

**MINUTES**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

Wednesday, September 5, 2012  
Conference Room B, City Hall

**Commissioners Present:** Chairperson David Klavitter and Commissioner Bob McDonell.

**Commissioners Excused:** None.

**Staff Members Present:** Laura Carstens and David Johnson.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 1:15 p.m.

**AFFIDAVIT OF COMPLIANCE:** Staff presented an Affidavit of Compliance verifying the meeting was being held in compliance with the Iowa Open Meetings Law.

**MINUTES:** Motion by McDonell, seconded by Klavitter, to approve the March 7, 2012 minutes as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Klavitter and McDonell; Nay – None.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Historic Preservation Program Update:** Staff Member Carstens explained she has been coordinating with the City Manager and Chairperson Klavitter on taking the Historic Preservation Commission to the next level. She reviewed opportunities to improve the Historic Preservation Program in the City of Dubuque. She noted at the last NAPC workshop, different approaches to local preservation programs were discussed, including forming design review committees and deferring design review to City staff. She discussed the Commission's recent commitment to education and outreach with the formation of the Historic Preservation Commission Education Task Force. She noted the benefits and discussed the potential for the entire Commission to serve in an educational and outreach capacity rather than focus their time and effort on design reviews as has been the case over the last 10 years. She noted the Historic Preservation Commission could serve a similar role as the Zoning Board of Adjustment, where the Commission would review waivers to guidelines and appeals of staff decisions.

The Task Force discussed the potential role for the Commission. Staff Member Carstens reiterated the Commission would carry out functions of the Task Force, noting the Commission could focus their efforts on public outreach, education, and marketing of historic preservation in the City of Dubuque.

Staff Member Carstens explained the City of Dubuque's Design Guidelines need to be consolidated and updated to better reflect sustainability and ADA issues that were not adequately addressed or on the forefront 10 years ago. The Task Force noted the complexity of design review in the city of Dubuque and agreed consolidating guidelines into one manual would better serve the public. The Task Force reviewed other opportunities including training for contractors and property owners, more involvement in community programming events such as Architecture Days, and marketing.

Staff Member Carstens explained the City Manager would support increasing the number of staff approvals and having the Commission serve in an educational and outreach role. She clarified the City Manager was adamant that City staff does not do all the work and the Commission would need to take a more active role in the community toward educational and outreach efforts. She also noted that the City Manager would like any changes in staff sign-offs to be part of an ordinance amendment, so that the City Council is fully aware of any proposed changes and thus can decide on what changes to make.

Staff Member Carstens explained the City Manager also questioned how the Commission's outreach work would be funded. The Task Force and City Staff discussed potential funding opportunities. City staff noted a number of existing historic preservation programs are either not used or underutilized, specifically the Historic Preservation Housing Grant and Historic District Public Improvement Program. City staff and the Task Force noted many of the recent applications for HDPIP funding have been for the Four Mounds Foundation and the Mines of Spain rather than public right-of-way and streetscape improvements as originally intended. Staff Member Johnson noted a Revolving Loan Fund application has not been received for approximately two years and the Historic Preservation Housing Grant has not been applied for in at least four years. Staff and the Task Force discussed requesting reallocation of those funds to fund the educational and outreach efforts of the Historic Preservation Commission. Commissioner McDonnell noted placing design review in the Planning Services Department will enhance the public perception, customer service, and would be a better utilization of staff time and the Commission's time.

The Task Force noted the new role of the Commission could better serve the Historic Preservation Program in the city of Dubuque. Staff Member Carstens noted that the Historic Preservation Commission only reaches one or two people per month through design review. She explained the Commission can reach more people and have a much greater, positive effect on historic preservation in the Dubuque community through focusing their efforts and attention on education, outreach, marketing, and linking the Historic Preservation Program to the City's Sustainable Dubuque brand. The Task Force explained the Commission would serve more as consultants rather than regulatory officials.

By consensus, the Education Task Force supported discussing a new role for the Historic Preservation Commission at the Commission's next regular meeting.


Expanded Training Opportunities: The Task Force discussed recent concerns regarding the quality of work on historic properties in the city of Dubuque, particularly with repointing. The Task Force discussed recent projects and the cause for the inappropriate treatments to those buildings. The Task Force and staff noted a general lack of knowledge or will to follow appropriate guidelines as well as the challenges for those projects that do not require building permits. The Task Force discussed certification for contractors as well as educational and hands-on training opportunities for local contractors. The Task Force and staff noted these issues are the types of big picture concerns that have long-term impacts on preservation efforts in the city of Dubuque, and the Commission should be tackling these issues rather than consuming the majority of their time on design review.

**ITEMS FROM PUBLIC:** None.

**ITEMS FROM STAFF:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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David Johnson, Assistant Planner

12/6/12  
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Adopted