



**MINUTES**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR SESSION**  
5:30 p.m.  
Thursday, March 19, 2015  
City Council Chamber, Historic Federal Building

**Commissioners Present:** Chairperson Bob McDonell; Commissioners Christina Monk, Chris Olson, Mary Loney Bichell, David Klavitter and Otto Krueger.

**Commissioners Excused:** Commissioners John Whalen and Joseph Rapp.

**Staff Members Present:** David Johnson and Eric Van Buskirk.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Chairperson McDonell at 5:30 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 Krueger, seconded by Bichell, to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2015 meeting as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Olson, Bichell, Klavitter, Krueger, and McDonell; Nay – None; Abstain - Monk.

**DESIGN REVIEW:** Application of Lee Potter, Jr., for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install new siding and remove the overhang for the property located at 635, 637, and 639 Jefferson in the West 11<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District.

Staff Member Johnson reviewed the staff report. He explained the property is a side gable vernacular duplex located in the West 11<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District. He noted there is no funding requested for the proposed work. He reviewed that in 1979, Kriviskey found the building to a supportive building to the National Register District; however, Jacobsen's review of the building in 2004 found that the building is a non-contributing building to the district. Staff Member Johnson clarified the building is not considered a historic building.

Staff explained the level of significance is likely due to the building having been remodeled beyond recognition and made into a tri-plex sometime before 1971. Staff Member Johnson reviewed numerous alterations and building permits for the property, and noted the building suffered two fires – one in 1945 and the other in 1978. He explained because of the alterations and fires, the building does not have architectural significance.

He explained the property owner's requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to install new siding. He reviewed the request will replace the existing 4' by 8' sheaths of vertical siding and steel siding with new vinyl siding with a smooth texture and 6" exposure. He reviewed the different siding treatments for the façades of the home. He reiterated the building is not historic and will never be National Register eligible. He referred Commissioners to the review of applicable architectural guidelines for the proposed project.

Lee Potter, Jr., 3410 Waller Street, presented the application. He explained he is the manager of the property on behalf of Karen Potter. Mr. Potter distributed samples of the vinyl siding he would like to use. He noted the vinyl siding is the least costly alternative and would allow him to make more improvements to the property. Mr. Potter explained the property is not historic and does not look anything like it once did. He stated the intent of the project is to simply make the building look nicer and bring uniformity to the exterior siding. He noted the building in its current condition does not have the appeal to fit the West 11<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood. He reviewed alternatives to vinyl siding that he considered before filing the application. He noted he looked at cement board; however, after speaking with contractors, he is concerned about the installation and performance of the material. He noted vinyl siding has proven over the years to be one of the better performing siding materials.

The Commission clarified the scope of work which also included removing the overhang over the front doors and removal of the steel and wood siding to be replaced with vinyl. Mr. Potter confirmed that is the current scope of work; however, he would like to further research other options to improve other exterior components of the building.

The Commission and applicant discussed vinyl siding alternatives and profiles. The Commission reviewed lap widths that are traditionally found in historic neighborhoods, noting a 3" to 4" inch exposure is appropriate. The Commission noted 5" can be acceptable as well.

The Commission asked staff if they are aware of any issues with use of cement board, noting the Commission has approved that material in the past. Staff Member Johnson reviewed there were lawsuits in the 1980s in the Galena Territories over the performance of the material. He explained since that time, improvements have been made to it and staff is not aware of any issues with recently installed fiber cement products. Staff Member Johnson explained cement board does require specialized equipment and experienced installers for it to look nice and perform well. The Commission noted cement board is not a maintenance free product, noting it has to be painted like wood. Staff Member Johnson clarified the product carries a 15 year paint warranty and a 50 year product warranty. Mr. Potter explained the paint is not his concern; it's the need to caulk the material and how the caulk would expand and contract.

The Commission asked if the applicant considered wood siding. Mr. Potter explained that would be cost prohibitive. He explained the vinyl siding estimated project cost is \$6,900; and to install cement board add approximately \$4,000 to the project.

The Commission asked staff whether the Commission has approved vinyl siding on principle structures in the past. Staff Member Johnson responded the Commission has not approved vinyl siding on principle structures; however, this is the first application for vinyl siding on a non-historic building. He noted all other past requests have been for buildings which contribute to a National Register of Historic Places District. He explained those applicants in the past who did request vinyl siding on historic building, the answer was always no. Mr. Potter stated he would not have filed the application if his building were still historic. He reiterated all he wants to do is improve the appearance and make the building fit in in the most cost effective way he can.

The Commission discussed whether approving the application would set precedence. Staff Member Johnson clarified the Historic Preservation Ordinance sets forth that precedence is not set in design review cases, and every case is reviewed on its own merit. He noted the Commission has the ability to look at every application independently since every building and circumstance is different. The Commission noted a benefit to living in a historic district is quality design and details which contribute to the overall attractiveness of a neighborhood. Mr. Potter noted many of the properties in the vicinity of his building are rental properties. The Commission clarified it makes no difference who or how many people live in a building for the purposes of design review.

