



City of Aurora

2nd Floor Council
Chambers
44 East Downer Place
Aurora, Illinois 60505
www.aurora-il.org

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday
May 12, 2016
7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The following Preservation Commission members were present: Fernando Castrejon, Dan Miller, Jim Schweizer, Don Truax, and Rob Vaughan. Jose Garcia called in and excused himself from the meeting.

OTHERS PRESENT

The following staff members were present: Jill Hall and Sue Jackson.

Jeff Williams (614 Oak Avenue), Sandra Tijerina (561 Saddle Lane), and Francisco Ramirez (1106 Summit Avenue).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 15-01114** Approval of the Minutes for the Preservation Commission meeting on December 2, 2015.
A motion was made by Mr. Schweizer, seconded by Mr. Truax, that the minutes be approved and filed. The motion carried by voice vote.
- 15-01126** Approval of the Minutes for the Historic Preservation Commission meeting of December 10, 2015.
A motion was made by Mr. Schweizer, seconded by Mr. Castrejon, that the minutes be approved and filed. The motion carried by voice vote. Mr. Truax abstained.
- 16-00376** Approval of the Minutes for the Historic Preservation Commission meeting of April 14, 2016.
A motion was made by Mr. Castrejon, seconded by Mr. Vaughan, that the minutes be approved and filed. The motion carried by voice vote. Mr. Schweizer abstained.

COA REPORT

16-00432

April 2016 Certificates of Appropriateness Report

Mr. Schweizer said I have a question. On item 916 on the wood burning fireplace, is that an outside barbeque?

Ms. Hall said no. It is actually an outdoor fireplace. It has like a mantle like you would see indoors. Free-standing, not a fire pit.

Mr. Schweizer said on items 1044, 1205, 1240 and 1308, a request for clarification. In the guidelines we're not supposed to be talking about color schemes or issuing COA's for painting as I understand it. Is there a reason why so many painting COA's are being pushed through this?

Ms. Hall said from my understanding and what I've spoken to Stephane was that paint color was not regulated, but the actual painting was because we have been having people come in and start doing some changes thinking it was just painting, so we've been just having people come in for all exterior changes. When we met with the Public Outreach Committee, I believe this might be different than what they've been doing. When I came, that was what I was under the impression. Paint color I still don't regulate. If they are going by an appropriate color I go ahead and just note it. If they come into the office and ask for guidance, I might suggest a color, but tell them they are free to choose whatever color they want.

There were no other questions on the COA report.

This COA Report was discussed and filed.

AGENDA**16-00420**Certificate of Appropriateness to replace gutters with K style gutters
Jeffrey Williams (16-00420 / AU15/3-16.088 - COA/HP - JH - Ward 6)

Ms. Hall said just briefly I will introduce the project and then give Mr. Williams an opportunity to speak. He came in for a HCOA to replace his gutters. He currently has one side half rounds and the other side is a K style. He would like to do all K style gutters and not the half round. According to the Historic District Guidelines, it does call for half round gutters. They are more historically accurate for older homes, so I told Mr. Williams that and he would like to bring it forth to the Preservation Commission and get your intake on it. He was able to get some quotes for half round gutters. One came in just under \$1,800, one was round \$3,600 and the K style cost was just like over \$1,000. You can see in the information the parts of the guidelines that mention gutters and particularly the half round gutters. Let me bring up a few pictures. There is the K style that's currently on the house on one side. There is the half round that is currently on the house on the other side. I did take a look at the street. There seems to be, similar to his home, a mixture. Some have half and half, many K style and there are a few of the half round. Staff's recommendation is according to the guidelines it does recommend half rounds and I don't know if the Preservation Commission wants to discuss the appropriateness compared to what's contributing, a major contributing factor to the architecture, if the gutters are a significant feature to this home.

I'm Jeff Williams, 614 Oak Avenue. I tried last year to get this done. I solicited bids from numerous contractors. About only 4 or 5 people responded. Probably about 8 or 9 did not even bother to respond. The one that I wanted to get was \$1,000.

Ms. Hall said for the K style it was \$1058.

