

Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission
July 14, 2016 Meeting Minutes
Oak Park Village Hall, Room 201 – Council Chambers, 7:30 pm

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Acting Chair Regina Nally, Greg Battoglia, Fred Brandstrader, Rebecca Houze, Laura Jordahl, Don McLean, Dan Moroney, Christopher Payne, David Sokol, Aleksandra Tadic
ABSENT: None
STAFF: Douglas Kaarre, AICP, Urban Planner/Historic Preservation

Planner Kaarre noted that Chair Rosanne McGrath resigned from the Commission earlier in the day due to a work conflict of interest. Gary Palese, who left the Commission in May, was the Acting Chair. Therefore with no one to run the meeting, he asked for a motion to elect a current commission member as the Acting Chair.

ELECT ACTING CHAIR

Motion by Sokol to elect Regina Nally as the Acting Chair. Second by Battoglia. Motion approved 8-0-1.
AYE: Battoglia, Houze, Jordahl, McLean, Moroney, Payne, Sokol, Tadic
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: Nally

Commissioner Brandstrader arrived.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion by Battoglia to approve the meeting agenda as submitted. Second by Tadic. Motion approved 10-0.
AYE: Battoglia, Brandstrader, Houze, Jordahl, McLean, Moroney, Payne, Sokol, Tadic, Acting Chair Nally
NAY: None

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

None

MINUTES

Motion by Sokol to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2016 meeting as submitted. Second by Jordahl. Motion approved 10-0.
AYE: Battoglia, Brandstrader, Houze, Jordahl, McLean, Moroney, Payne, Sokol, Tadic, Acting Chair Nally
NAY: None

REGULAR AGENDA

- A. **HPC 2016-43: 215 N. Elmwood (Gupta/Wohrley)**: Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a 1-story garage and construct a 1-1/2 story garage (*Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District*)
Architect Rosanne McGrath and property owner Dr. Samir Gupta were present.

Planner Kaarre provided an overview of the application. The house is listed as a Contributing Resource within the Historic District. The expanded American Foursquare house, with Prairie School and Queen Anne influences, was constructed c. 1900. The one-story garage was constructed in 1911. The proposal is to demolish the rear one-story frame garage and construct and one and one-

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half story frame garage in the same location. The proposed garage would have usable second floor space under a hipped roof with four dormers similar to the house, wood siding with matching horizontal banding, and one garage door facing the driveway and two garage doors facing the alley. The garage windows would be wood and will include reusing the existing garage windows. The as proposed appears to meet the Garage Policy nos. 3 and 4 of the Architectural Review Guidelines and staff recommends that the Commission approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application as submitted, per Section 7-9-13(E) of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Motion by Payne to open the application for discussion. Second by Jordahl.

Rosanne McGrath, 1227 Columbian, provided an overview of the new garage and the reasons behind the proposal. They looked at trying to retain and expand the existing garage, but there is no foundation, the roof has been reframed, the chimney has been removed, and due to these alterations any original character has been lost. Also it is angled on the site and they wish to straighten the footprint. They are picking up the dormer design and simplified horizontal trim from the house. They are using matching wood siding and reusing the historic wood windows. The height will be 25 feet (19' - 6" to the mid-point of the roof slope).

Dr. Gupta stated that they love the house and they neighborhood and it's important for this approval for their extended family issues and extra living space.

Commissioner McLean stated that it is a great design and the case for demolition is a good one. There is nothing significant to preserve and the design echoes the house nicely and is in line with the Architectural Review Guidelines.

Commissioner Battoglia noted that the bay facing the street marries nicely with the house.

Motion by Jordahl to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the garage at 215 N. Elmwood Avenue given its compromised condition with regards to its Contributing status and approve the proposed 1-1/2 story three bay garage as described and rendered in drawings as submitted by Studio M Architects. Second by McLean. Motion approved 10-0.