The Commission asked if Mr. Potter or the applicant intended to make any changes to the porch and porch railing. Mr. Potter stated not at this time; however, he's open to suggestions. The Commission asked if Mr. Potter would consider cement board. Mr. Potter stated as a last resort he would take it under consideration, but he cannot guarantee that he would do it.

The Commission acknowledged that the building is no longer historic; however, the applicant noted the original wood siding was a 4-inch exposure. The Commission noted that although it is not a historic building, it is still in a historic neighborhood and the best approach moving forward would be to use a siding that is complimentary to the original siding and neighborhood. If original materials can't be used, the next best option is a material which mimics the original material, such as cement board. The Commission explained the least preferred alternative is vinyl siding, which is installed differently, looks different, and has different profiles, and is installed in panels.

The Commission asked to entertain the idea of pricing cement board for the project. Mr. Potter reiterated the vinyl siding was \$6,900, and the cement board was \$10,900. The Commission noted the additional cost would result in a nicer looking product. Mr. Potter explained his concerns about vandalism. He stated vinyl siding would be more durable and easier to replace sections. He noted replacing sections of cement board is

much more challenging than vinyl siding. The Commission noted there is less probability for damage to cement board than vinyl siding, stating it is much more durable. The Commission stated replacement vinyl siding may oftentimes buckle and not lay flat, and you cannot match colors if the existing siding has faded or from a different manufacturing run.

The Commission asked staff if there were any incentives which would help make up the difference in cost between vinyl and cement board. Staff Member Johnson explained because the property is not owner-occupied and used residentially, the only program he is aware of that could assist would be the Historic Preservation Revolving Loan Fund. He noted that would require the property owner to want a loan to undertake the work, which they may or may not want to do. He reviewed the terms of the loan.

The Commission questioned whether the building could potentially ever contribute to the district. Staff Member Johnson clarified that too much of the building has been lost. He explained the craftsmanship and details that made that building unique are now for the most part gone, and irreversible. He explained moving forward, the materials would be new and because of the degree of loss, the building would never be a contributing building to the district, even if replicated the original in appearance. He referenced the train depot in the Port of Dubuque as an example, noting that is an exact replication of the original building, however, it is not National Register eligible because it's a new building.

The Commission discussed the application, noting a fiber cement product would be the best alternative for the building, neighborhood, and the property owner's ultimate design goal for the building. Mr. Potter reiterated he could not commit to cement board without further researching the product, but he would consider it upon the recommendation of reputable contractors. The Commission explained the importance of consulting and using contractors experienced in installing cement board products. The Commission referenced past projects that have used cement board that turned out fantastic and the material was a nice compromise from wood siding.

Motion by Klavitter, seconded by Olson, to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for vinyl siding as presented. Motion was denied by the following vote: Aye: None; Nay – Monk, Olson, Bichell, Klavitter, Krueger and McDonell; Abstain – None.

Motion by Olson, seconded by Klavitter to remove the overhang along the front of the house. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Monk, Olson, Bichell, Klavitter, Krueger, and McDonell; Nay – None; Abstain – None.

Motion by Olson, seconded by Bichell, to allow smooth textured, 5-inch exposure cement board siding as a replacement alternative for the existing metal and wood panel siding. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Monk, Olson, Bichell, Klavitter, Krueger, and McDonell; Nay – None; Abstain – None.

**ITEMS FROM PUBLIC:** None.

**ITEMS FROM COMMISSION:**

Work Plan Update: Planning Services staff provided updates for work plan items. The Commission questioned how the information in the survey and registration projects could be used to benefit the public. Staff Member Johnson suggested waiting to read the nominations before further discussion. The Commission questioned whether specific information could be sent to property owners. Staff Member Johnson stated that would be very time consuming and unlikely. He explained oftentimes the information contained in the survey and registration projects are not detailed enough to warrant individual site sheets and information. He explained the greatest value and interest to property owners is oftentimes the neighborhood context.

The Commission discussed the Education Plan. Staff Member Johnson clarified the Education Plan has evolved into Commissioner Klavitter's desire to pursue an economic impact study to better understand and market the benefits of historic preservation in the city of Dubuque. The Commission supported the study, noting many if not all of Commissioner Whalen's work plan items to undertake a comparative analysis of historic districts would likely be addressed in that economic impact study.

Commissioner Klavitter asked for the Commission's feedback on the two economic impact studies forwarded by Planning staff. He noted one was the Columbia, Missouri Economic Impact Study and the other was the Raleigh Economic Impact Study.

The Commission questioned what Commissioner Whalen's goal was in a comparative analysis of local historic districts. They noted it appears to be a lot of work and something best addressed by a consultant in an economic impact study. Staff Member Johnson explained Planning staff met with Commissioner Whalen once to define objectives for the project, but the goals and how that information would be used had not been defined.

Staff Member Johnson stated the economic impact study was intended to inform the Commission on issues and opportunities as well as serve as a marketing piece. The Commission discussed the challenges of comparing the local historic districts in the city of Dubuque, noting even the two predominantly residential historic districts are drastically different since they were first developed and now. Staff explained the challenges with comparing Jackson Park and the Cathedral Historic Districts to anything, noting they are both very eclectic in their design and use.

