

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
Education Committee
February 23, 2016 Meeting Minutes
Oak Park Village Hall, Room 215, 7:30 pm

A. Roll Call

PRESENT: Chair Dan Moroney, Fred Brandstrader, Liz Holt, Laura Jordahl, Gary Palese,
David Sokol

ABSENT: Don McLean, Karen Doty, Frank Heitzman

STAFF: Douglas Kaarre, Urban Planner/Historic Preservation

B. MINUTES

Motion by Sokol to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2016 meeting as submitted. Second by Palese. Motion approved 6-0.

AYE: Brandstrader, Holt, Jordahl, Palese, Sokol, Chair Moroney

NAY: None

C. Secondary Building Requirements and Guidelines

Commissioner Moroney provided an overview of the project. A garage section has not been included in the new Guidelines, and there have been a number of recent garage demolitions where the replacement design is for a much larger garage. The purpose is to have a policy on dealing with demolition and new design.

The Committee discussed other types of secondary buildings including barns and ticket booths. They discussed how to determine if a garage is a contributing resource or significant and that the replacement structure should reflect its status. For example, replacement of a significant accessory building should match it exactly; replacement of a contributing resource may be compatible with the house. They discussed ways to deal with “demolition by neglect” (obvious neglect of maintenance in order to hasten the deterioration of the building to allow demolition). Safety issues, such as no foundation, are often an issue.

The Committee discussed one-car garages and reasons for the preservation of some. It was suggested that the Commission conduct a garage historic resource survey to determine current number of contributing and significant accessory structures. The idea behind a significant accessory structure is that the Commission would have slightly more authority when reviewing the replacement design where demolition is approved.

The Committee discussed including language that addressing massing and scale, such as the need for the accessory structure to be subordinate or subserviant to the main structure, or include a calculation, such as 1/3 or 2/3 the size of the house, etc.

D. Landmark Link Newsletter

The committee provided direction for the Winter 2016 edition of the newsletter. The subjects included:

- 2015 Historic Preservation Awards
- Update on the Hulbert Houses Historic District discussions
- Promote the two historic district guidebooks
- Sell the guidebooks in Village Hall

E. Education and Training

Commissioner Palese suggested that the Commission look at conducting a study of how historic districts in Oak Park have impacted property values over the years. The Committee discussed the benefits of positive survey results, such as credibility, educating the Village Board that historic district designation is a benefit, show that preservation makes sense (cents), provide further training materials for the Village Board and citizens and realtors, maybe interest more commercial building owners to preserve and designate landmarks, and coordinate local groups to increase tourism.

Commissioner Moroney suggested conducting a realtor survey and doing realtor presentations. They should reach out to the Oak Park Township Assessor.

Planner Kaarre suggested looking at alternatives to funding, such as using volunteers or graduate students. He will provide copies of existing studies from other communities.

F. Publications

Brochure: Researching Your Oak Park Home – it was noted that the process to conduct a title search at the Cook County Assessor’s Office should be updated.

It was suggested that they start promoting the two existing historic district guidebooks and consider preparing one for the Gunderson Historic District.

G. Other Business

Look at the March meeting date and conflicts with Spring Break.

ADJOURN

Motion by Sokol to adjourn. Second by Jordahl. Motion approved: 6-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. Minutes prepared Douglas Kaarre.