

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

APPROVED

DATE: July 7, 2004

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Council Chambers, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois 61801

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rich Cahill, Alice Novak, Bill Rose, Art Zangerl

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Scott Dossett, Trent Shepard

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Rob Kowalski, Planning Manager; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Curtis Pettyjohn, Hugh Phillips, Marya Ryan, Bernadine Stake, Christopher Stohr, Ed Tiedemann, Nancy Wehling, Roger Woodbury

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Urbana Historic Preservation Commission Chair, Alice Novak, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. The roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Mr. Zangerl moved to approve the minutes from June 2, 2004 as corrected. Mr. Cahill seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote as amended.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Letter from Marya Ryan to the Plan Commission

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

6. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

7. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

8. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Case # HP-04-HDD-1: Request for designation of the “Buena Vista Court Historic District,” property consisting of 1-8 Buena Vista Court.

Rob Kowalski, Planning Manger, gave the staff report for this case by giving a PowerPoint presentation on the following:

- Buena Vista Court Aerial Photo
- Buena Vista Court Zoning
- Photo of 1 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of 2 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of 3 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of 4 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of 5 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of 6 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of 7 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of 8 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of the Entrance Arch
- Photo of the Birdbath
- Historic District Criteria – Section XII-5-C-1 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance

Mr. Kowalski reviewed the history of the application process for nominating Buena Vista Court for historic district designation. He noted that Lauren Kerestes had submitted the application for nomination of the district. Ms. Kerestes had interned with the City of Urbana for two years, and she was currently employed by the Town of Normal. She did this project as part of her studies at the University of Illinois – Department of Urban and Regional Planning. A lot of her work complemented the work that was done on the National Register nomination as well. Buena Vista Court was on the National Register of Historic Places. Staff had held two neighborhood meetings with the residents of the Buena Vista Court to find out what their thoughts were and to educate them on the process to become a historic district designation. The meetings went very well. At those two meetings, five of the property owners had signed the application form. No one had signed any kind of written protest or opposition to the nomination. At the June 2, 2004 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission, there was a preliminary determination, in which the Commission decided that the proposed nomination was worthy of further consideration in a public hearing. He noted that this would be the second historic district in the City of Urbana.

Marya Ryan, of 1 Buena Vista Court, handed out a letter that she had written to the Plan Commission regarding additional language that could be added to the Historic Preservation Ordinance to help owner-occupants be able to afford maintenance and repairs on their homes. She would hate to see an owner-occupant have to sell their home, because they could not afford to maintain and/or repair their home in the expensive, historically authentic fashion required from being in a historic district.

Ms. Ryan thanked Ms. Kerestes for including some of her previous comments in the application. She clarified that the brickwork was not actually recreated on her home, but they did replicate it in the Dry Vit, so the design of the house was as it was before the work was done.

Mr. Rose commented that emergency care and maintenance of these properties and all properties were very important in historic preservation. Finding common characteristics in a grouping of buildings may open up the possibility for a discussion of issues that might concern the property owners. He suggested that the City of Urbana or the Historic Preservation Commission sponsor a get together with perhaps a roofing expert, gutter expert, plastering expert, etc. and property owners, in which these experts could describe common problems and common solutions, what property owners could do, and what some estimated costs of repairs might be down the line. Ms. Ryan stated that would be great. After talking to Ms. Oktay, she found that there were different options that property owners might have. Any opportunity available to learn more about how to maintain a home in an affordable way would be welcomed.

Curtis Pettyjohn, of 907 South Orchard, stated that he was very happy to see more historic property in the City of Urbana undergoing the process of historic designation. He felt it was important because of the "cancer" that the Presbyterian Church had perpetrated on the area near Buena Vista Court. The number of buildings that had been demolished was appalling. So, he was very excited that the beautiful houses could be saved and designated historic. He also noted his appreciation to each member of the Historic Preservation Commission on the work that they did.

Mr. Kowalski pointed out that in the back of the information packet, there was a photo inventory of each of the units. Staff provided this inventory so that it may help in the future with Certificates of Appropriateness to know what was there at the time of designation. It may also be beneficial for the Historic Preservation Commission's discussion at this meeting.

Mr. Cahill felt that Ms. Kerestes had done a great job using the Commission's comments from the June 2, 2004 meeting when making changes to the application. There were a couple of minor changes that he mentioned should be made were as follows:

- 1) There were a couple of references to floor plans in the application. The first draft showed floor plans; however, the second draft did not. He suggested removing the notations to floor plans from the application.
- 2) It would be nice to clarify a little more about Saffer Court on the University of Illinois' campus. There were originally six structures there, and only one is left.