The Commission reviewed the two economic impact studies. The Commission noted the Raleigh Economic Impact Study is cutting edge and exactly where the city of Dubuque Preservation Program needs to be, whereas the Columbia, Missouri Economic Impact Study is a dated in its content. The Commission noted the information in the Raleigh economic impact study are the things that Dubuque needs to be talking

about. The Commission noted the Raleigh Economic Impact Study information is relevant and matters. Commissioner Klavitter noted Dubuque has embraced its architectural heritage as a marketing differentiator, and the City has seen private reinvestment, and it's important to quantify and qualify the benefits of historic preservation.

The Commission discussed the positive impacts of historic tax credits, and those impacts might be interesting to include in an economic impact study. The Commission noted the Raleigh study addressed economic prosperity and equity, expanding housing choices, managing growth, coordinating land use and transportation and outlined an analysis of Certificate of Appropriateness approvals and denials. The study also talks about sustainable development and growing vibrant and successful communities. The Commission noted these topics are relevant and things that the Commission and community need to be talking about.

The consensus of the Commission was the Raleigh Study was an appropriate blueprint for a Dubuque Economic Impact Study. Staff Member Johnson noted the Main Street Iowa report published in 2014 outlines many of these concepts already and details community data. He noted that report also was prepared by Donovan Rypkema. He explained current budget constraints and future concerns will require the Commission to identify grant opportunities and matching funds. The Commission discussed a possible certified local government grant application with in-kind contributions from staff and Commissioner involvement.

By consensus, the Commission requested Planning Services staff inquire with Donovan Rypkema on the estimated cost to prepare an economic impact study for Dubuque which is comparable to the content of the Raleigh study.

**ITEMS FROM STAFF:**

Architecture Days: Staff Member Johnson provided a schedule of activities for Architectural Days, noting it will be the week of April 13<sup>th</sup>. He explained Commissioners are encouraged to attend all of the week-long activities; however, it is especially important for Commissioners to be at the April 16<sup>th</sup> evening presentation and Preservation Awards. He explained the Ken Kringle Historic Preservation Awards will be presented that evening, and it is important that Commissioners are present to meet and greet the award recipients. The Commission recommended name tags be provided for Commissioners and recipients so Commissioners know who the award winners are. Staff Member Johnson stated name tags will be provided.

Ken Kringle Nominations: Staff Member Johnson reviewed the Commission had nominated 185 Main Street, 902 White Street, 1072 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, and 1083 Grove Terrace for Ken Kringle Historic Preservation Awards. He explained the Commission requested Planning Services staff research other potential nominations at 421 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and 555 W. 11<sup>th</sup> Street. Staff Member Johnson confirmed both projects would

be eligible for the Ken Kringle Historic Preservation Award. The Commission further discussed reconsidering 1095 Grove Terrace for the historic preservation award. The consensus of the Commission was that 1095 Grove Terrace should be given a Ken Kringle Award.

Motion by Klavitter, seconded by Krueger, to nominate 185 Main Street, 421 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, 555 W. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, 902 White Street, 1072 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, 1083 Grove Terrace, and 1095 Grove Terrace for 2014 Ken Kringle Historic Preservation Awards. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Monk, Olson, Bichell, Klavitter, Krueger, and McDonell; Nay – None.

National Historic Preservation Month: Staff Member Johnson noted May is National Preservation Month. He explained a theme had not yet been announced by the National Trust; however, a theme is not essential for the Commission's recognition efforts. He explained the National Trust for Historic Preservation encourages preservation and Main Street organizations to use May as an opportunity to showcase how they are celebrating and saving historic places. Staff noted that every year the Commission proclaims May as National Historic Preservation Month and Planning Services staff would prepare that proclamation which will be read at the May 4<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting as soon as a theme is announced by the National Trust. He noted the National Trust also encourages Commissions to develop a demonstration project, special event, or community service opportunity in recognition of Preservation Month. Planning Services staff requested Commissioners attend the May 4<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting and the Chairperson accept the Preservation Month proclamation on behalf of the preservation community.

Planning Services staff encouraged Commissioners to also partner or develop a demonstration project, special event, or tour of the community or service opportunity. Planning staff noted current budget constraints which do not allow for an extensive project and encouraged Commissioners to seek out partnership opportunities with other preservation organizations within the community. The Commission discussed opportunities, noting the school of the Art Institute of Chicago Window Restoration Methods course to begin the end of May as well as a program being offered by the Friends of St. Mary's also near the end of May. Staff Member Johnson noted he would inquire further into the opportunities.

Commissioner Monk noted she is planning a display in recognition of Farmers Market, noting Dubuque has Iowa's oldest Farmers Market. She explained the display would be at the Farmers Market opening day.

Staff Approvals: Staff Member Johnson reviewed approved building permits for February 2015.

Building Services Historic Preservation Enforcement Report: Staff Member Johnson reviewed updates to the report.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Laura Carstens, Planning Services Manager

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Adopted