*AYE: Battoglia, Brandstrader, Houze, Jordahl, McLean, Moroney, Payne, Sokol, Tadic, Acting Chair Nally
NAY: None*

A. **Oak Park Zoning Ordinance Update: Discuss proposed updates to the Zoning Ordinance**

The Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the Draft Zoning Ordinance at its meeting on July 14, 2016 and had the following comments:

- Section 3.9.5 of the existing Zoning Ordinance was omitted from the Draft Zoning Ordinance and should be included, as amended:

Historic Preservation Districts and Landmarks: All development shall meet the standards and requirements for preservation of historic structures set forth in Chapter 7 of the Village Code in addition to all applicable requirements of this zoning ordinance. Chapter 7, Article 9 of the Village Code also requires a Certificate of Advisory Review or Certificate of Appropriateness for projects in the Village's historic districts or Historic Landmarks.

Chapter 9, Section 7.9.10 of the Village Code, requires most zoning and subdivision actions affecting historic landmarks or historic districts to be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission. The map of historic districts is shown on the Official Zoning Map.

- Section 12.6 of the Draft Zoning Ordinance (HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION) should be amended as follows:

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The primary responsibility of the Historic Preservation Commission is to administer the Village of Oak Park's Historic Preservation Ordinance and Architectural Review Guidelines.

The language for items (A) and (B) which begin with "when called upon" should be strengthened. The language in the Historic Preservation Ordinance is stronger, stating that the Historic Preservation Commission shall be notified of these various zoning applications, that they shall review them, and that they may provide their opinions to the public hearing body.

- Section 9.3.U(c) of the Draft Zoning Ordinance (SOLAR PANELS) should be amended as follows:

c. Solar panels to be installed within a historic district must meet the Architectural Review Guidelines of the Historic Preservation Commission.

- Section 2.3. of the Draft Zoning Ordinance (DEFINITIONS): It was noted that Section 9.3.K narrowly outlines where coach houses may be constructed and coach houses are defined in Section 2.3. It was also noted that a two-story accessory building could be constructed on any lot and illegally converted to a coach house at a later date. It was thought that there may be a loophole in the definitions in relation to coach houses which should be clarified.
- Article 7 of the Draft Zoning Ordinance (DESIGN STANDARDS) will be reviewed by the Architectural Review Committee at their meeting on July 27, 2016. Comments will be emailed to you on Thursday, July 28.
- Section 3.2. of the Draft Zoning Ordinance (ZONING MAP): The zoning map should include the official boundaries of the current and future historic districts.

- B. **Village Trustee Bob Tucker: Discussion and update on Board and Commission activities with the Commission's Trustee liaison**
Village Trustee Bob Tucker was present.

Acting Chair Nally stated that they invited Trustee Tucker as their liaison to the Board of Trustees to attend the meeting to strengthen their communication and learn more about what is going on at the Board level. One of the issues they recently discussed was the "bump" proposal on Madison Street.

Trustee Tucker stated that it's very preliminary at this point. They have hired engineers to study the infrastructure costs.

Tammie Grossman, Director, Development Customer Services Department, stated that the engineers are doing a design showing the proposed streetscape and also what it would take to do the "bump." They're showing engineering designs for both.

Commissioner Sokol stated that the plans have implications for historic preservation as there are several buildings along Madison that are significant and were designed by well-known architects and there have been no discussions or they have had no input on their impact.

Trustee Tucker stated that there is nothing to see right now. They have to wait until they get the engineering study to see the impact. He's had conversations with Landmarks Illinois. It's so early in the process right now. He's turned that over to staff.

Acting Chair Nally stated that they are interested to know if the "bump" is someone's specific idea, or is it looking at a specific use or someone is looking at the property.

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Trustee Tucker stated that the properties have been vacant or short-term leases for many years. OPEDC proposed the “bump” because of the shallow depth size of the lots. It’s too hard to build modern retail stores. The “bump” would create a larger lot to allow for that. The proposed structure on the south side would have parking on top. There have been sketches.

Rosanne McGrath stated that about ten years ago there was a Madison Street study done which identified properties on Madison Street that were worth saving for various reasons. The “bump” occurs at one of those. The report also recommends that discussions about what happens to those buildings should include the HPC. Why is the “bump” being proposed there instead of somewhere else?