Mr. Williams said their bid was about a \$1,000 more for the half round. The only other company that even bid on the half round was \$3,684. Just the cost alone makes it unacceptable for me because my budget is limited. I need to get this done fairly quickly because I'm having damage done in my basement. I've got water seepage and water damage. I've also got the availability of contractors. There are only 2 people that wouldn't even respond on half round gutters. As far as being appropriate to the area, I walked and looked at all the houses on Oak Avenue and out of over 100 house only 4 have of them have complete half round gutters. There are about 7 or 8 that are half round and K style. Most of the half rounds are on the sides and back ends because they replaced the ones that needed replaced on the front with K style, so if it is just appropriate to where the area is I would stand out if I had half rounds so it doesn't really make much sense to me. I'd like to have my house have a complete unified appearance with one type of gutter on the entire house. I've been a resident in that district since 1988, which was like 10 years before it was made into a historic district, so I kind of feel like I'm a little grandfathered in on this thing. With the condition of a lot of houses in the area that don't even have gutters, I think it is appropriate that I'm just taking the effort to actually get them fixed up and looking good. That's about all I've got.

Mr. Vaughan said I have a question for you. What was the exact scope of work that you were looking to have done? Were you just looking to replace the half round or are you looking to have gutter replacement for the entire house?

Mr. Williams said the entire house.

Mr. Miller said the half round gutters that were bid, did they bid (inaudible) ones?

Mr. Williams said yes.

Mr. Miller said I've had some trouble getting some gutter guys.

Mr. Williams said there has also been several renovations in our neighborhood and there have been houses that have been left abandoned for like many, many years and they have been completely redone and they have K style gutters on them.

Mr. Truax said which probably says they didn't get approval.

Mr. Williams said probably because I actually stopped and talked to one contractor who was installing K style gutters on Oak Avenue and he said he didn't want to talk to me.

Mr. Miller said I'm sure he didn't. Does anybody have any discussion on that?

Mr. Truax said well the ordinance is pretty clear, or the guidelines are pretty clear. You have a house that would have had round gutters and that's what you have to replace them with even if somebody put the wrong style on it at some point.

Mr. Miller said yes, the ordinance is pretty clear on that. I don't doubt you that some flipper got away with violating it because the city has let that slip. Others, as I understand it, other people who have installed the K style and they still own the home, the city could still pursue a violation against the homeowner.

Mr. Truax said if it is grandfathered, that is it was before the district was formed, they can leave them forever.

Mr. Miller said so it is true your old K style gutters were grandfathered in. But for replacement by the ordinance you have go with the historically appropriate. It sounds like we are siding with the staff on that.

I'm Joan Williams, 614 Oak Avenue. With regard to the number of available people it seems in the trade that are willing to do this, does the historic district do anything about providing resources in terms of a list of potential people who would do this kind of work to maintain the historic integrity of the area?

Mr. Truax said Jill do you know?

Ms. Hall said city staff does not. The city doesn't want to necessarily provide a list because the city cannot provide recommendations of contractors because it could appear to be favoritism. If the Preservation Commission would like to work on that type of project being not directly staff of the city, I think that would be something you would be more able to do.

Mr. Truax said but that's still the same problem. We are representing the city, not ourselves, and if we do it, it is a recommendation, as you said, by the city.

Ms. Hall said my understanding is that is it not as a direct representation as the city doing it since you are on the Preservation Commission, but you are also individual citizens serving on the Commission, so that was my understanding that you have...

Mr. Truax said I disagree. That if it was me giving a list that would be okay. But if we all give a list then we are violating the city ordinance.

Mr. Miller said I've recommended names myself before. I have some carpenters I use. I'm sorry I don't have a gutter guy.

Mr. Truax said I do.

Mr. Schweizer said I think if you ask us after the meeting individually...

Mr. Williams said I don't see why, it says in the thing about the harmony and appropriateness to the neighborhood, and when I've got 4 house in the entire street that have those out of over 100 that I'm being forced to be one of the exceptions to the appropriateness. Whether or not you call it a historic district or not, I don't find that, and then also to be penalized financially because I want to maintain my house and I need to get this done because I'm having damage done to my foundation. There's been, I don't see that a variance can't be, because we've had bigger problems in our neighborhood than my historic accuracy. We have abandoned houses, houses in poor repair, people that don't make any effort, we have absentee landlords that have multi-rental units in houses that they do not maintain that I have to on this small item that I can't really afford. I can afford the minimal cost that will be a good job and just a small thing. I can see it if it is a major variance from the neighborhood in a historic world.

