

**Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission  
November 10, 2022 – Meeting Minutes  
Remote Participation Meeting, 7:30 pm**

**Roll Call**

Present: Acting Chair Daniel Roush and Commissioners Asha Andriana, Monique Chase, Sarah Doherty, Andrew Elders, Lou Garapolo, and Scot Mazur  
Absent: Commissioner Nicole Napper  
Staff: Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner

*Commissioner Elders arrived at 8:40pm, during HPC2022-61 307 S Harvey Ave.*

**Agenda Approval**

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the agenda. Second by Commissioner Chase. Motion approved 6-0.*

**Non-Agenda Public Comment**

None

**Minutes**

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the minutes for October 20, 2022. Second by Commissioner Doherty. Motion approved 6-0.*

**Regular Agenda**

- A. Garage Review Memo:** Update from staff on the review procedure for garage and coach house demolition and new construction applications.

Acting Chair Roush introduced the item and Planner Trexler gave an overview. She explained that staff reviewed the garage review process with the HPC's attorney. It was determined that demolition of historic garages and construction of new garages should be reviewed separately based on their own merits. Historic garage demolitions require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) and should be reviewed based on the existing garage only. New garages will be reviewed separately as Advisory Review.

Commissioner Garapolo said he is concerned with this memo because it is specifically for garage review. He said it raises the question about other projects and the Commission may be criticized. He asked for another memo for demolition besides garages. Planner Trexler said this can be provided.

Commissioner Garapolo said he is concerned that they have separated garage demolition from review of the proposed building. Control over demolition is the only control the Commission has. That will not be answered by this memo. He said he has quite a bit of concern about the process. Acting Chair Roush said they should put a conversation on the agenda for a future meeting.

Commissioner Chase said she agrees with Commissioner Garapolo and wants to make sure multiple voices are on record. Commissioner Garapolo said they should put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

- B. Advisory Review: 714 N Grove Ave (Colin Brietzke):** Advisory Review for construction of a new coach house, existing garage not visible from the street (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Acting Chair Roush introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Colin Brietzke, the homeowner, and Michael Ruehle, the architect, were present. Mr. Ruehle said the presentation is extensive and he is familiar with historical issues. They intend to clad the exterior to be compatible. The house has vertical board-and-batten on the second floor and stucco on the first floor. The idea is to use horizontal siding on the first floor and vertical on the second floor. He said they are waiting for Zoning Board approval before doing the full design. He said it will not be visible from the street, even at this height, but that doesn't mean they won't look at the aesthetics and make it compatible with the neighborhood.

Commissioner Garapolo said clapboard and Hardie/LP Smartside were mentioned, and it's hard to comment if the Commission doesn't know the direction. He asked if the windows will match the house. Mr. Ruehle said they will need egress windows. Whether they are casement or double-hung is up in the air. The windows will be clad wood or possibly fiberglass for energy efficiency concerns. The material will be LP Smartside, which they can cut to whatever is appropriate. They would use a narrow reveal. LP and Hardie are both options. Commissioner Garapolo said this submittal is much too early. They don't know the size, siding, or windows. He said this should be postponed until the applicant can come back. Mr. Brietzke asked if they need a full architectural design and how extensive it should be. Commissioner Garapolo said they need answers to the questions the architect has raised. They need a design to go before other Commissions. The drawing looks nice but it is a diagram.

Acting Chair Roush said they should get an answer from Zoning, then return. Mr. Ruehle said segmenting demolition and new construction makes sense in cases like this. He said they needed to know the demolition would be approved before designing the garage. Acting Chair Roush said they can move ahead confidently and get the Zoning review.

- C. HPC2022-58: 178 Forest Ave (Nineteenth Century Club):** Certificate of Appropriateness to replace a rear door (Landmark and Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Acting Chair Roush introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said the applicant previously attended the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on August 11, 2022. At that time, the Commission agreed that a single door would be acceptable over two doors, but asked that the applicant return with documentation of the proposed door.