It had been used as the Center for American Indian Studies. The other part of the lot was for a relocation of a significant structure that got moved.

Mr. Zangerl asked if the owners in the proposed historic district had some contributions that they make to maintain the common areas? Ms. Ryan explained that there were no common areas. The courtyard was proportioned off to each individual property owner. Mr. Zangerl inquired who would be responsible for the archway. Ms. Ryan stated that there was not any organization responsible to date. Although if there were any repairs needed, she suspected that they would request contributions from all of the property owners, just like when they dealt with the dilapidated garages. Mr. Kowalski mentioned that the case of the archway and the birdbath could be an interesting dilemma years down the road, since there was not organized homeowner's organization. Ms. Novak commented that someone probably owns the birdbath, because it was in someone's yard. Mr. Kowalski stated that the Commission could keep an eye on these two objects over the years and help current or future owners identify possible grants to help maintain them.

Mr. Zangerl felt that Mr. Rose's idea of sponsoring a workshop in the neighborhood for stucco structure maintenance was a good idea. Ms. Novak mentioned that the Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA) had done workshops on window rehab as well. Maybe the City of Urbana's Historic Preservation Commission could partner up with PACA on sponsoring a workshop.

Ms. Novak agreed with Mr. Cahill about the clarification in the application on page 9. The building that was to be relocated was formerly 1003 West Nevada. She suggested adding in the address of the building that was left in Saffer Court or at least clarify the block side that the building was one.

She noted that Ms. Kerestes did a lot of work on providing the historic owners and occupants of the proposed buildings. However, Ms. Kerestes did not include the employment information, which would have been interesting as well.

Mr. Zangerl moved that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend approval to the City Council that the proposed collection of properties be designated as a historic district based on support of all three main criteria, namely that Buena Vista Court had significant value as part of the architectural heritage of the community, that it was representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type with a high degree of integrity, that the proposed buildings are identifiable as an established and familiar location, that they are a contiguous grouping of properties having a sense of cohesiveness expressed through their style and method of construction, and that they contain sufficient historical integrity to convey a sense of time and place. Mr. Rose seconded the motion. The roll call was as follows:

Ms. Novak	-	Yes	Mr. Rose	-	Yes
Mr. Zangerl	-	Yes	Mr. Cahill	-	Yes

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Kowalski mentioned that this case would be presented to City Council on July 19, 2004.

Anticipating that City Council would approve this case, Mr. Zangerl talked about signage. He preferred if there would be a plaque at both ends of the court rather than on each home. Mr. Kowalski stated that staff had begun to gather some materials to use for the plaques.

9. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

10. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

There was none.

11. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Kowalski reported on the following:

- The Plan Commission was scheduled to meet on Thursday, July 8, 2004 at 7:30 p.m. to pickup their discussion on the Mixed-Office Residential (MOR) Design Guidelines.
- The Next Scheduled Meeting for the Historic Preservation Commission will be held on August 5, 2004. The Commission will meet to consider a Certificate of Appropriateness for some gutter work and a new fence at the Lindley House, located at 312 West Green Street. Although the owners were planning to replace the shingles, it would be considered a minor work and was reviewed by Ms. Novak and Libby Tyler, Director of Community Development Services. Staff was in the process of documenting the cresting that was on the top of the roof to ensure that it would be re-installed.
- APA-ISS Conference will be held on July 30, 2004. He invited the Commissioners to attend and noted that the City would pay for their registration. He noted whom the guest speakers would be and what they planned to talk about in their sessions.

Mr. Zangerl inquired about the public perception of the MOR Design Guidelines. Mr. Kowalski stated that staff had held an open house prior to the first Plan Commission meeting, and the people that attended had received the guidelines very well and glad to see that the guidelines were not very stringent. The Plan Commission felt the same way.

Mr. Cahill questioned if there was any progress being made on filling the new Development Review Board? Mr. Kowalski replied that there was. The Mayor had made many contacts and had some good leads on all but one or two of the positions. He should be presenting those recommendations to the City Council very soon.

Mr. Kowalski mentioned that along those same lines, there was still a position open on the Historic Preservation Commission, as well as on the Zoning Board of Appeals and on the Plan Commission. The Mayor was always looking for interested people to fill those positions. It was very important to have full boards and commissions, because it really affects having a quorum to hold a meeting.

12. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Zangerl moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 p.m. Mr. Rose seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted,

Michaela Oktay, Senior Planner