Mr. Truax said you are missing the point. We have an ordinance. We have guidelines. Everybody has to follow the guidelines. We can take anybody to court who puts in K style gutters on an old house where it is inappropriate.

Mr. Williams said yes, but you haven't.

Mr. Truax said I said we could, and you don't know how many of those were there

before the district was formed.

Mr. Williams said I've lived there since 1988.

Mr. Truax said that's fine. I've lived here since 1969. What's your point?

Mr. Williams said I would just like to get a variance that says I can fix my house.

Mr. Truax said there is an option, but it has to do with economic hardship. You have to prove you can't afford to do it. All of that is in the ordinance. Just look at it. It is in your guidelines that you have.

Mr. Williams said I guess I won't repair my gutters then. I've got no option.

Ms. Hall said does anyone else have any other comments or want to input into the discussion?

Mr. Truax said I move we disapprove the COA for K style gutters.

Mr. Miller said is there a second?

Mr. Fernando said second.

MOTION FOR DISAPPROVAL WAS MADE BY: Don Truax

MOTION SECONDED BY: Fernando Castrejon

AYES: Fernando Castrejon, Dan Miller, Jim Schweizer, Don Truax, Rob Vaughan

NAYS: None

A motion was made by Mr. Truax, seconded by Mr. Castrejon, that this agenda item be denied. The motion carried.

16-00324

Certificate of Appropriateness to replace vinyl windows located at 202 N. View Street (Francisco Ramirez - L16-00324 / AU21/2-16.068-COA/HP - JH - Ward 4)

Ms. Hall said I know you are all probably familiar with the project, but just to refresh ourselves, this did come up at the last meeting. Let me bring up some of the photos. You had asked the applicant to go and get some additional information for the cost of replacement windows to be in kind to what was originally there. They have additional information for you and they can present it.

I'm Sandra Tijerina, 562 Saddle Lane. So I called the company in Chicago. At first I went to go talk to the gentleman that was recommended and he actually used the company based out of Chicago. He replaced his windows with this style, but this window right here was \$800 just for one window.

Mr. Truax said what was the maker of the window?

Ms. Tijerina said I didn't ask him the maker of the window, but he told me...

Mr. Truax said there are a lot cheaper windows than handmade windows.

Ms. Tijerina said when I called the company in Chicago they told me that they vary between \$300 to \$800 per window. The larger windows that are in the front, for example the one right by the door, that one would be \$1,200. So my dad is retired. He doesn't have income to be spending that kind of money. I know that you

mentioned that we could have the option to sell the house as is, so we put it on the market. I got the, I do have the disclosure agreement where we're disclosing that the windows need to be replaced or repaired because there are still some windows on there that are wood, so I would assume that those could be repaired. The ones that are vinyl, I would assume those have to be replaced back to wood. So I would like to ask for an extension to see if we can sell it and then if not then I guess we are going to have to figure out how to fix it. Like I said, my dad is retired. He lives on a small income. He doesn't have that kind money to be replacing like 10 or 12 windows, so it is very costly for us.

Ms. Hall said I did speak with Stephane and she said we will have our Legal Department take a look at the forms that she is providing us today.

Ms. Tijerina said I'm a realtor so these are the realtor, the forms that are approved by the Illinois Association of Realtors and in here on line 22 it says here specifically state or federal laws or regulations relating to this property which violation has not been corrected. If you check yes on there then you have to specify what violation and at the bottom I put city violation to repair/replace the windows. This is the historical designation property disclosure form that the City of Aurora gives us, which we are disclosing as well. If there are any other forms, I'd be happy to disclose them if you want to send them over to me.

Mr. Miller said thank you for coming and thank you for being so transparent.

Ms. Tijerina said thank you so much for your time. I appreciate it.

Ms. Hall said it has also been noted in our system that there is an outstanding violation. Are there any questions or comments?