Trustee Tucker stated that those properties are privately owned and they have signed contracts with developers. That includes the Foley-Rice building.

Commissioner Moroney asked if the Volvo Building which was demolished for the District 97 headquarters was identified in the Madison Street Corridor Plan as a significant building.

Rosanne McGrath stated that it was.

Commissioner Moroney stated that the HPC could be a resource and while he’s not sure if they had the purview to provide design review for that building, his daughter thought they were building a jail.

Rosanne McGrath stated that the Walgreen’s and the Grove Apartments buildings were such wonderful examples of adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Historic buildings can be a part of the project and the HPC would like to be a part of the discussion.

Trustee Tucker stated that’s why he spoke with Landmarks Illinois and hopefully he can come back to this meeting again. He can also meet with a few commission members at other times.

Commissioner Sokol stated that its so easy for a preliminary idea to be cast in stone so quickly that it’s too late to have any impact of us to talk about the historic buildings. Yes, the “bump” is just an idea now, but now there are contracts and then all of sudden it will be too late. How can they have real discussion in the near future on what are the most important buildings that shouldn’t be demolished and should be incorporated into any development?

Tammie Grossman stated that there needs to be a Planned Development application and the Board can ask the HPC to look at it.

Commissioner Payne stated that preservation is a key part of Oak Park, as well as heritage tourism, housing quality and overall quality of life. It isn’t stat but is constantly changing. The HPC can offer their expertise in terms of landmarking and getting economic incentives. A study has been done on Madison Street and a number of buildings have been identified as being part of a potential historic district. There are marketing opportunities that now seem to be completely ignored. Any idea of a Motor Row or any celebration of that heritage in Oak Park doesn’t seem to be happening. It’s something in our strategic plan that hasn’t been addressed. We should talk about how we begin educating the community about those buildings and get them interested and why they should be protected.

Commissioner Moroney asked about the new policy resulting in Rosanne needing to resign.

Trustee Tucker stated the state statute and Village Code were clear.

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Rosanne McGrath asked why if the code has been in place since 2003 that the HPC was allowed to follow their Rules of Procedure that have been in place since 1994?

Tammie Grossman stated that it was a mistake and should have been looked at more closely. Once it was known the Village Attorney made it clear that the current code needed to be followed. He will be issuing a detailed memo explaining this to you. This covers the HPC, the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Fire and Police Commission.

Commissioner Sokol asked what the code was that required her resignation.

Tammie Grossman stated that it was a business interest in an application going before the commission.

Commissioner Moroney stated that it's too bad that they had to lose Rosanne. She was an invaluable resource with intimate local knowledge. Architects and contractors who work in those historic districts really have that knowledge and it's unfortunate that we won't have that any more.

Acting Chair Nally thanked Trustee Tucker for spending his Thursday evening meeting with them.

C. 2017 HPC Work Plan: Discuss proposed 2017 work plan

The Commission reviewed their current work plan and prepared a draft 2017 work plan and budget to present to the Village Board. Proposed new items include updating the Guidebook to the Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District, working on a joint task force for the preservation and potential reuse of the main post office, and working on an education/outreach program about the preservation of historic commercial properties in Oak Park and Motor Row properties on Madison Street.

CONSENT AGENDA

OTHER BUSINESS

Madison Street: The Commission discussed the proposed "Bend" project and their lack of involvement to-date. They voiced their concern with the proposed demolition of the Hill Motor Sales Company Building (former Foley-Rice Building). It was suggested to reach out to the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency to determine if Madison Street's Motor Row properties are eligible as a multiple property National Register nomination.

ADJOURN

Motion by Sokol to adjourn. Second by Jordahl. Motion approved 10-0.

AYE: Battaglia, Brandstrader, Houze, Jordahl, McLean, Moroney, Payne, Sokol, Tadic, Acting Chair Nally

NAY: None

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Douglas Kaarre, AICP, Urban Planner/Historic Preservation.