Robin Weinke and Ingo Shaffer were present on behalf of the project. Mr. Weinke said there was some concern the opening would change; what they are proposing would be have a replacement door and the portion on the left would be an emergency door. That portion would be capable of opening if needed but would not typically be opened. There will be a new frame but it will be the same size. There may be some issues with the brickwork when the frame is removed but otherwise there will be no change to the brickwork.

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Chase.*

Commissioner Garapolo said there was a concern not about the door but about the details. He said the presentation this evening answers that question. This has minimal effect. He said he supports the proposal. Acting Chair Roush said he's seeing a lot of general agreement and he agrees, too.

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Doherty. Motion approved 6-0.*

*AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Mazur, and Acting Chair Roush*

*NAY: None*

- D. HPC2022-59: 240 S Clinton Ave (Convey):** Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to the side entry porch and a dormer addition (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District).

Acting Chair Roush introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview.

Bill Scholtens and Roman Munoz, the architects, were present. Mr. Scholtens said new owners are moving in. There is an existing dormer at the rear with an existing stairway that appears to have been used as an apartment. The owners want to integrate the attic level so it functions like a single-family home. So they are relocating the attic stair to stack above the existing stairs for floors one and two. They are drawing the shed inspiration from the rear dormer. He said they are adding a stair to the side of the side porch. It was previously a galley-like porch with no entrance. This will allow the porch to be used. It has been modified over its life quite a bit. They will draw from the character of the home, including a bevel on the posts and a screen to enclose the area below the deck match the front.

*Motion by Commissioner Doherty to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Chase.*

Commissioner Garapolo asked what material will be used for the dormer siding. Mr. Scholtens said the existing dormer is painted wood with corner boards and an aluminum-clad window. They will match that: wood siding and two Marvin clad wood windows. The roofing will be asphalt shingle. Commissioner Garapolo said he doesn't have a problem with that. The porch changes appear appropriate and fit into the building design. He said he supports this proposal.

Commissioner Doherty said she agrees with Commissioner Garapolo. This porch design is much more sensitive. Acting Chair Roush agreed and said this is a good project. It is good for the street and nicely done.

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Andriana.*

*AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Mazur, and Acting Chair Roush*

*NAY: None*

- E. HPC2022-60: 544 N Grove Ave (Margaret Anderson):** Revised Certificate of Appropriateness for previously approved project to add a rear door to a house on a corner lot; altering door from French doors to sliding doors (Frank Lloyd Wright-Prairie School of Architecture Historic District).

Acting Chair Roush introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said the project was previously reviewed at the July 28 Architectural Review Committee meeting and approved at the August 11 Historic Preservation Commission meeting but the homeowner wishes to change the door type due to supply chain issues. The proposed sliding doors will have applied mullions to have the appearance of French doors.

Margaret Anderson, the homeowner, was present on behalf of the project. She said they had some supply chain issues related to the door and it will not come before winter. She said she was able to find a wood-interior Pella door and her contractor found some muntins that can be added to the exterior to make it look appropriate.

*Motion by commissioner Garapolo to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Chase.*

Commissioner Garapolo said the ARC and HPC found the project to be well-designed and of minimal impact. It is somewhat visible, but very minimal. He said he likes French doors but if he was walking down the street, he wouldn't be able to tell the difference in this situation.

Commissioner Chase said supply chain problems are a huge issue at her work. This is minimally visible and will blend well. Acting Chair Roush said in a perfect world they would be French doors, but he supports this, too. Commissioner Andriana agreed.

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the project as proposed. Second by Commissioner Mazur.*

*AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Mazur, and Acting Chair Roush*

*NAY: None*

**F. 307 S Harvey Ave (James Podraza) (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District):**

**a. HPC2022-61: Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of a historic garage**

Acting Chair Roush introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said the applicant previously attended the Architectural Review Committee meeting on October 27, 2022. She said the review of the proposed new garage requires Advisory Review and will be a separate agenda item that will follow if the Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition is approved.