Mr. Truax said we don't have to do anything then right?

Ms. Hall said no. I would say I don't think we need to officially, as long as we're just kind of tabling it for now. I'll keep in touch and figure out if they need to come back or what's been happening.

16-00427

Annual Mayor's Awards for Historic Preservation, honoring property owners who have made improvements to their properties while maintaining the historic character. (16-00427 / KDWK-16.065-PZ/HP - JH)

Ms. Hall said the Public Outreach Sub-Committee met last week to discuss the projects. There are 7 homes that were nominated for the Mayor's Awards for 2016: 108 N. View Street, 142 S. Lincoln Avenue, 146 S. Lincoln Avenue, 211 Center Avenue, 402 N. View Street, 413 Wilder Street, and 523 W. Downer Place.

Discussion and vote followed on each nomination and 5 nominations will be given the Mayor's Award: 108 N. View Street, 146 S. Lincoln Avenue, 211 Center Avenue, 402 N. View Street and 413 Wilder Street. It was felt that the nominations for 142 S. Lincoln Avenue and 523 W. Downer Place would be considered for nomination in 2017 once they were fully completed.

16-00415

The Preservation Commission is providing comments on the National Register Nomination for Middle Avenue Historic District located on Middle Avenue, bounded by S. Lake, Cross, S. River and Gale Streets (Nominated by Gary W. Anderson Architects - (16-00415 /

AU21/4-16.087-HP - JH - Ward 4).

Mr. Schweizer said and by the way, before you start Jill, I'll let the people know that if you go to the library and you go up to the history room and you start looking through the books about the CBQ and the Third Rail and all the kinds of railroad related things going on in Aurora, Middle Street is prominent in all of that. There is a great deal of history in addition to what Jill has in the packet. It was a well-used corridor.

Ms. Hall said this is obviously being nominated for its historic significance. Here is the map. You can see that the outlined yellow is what is being included in the district. There are 9 buildings, 7 of which are contributing. The neighborhood that developed around this specific railroad route was known as Alley Job. The railroad was granted right-of-way for the length of Middle Avenue. They did daily runs on what's known as Alley Job. That ran actually up into the 1980's. This district, the nomination notes that while the railroad line itself was very long through Aurora, this one was an important spur as well as it includes a lot of the representation of like the warehouse history, and industry history along the railroad that is not found in some other parts of Aurora, or at least not found still intact in other parts of Aurora. The buildings date from 1891 to 1950. I'm sorry, there are 11 buildings with 8 contributing. It is being nominated under the National Register as Criteria A for being associated with events that made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. So it is basically the importance of the railroad industry that developed in Aurora. It played a very prominent role. This block remains intact unlike the others in the area, so it kind of represents the history that is lost throughout the rest of Aurora. The integrity of the buildings, they remain. The footprint is still similar to what was there currently. The building facades have been altered through the years. Here are some current photos. You can see a lot of the windows have been kind of filled in and openings have been changed. However, a lot of these changes do appear to be removable so that they could be restored back to their historic integrity and their historic appearance.

Mr. Schweizer said has staff had any discussions on grant funding to make something like that happen?

Ms. Hall said no. We haven't considered grant funding. I know one of the push for this National Register nomination is the hope to use historic tax credits.

Mr. Miller said so it's a benefit that property owners receive then if it is approved as a National Register?

Ms. Hall said yes. It would help them for if it's, I'm assuming it would be used for income producing and they could get historic tax credits on major rehabs, which a lot of these buildings would be major rehabs.

Mr. Vaughan said on the second page of the document under recommendations, it says staff recommends supporting the nomination of the Big Woods School. I think you would want to change that I would assume.

Ms. Hall said I'll change that.

Mr. Schweizer said did that fall under the River Edge Redevelopment Zone at all or would that be separate from this?

Ms. Hall said that I'm not certain about.

Mr. Schweizer said that is something we can bring up with Mr. Wiet maybe.

Mr. Truax said I haven't had enough time to look at it so I'm not going to vote on it one way or the other. I don't believe I've done my research. In the 2 days I've had to do it, I just haven't gotten to it.

