded stating the owners should look into Landmark Illinois grants.

*The following item was presented:*

Item 6.F. Need for financial assistance for asbestos abatement in downtown buildings

Vice Chair Scharnett noted that many properties downtown have been put up for sale and projects have been considered, however there are asbestos issues that prevented them from moving forward. He stated that the City and the Commission should evaluate possible mechanisms to help finance asbestos abatement to preserve the historic buildings and allow beneficial reuse. He noted that, without help, many of the buildings may be demolished, or sit vacant, due to the significant cost of abatement.

Ms. Pemberton asked if it is an educational issue or a feasibility issue. Vice Chair Scharnett responded that asbestos removal is costly, even if you know how to appropriately navigate and mitigate, and it is difficult to identify the full scope of abatement requirements in advance because it differs with each potential scope of work and additional materials may be uncovered that require additional abatement.

Chair Koos asked about the possibility of including asbestos abatement in the potential projects funded by the proposed Downtown TIF district. Ms. Pfeifer stated she will look into the eligible projects.

Ms. Pemberton asked if there are any calculators that could provide potential “true cost” estimates that incorporate sustainability concepts like embodied carbon, etc. Vice Chair Scharnett stated it would be difficult due to variability between different properties and the extent of the materials where the asbestos is located. Ms. Pemberton stated it would be beneficial to develop a method to evaluate the projects based on cost of demolition and rebuild, including any sort of mitigation (asbestos, lead, etc.), versus the cost of rehabilitation and reuse of the property. Even if evaluation for those costs needed to be done on a case-by-case basis, a way to routinely compare them and include externalities could assist the Commission with future review.

Commissioner Lindenbaum asked Vice Chair Scharnett if there is the possible of doing a property survey to identify abatement costs for different downtown buildings. Vice Chair Scharnett said it would not be feasible due the hidden nature of asbestos.

Chair Koos asked the Commission if it is worth discussing with the State about developing a model survey on how to review asbestos abatement in historic buildings. Vice Chair Scharnett stated it would be difficult because it is highly dependent on the newly-intended design, as well as the existing building and materials. He noted that if the proposed use does not disturb the asbestos, then no abatement may be necessary.

Ms. Pemberton stated that the Commission and Staff should look into federal programs and grants that could assist asbestos abatement efforts in redevelopment since it is an issue that is well-known nationally in the industry and is continuing to rise in general public awareness. Chair Koos added that the History Museum will have an asbestos exhibit—"Deadly Deception," focused on the old UNARCO plant in West Bloomington—beginning in the fall and it would be beneficial to have a program coincide.

## Adjournment

**Vice-Chair Scharnett made a motion, seconded by Chair Koos, to adjourn the meeting.**

**AYES:** Koos; Scharnett; Peters; Lindenbaum; Elterich; Meyer; Adams

**Motion carried viva voce.**

The Meeting Adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

## CITY OF BLOOMINGTON



\_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Koos, Chair



\_\_\_\_\_  
Alissa Pemberton, Staff Liaison