Jim Podraza, the homeowner, was present on behalf of the project. Mr. Podraza said they moved in 49 years ago, in 1973. At that time, the garage was in better condition. There were three trees; the middle one was an inch away from touching the eave. To keep the garage from getting knocked over, he cut a notch in the roof to give the tree another foot to grow. He said the tree has continued to grow and the garage has continued to deteriorate. The sill has rotted out due to the tree and he often has to adjust the alignment of the door. The garage is leaning to the east and north. The tree will continue to grow and will start knocking the garage down. The next step would be cutting holes in the wall. He said he doesn't want to cut down the tree. Those trees were one of the reasons they bought the house.

Commissioner Garapolo said following the garage memo, they don't have any letter from a structural engineer. It's homeowner's evaluation. They don't have evidence that repair is

economically infeasible. He said if that's the criteria, they don't have a full submittal. He said this proposal should be postponed until this information is presented.

Acting Chair Roush asked for clarification from staff. Planner Trexler said a letter from a structural engineer or similar professional has not previously been required but has been recommended. Acting Chair Roush said he was at the ARC meeting and his take-away was that this is a garage demolition they would approve. He said he thinks Commissioner Garapolo is saying a more air-tight process is needed. It sounds like the HPC may want to make some of these requirements more stringent. As it stands now, Jim has come here with the rules as he was presented them. Commissioner Garapolo said if these are the guidelines, they either have to apply them to all projects or none of them.

Commissioner Doherty said she agrees on the economic infeasibility point, but not on the letter from the engineer. Commissioner Chase said they need a contractor to break down what costs of repair would look like. She said evidence that does not cost money is her preference. Acting Chair Roush said it sounds like this application may not be proving economic infeasibility. Commissioner Chase said they need the economic hardship to be addressed in some form. They are setting a precedent.

Mr. Podraza said economics are not part of this, it's a question of the tree. Acting Chair Roush said he understands and asked how they can focus the discussion. The economic hardship might include a tree service quote to remove the tree. There may be other costs that come if you lose the tree.

Planner Trexler said the Commission should use the Guidelines. She said the recommendations in the memo were based on Commission precedent.

Commissioner Garapolo said they need a conversation with the Commission. He requested additional information in accordance with these guidelines. Commissioner Chase said on some other projects they have conditionally approved things if more information is provided to staff. Commissioner Garapolo said if they conditionally approve, they de-facto approve the project and he would not be in favor of that.

*The Commission took no action.*

*Commissioner Elders arrived at 8:40pm.*

b. **Advisory Review** for proposed new garage

*As no action was taken on the Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition, the Advisory Review of the proposed new garage was deferred.*

**G. 424 Pleasant St (Nick Schmuck & Cora Bruemmer)** (Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District):

a. **HPC2022-62:** Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of a historic garage

Acting Chair Roush introduced the application. Planner Trexler gave an overview. She said the applicant previously attended the HPC meeting on October 20, 2022. Their application was approved for the house alterations only due to concerns about the design of the new garage. Following the meeting, staff reviewed the Historic Preservation Ordinance with respect to garage reviews with the assistance of the Commission's attorney. It was determined that garage demolitions and new construction must be reviewed separately. The new garage

proposal requires Advisory Review as a separate item on the agenda, following approval of the demolition of the historic garage.

Tom Bassett-Dilley and Joe Juhl, the architects, were present. Nick Schmuck and Cora Bruemmer, the homeowners, were also in attendance. Mr. Bassett-Dilley said they included some additional documentation. Like the previous garage, there is a fundamental problem: these are un-reinforced buildings. Slabs crack, buildings settle. In the previous case, it is unsalvageable, you would have to rebuild the foundation. He said in this case, there are two cracks the length of the garage. The north and south walls have settled and will continue to settle. There is more than an inch of displacement at the worst of the cracking. There is vertical cracking on all of the corners. The right and left-hand sides have gone down; water has contributed to that and accelerated the settling. He said since the garage was built, the alley has been raised. There is a concrete patch to keep water from running in. Beyond that, the foundation is not salvageable. You would have to raise the garage and repair the foundation and put the garage back down. He said the building code talks about "technical infeasibility." This technical infeasibility. To prove an economic hardship would require multiple sets of drawings and multiple bids, would take a lot of money from the client.