Mr. Vaughan said I'd actually agree with Don and table it until next month. The 2 days' notice, unfortunately, was just not enough to really dive into it. I vote we table it and postpone it until next month.

Mr. Truax said is there any issue with postponing it a month.

Ms. Hall said no. We should still have time to comment.

Mr. Schweizer said I'll make a comment now that I think it is a great idea.

Ms. Hall said I wait to do the official packets until near like the week they are due. I can just e-mail you this type of information unofficially if you want to have it earlier.

Mr. Miller said that would help. Thanks for bringing that up. I had that thought too. We were going to be voting on something, 100 pages I haven't read, although I think it is a great idea. What I see of this, it is very encouraging. In glancing at a few of these historical drawings and photographs I can say they used to make (inaudible) pretty attractive.

Mr. Truax said who initiated this? I know Gary. He didn't do it on his own, right?

Ms. Hall said no, this was, I believe, initiated by the company that owns a lot of the buildings.

Mr. Miller said and with National Register you say they could qualify for historic tax credits and then would there be any like restrictions on what they do with the building facades, like with the local district?

Ms. Hall said there are restrictions as far as during the project the work has to adhere to the Secretary of Interior standards for rehabilitation. When they think of giving tax credits, they are looking at long term, so you can't be like I want tax credits for this part of the rehab and then 2 months later I'm going to build this horrible addition. They will look at the entire project, but it does not necessarily then restrict what can happen 5 to 10 years down the road in changes.

Mr. Miller said there would be approval of what they hope to do with the tax credits though?

Ms. Hall said yes.

Mr. Schweizer said and this wouldn't have any bearing on environmental remediation? We know the area used to be an industrial zone and we don't really know what is under there. If they start pulling up concrete and start finding what we hope they don't find, does the historic designation affect that at all?

Ms. Hall said no. It would kind of go hand in hand. They would need to remediate what they need to remediate. That being said, they would need to try to do it in a manner that doesn't disturb the historic fabric and still try to meet the Secretary of Interior standards, which does allow for changes and you can adaptively reuse the building. It is not trying to completely restore it to the original building 100%.

Mr. Miller said okay we agreed to table this.

PENDING**COMMITTEE REPORTS****A) Grants - Rob Vaughan, Chariman**

Has not met.

B) Near Eastside Historic District - Jose Garcia, Chairperson

Has not met.

C) Riddle Highlands Historic District - Fernando Castrejon, Chairperson

Has not met.

D) Public Awareness - Dan Miller, Chariman

We have met. We brought forward some of the historic preservation award nominations, which we've already discussed. We also had a meeting with staff just to discuss issues with inspections and enforcement.

E) Landmarks - Don Truax, Chariman

Has not met.

F) FoxWalk Design Review - Don Truax, Chairperson

Has not met. Fernando is there anything you want to say about the Elk's Club or the other buildings?

Mr. Castrejon said I'm not on the committee, but I'm with Karademas Management, so as most of you might know, the Karademas Group took over the old Midtown Restaurant so it is currently being fully remodeled. It will be open by Karademas Hospitality and we are hoping to open that within the next 3 weeks, so look for the invite for the Grand Opening. Overall, we are hoping to capture a lot of the clientele coming from the Paramount and just providing a more family friendly atmosphere versus what it's been over the previous years. The Elk's building is, actually the 2nd and 3rd floors started painting, so drywall, mechanicals all are in. Flooring starts next week. We are pushing for July 1. There is no decision made on the 1st floor other than the original agreement with the city that it would be a restaurant. We've met with 5 different restaurant groups and have come to no agreement. I believe David is getting some pressure from the Mayor's office to determine what's going to happen, so most likely, depending on how the new – so by the way, the old Midtown will be called Leland Legends and just to capture, obviously, the music of the Blues industry and legends that might have stayed or attended the Sky Club.

G) Tanner Historic District - Dan Miller, Chairman

Has not met, although a group of citizens is holding a public meeting on the 19th at

the Fire Museum at 7:00 o'clock. That is not a committee meeting of this Commission. It is just something citizens in the area decided to do.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Castrejon, seconded by Mr. Truax, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by voice vote. Mr. Miller adjourned the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

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