

MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
5:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 21, 2022
City Council Chambers, Historic Federal Building

Commissioners Present: Acting Chairperson Christina Monk; Commissioners Thea Dement, Tim Gau, Alec Gustafson, John McAndrews, and Rick Stuter in person. Janice Esser and Bill Doyle virtually.

Commissioners Excused: Melissa Daykin Cassill

Commissioners Unexcused: None.

Staff Members Present: Ryan Kirschman and Chris Happ Olson. Wally Wernimont participated virtually.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Acting Chairperson Monk at 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES: Motion by Commissioner Gustafson, seconded by Commissioner Gau, to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2022 meeting as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Dement, Esser, Gau, Gustafson, McAndrews, Monk, Stuter and Doyle; Nay – none.

ACTION ITEMS:

DESIGN REVIEW

Applicant: Greg A. Prehm
Owner: JRK Properties, LLC
Address: 574-576 Chestnut
Project: Replace a limestone retaining wall with a concrete retaining wall
District: West 11th Street Historic District

Staff Member Happ Olson presented the staff report noting that the building is a contributing structure in the West 11th Historic District, being surveyed many times since the 1970s. She presented that the 2004 update to the National Register district dated the structure from 1889-1909. Through further examination of records including historic imagery, 1901/1902/1903 City Directories, a 1902 Telegraph Herald article about the first resident, and a 1901 Water Tap Slip, she pinpointed the build and occupancy date to 1902.

Happ Olson described the recent history to this project, stating the limestone wall was removed due to failure at the 574 side of the duplex and was replaced with a concrete block wall, and soon after was brought to the attention of Inspection & Construction Services. The division determined a permit was required for the situation, due to the slope and size of all needed to retain the slope. That permit triggered historic review.

Happ Olson described that the current wall pictured in the contemporary imagery provided in the staff report is proposed to be removed and referred to the imagery in the application supplement in the packet for the design the applicant proposed. The applicant requested to build a three-course and cap wall identical in construction methods to the photograph supplied. The applicant plans to use the same contractor that built the example. The proposal is a formed concrete wall to simulate limestone.

The Applicant Greg Prehm, 8505 Southern Hills spoke. The applicant described the difficulty he experienced in attempting to build a wall for the site, citing that the concrete wall proposed seems the most straightforward of the options available, in order to meet the needs of the permit to show the structural design of the wall.

Acting Chairperson Monk asked whether limestone would be allowed. Staff Member Happ Olson clarified that limestone walls are utilized all over Dubuque, and when a permit is required they need to be engineered to the situation.

Commissioners asked questions about the new concrete wall, its cap, and as whether admixtures or stains were used and how it was engineered. The applicant and staff did not have access to the specifications and engineering drawings for the example wall. Commissioners asked whether the wall that is existing will be removed, to which the applicant replied that it would be replaced with an entirely new concrete wall.

Commissioner Stuter stated that he had received calls when the existing concrete wall was erected because it did not appear appropriate for the property. Commissioners expressed consensus that the proposed concrete wall appeared to be in keeping with the look of historic limestone walls, and that weathering would improve its look, as it did on the example included in the application.

Motion by Gustafson, seconded by Dement, to approve the application as presented for the 574 Chestnut Street side, following the same specifications, design and coloring that was used on the example concrete wall provided in the application supplement. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Dement, Esser, Gau, Gustafson, McAndrews, Monk, Stuter and Doyle; Nay – none.

ITEMS FROM PUBLIC: None

ITEMS FROM COMMISSION:

Goal Setting: Staff Member Wernimont described the annual process in which the City does goal setting, and specifically the information gathering from departments, boards and commissions as part of that process. He referenced the packet memo describing the process and the draft worksheets for the upcoming goal setting geared to the Historic Preservation Commission. He stated that staff utilized the Commission's annual workplan to help populate the fields on the worksheets and reported out on successes over the past year. He welcomed input from the Commission and had Staff Member Happ Olson review the two worksheets.

A discussion between staff and commissioners included the edits to the worksheet and inclusion of:

- Eagle Point Park one-day free admission as part of Preservation Month activities,
- Inclusion of the Voelker Highlands National Register nomination,
- Adding further detail to the way we collect support to investment being made with historic properties where the City staff or Commission is providing a review role, and,
- Attaching the workplan to the document.

Wernimont thanked the Commission and said he would take the revised worksheets back to the goal setting process.

ITEMS FROM STAFF:

Training Opportunities: Staff Member Happ Olson described two training opportunities, outlined in a memo, where commissioners could participate and encouraged them to take advantage of the training. The Preserve Iowa Summit and the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions CAMP training are upcoming and the deadline to get back to Jane Glennon, Planning Services Secretary is Tuesday, April 26, 2022. Discussion ensued about the interest, relevant expenses reimbursed and the types of trainings being made available.

Commissioner Doyle expressed interest in attending the Summit, while Commissioners Gustafson and Monk said they would check calendars and get back to staff.

Question from Staff: Staff Member Happ Olson brought forth an informal discussion about a potential project that may or may not trigger Commission review, being a potential removal or remodeling of an element at 576 W. 3rd Street. The case was brought to staff attention earlier that day when they learned the owner was interested in modifying an existing dormer on a non-contributing structure in a conservation district.

A discussion among staff and commissioners continued about the language used in the ordinance specifically around demolition, the Commission's role in conservation

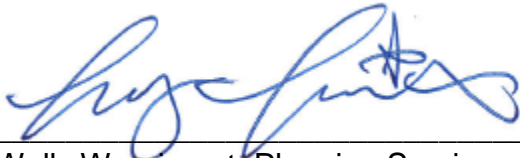
districts, and how permit applications may or may not trigger the historic review process. Staff Member Wernimont discussed the upcoming rewriting of the Unified Development Code and how this issue could be addressed in the rewriting. Discussion continued around focusing more on the level of significance of a property within a district, the feature's placement on a property in relation to visibility and the features that are considered character defining. Consensus was that the inclusion of these kinds of issues might be considered when addressing the language around demolition in conservation districts, which is currently defined as "any act or process which destroys in part or in whole a landmark or a structure."

Commissioners thanked the staff for the discussion and agreed that this particular project didn't warrant Commission review, but expressed interest being involved in the revision of the code. Wernimont said that commissioners will have the opportunity to serve on a subcommittee to help support that work when it comes up in the next year.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Commissioner Gustafson, seconded by Commissioner to adjourn the April 21, 2022 Commission meeting. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Dement, Esser, Gau, Gustafson, McAndrews, Monk, Stuter and Doyle; Nay – none.

The meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Wally Wernimont, Planning Services Manager

June 16, 2022

Adopted