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to open for discussion. Second by Commissioner Andriana.*

Commissioner Garapolo said he appreciates the review and commentary. Economic infeasibility is a requirement. He said the submittal is incomplete and the letter is self-serving.

Mr. Schmuck asked Commissioner Garapolo if he said he wouldn't disagree with the architect at the last meeting. Commissioner Garapolo said he did, the but letter is not coming from a third party. Mr. Bassett-Dilley said his professional stamp is on the letter.

Acting Chair Roush said a letter has previously been requested but not required. He asked what the applicant has not provided that the Commission would like to see. Commissioner Garapolo said the memo recommends broken out cost estimates for repair and replacement. Commissioner Elders said he agrees with Commissioner Garapolo. They have not brought in a third party. The plans for what they wish to do have never been changed.

Commissioner Chase said the photos don't show a structure that is in poor shape. She said she doesn't see a structure that is not level or is falling down like the last structure. Mr. Bassett-Dilley said the intention of the letter is to explain professionally what may not be evident. You cannot repair the foundation without removing the garage. In doing so, the stucco would crack and fall off. Commissioner Chase they don't have numbers for that. Mr. Bassett-Dilley said this is taking the requirement of the applicant to a different level. This is an unrepairable garage.

Commissioner Elders asked if their firm is raising a house to replace the foundation. Mr. Bassett-Dilley said they are. It is a light-weight wooden structure that can be raised. This has stucco to the ground. You would have to lift it and then move it away from the slab. With the house they can put in crib beams and raise it up, but a garage like this has to be moved out of the way. Commissioner Elders said he understands, his parents did this with their carriage house. Mr. Bassett-Dilley said it's not impossible, it's a poor use of resources. The garage is not tenable.

Acting Chair Roush said with the previous garage, the applicant is trying to do the right thing. The Commission is asking him to provide a number he can't get. He said there may be some parallels. The garage here is not in perfect condition. He said the proposed structure has caused some controversy. He is not clear what the greater good is and how we get there. Saying you have to provide an economic infeasibility argument is a thorny issue and they need to be clear on the rules. Commissioner Garapolo said they are told the solution is to lift the garage. They need to see that proposal and if that is the solution.

Ms. Bruemmer said if they get estimates in terms of cost, how much is economically infeasible? Mr. Schmuck said compared to lifting a house, it may be possible for some but not others. Mr. Bassett-Dilley said if the Commission takes no action, they will go to the Village Board. Mr. Schmuck asked that the Commission not punish the previous applicant on behalf of their garage. Commissioner Garapolo said they're talking about economic hardship. They had comments last time on the proposed garage. Commissioner Elders said those comments were disregarded. Mr. Schmuck said they were advisory. Mr. Bassett-Dilley said he would be happy to discuss compatibility and distinction. He said he hears the Commission. He said he believes they are doing some things with their design that are worth discussing.

Commissioner Chase said the items presented here do not show a garage that needs to be torn down. She said she needs more information before she will be willing to vote. Mr. Schmuck asked what is required. Commissioner Chase said she is not seeing walls falling down. There is no reason you can't use this garage. Commissioner Andriana said the Commission is asking for a third party to make this assessment. Acting Chair Roush said it sounds like in addition to making a professional's statement mandatory, it has to be a third part that make the statement. Commissioner Garapolo agreed it should be a third-party structural engineer's statement and said he wants to see numbers.

Acting Chair Roush said the advisory quality of the garage review does not sit well with the Commission. The lack of that power is a factor. He said he doesn't see this project moving forward tonight.

*The Commission took no action.*

- b. **Advisory Review** for proposed new garage

*As no action was taken on the Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition, the Advisory Review of the proposed new garage was deferred.*

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

None

#### **ADJOURN**

*Motion by Commissioner Garapolo to adjourn; Second by Commissioner Chase. Motion approved 7-0.*

*AYE: Commissioner Andriana, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Elders, Commissioner Garapolo, Commissioner Mazur, and Acting Chair Roush*

*NAY: None*

The meeting adjourned at 9:15PM.

Minutes prepared by Susie Trexler, Historic Preservation Urban Planner.