



Historic Preservation Commission

335 South Broadway

De Pere, WI 54115

<http://www.de-pere.org>

Regular Meeting

Final Minutes

Monday, September 21, 2015

6:00 PM

De Pere City Hall Council Chambers

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Commissioner Mike Fleck

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Scott Crevier	Aldersperson	Present	
Mike Fleck	Commissioner	Present	
Gene Hackbarth	Commissioner	Present	
Brian Netzel	Commissioner	Excused	
Kate Sabel	Commissioner	Present	
Sue Sands	Commissioner	Present	
Adam Turriff	Commissioner	Excused	

Also present: City Attorney Judith Schmidt-Lehman.

2. Approval of the minutes of the August 17, 2015 meeting.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Gene Hackbarth, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Scott Crevier, Aldersperson
AYES:	Crevier, Fleck, Hackbarth, Sabel, Sands
EXCUSED:	Brian Netzel, Adam Turriff

3. Update on the N.E.W. Master Gardener Association Riverwalk landscape project.

Gene Hackbarth invited Claudia Schultz and JoAnn Holloway from the N.E.W. Master Gardener Association to report on their landscaping project, for the benefit of Commission members and citizen viewers. He commended them for their work to enhance the De Pere Lock & Dam Historic District.

Ms. Holloway explained that while touring the Riverwalk a few years ago, she noticed that the landscaping was in need of attention. The Master Gardener Association approached the Fox River Navigational System Authority (FRNSA), which manages the locks, about taking on the project. FRNSA provided input about their wishes for the area as well as some restrictions that needed to be followed. The group also obtained approval from City Parks Director Marty Kosobucki. A group of 18 gardeners spent many hours preparing the site, planning the design, and raising funds. Stone Silo Prairie gardens donated some plantings, and the City provided mulch and water. Over half of the project was completed this year; cover crops were planted in the remaining area until the project can be completed. One of the missions of their organization is teaching, so they included signage for educational purposes. If citizens are interested in volunteering, they should contact the N.E.W. Master Gardener Association. Discussion followed regarding potential funding sources for the remainder of the project, and City staff provided information about available Community Service grants.

4. Review and Discussion of Historic Preservation.

A. Review Historic Preservation ordinance

Commission members Gene Hackbarth and Mike Fleck requested the ordinance review for the benefit of the newer board members. City Attorney Judy Schmidt-Lehman explained that the Historic Preservation Commission was established by the City Council

many years ago, and was reconstituted in 1998. The current ordinance was created at that time, and provided for the designation of local historic sites and local historic districts. When the ordinance refers to a "historic site or district", it pertains only to a local designation. Federal and State historic sites/districts are not covered by the City ordinance. The City currently has two local historic sites - White Pillars and the Polo Resto - and no local districts.

The Commission has the authority to designate an individual site if requested by the property owner. If a group of property owners express a desire to become a local historic district, the ordinance outlines the procedures to be followed by this Commission. City Council has the final authority over the creation of the district. The ordinance currently does not require a certain percentage of property owners to sign on; however Judy noted that it would be highly unlikely to be approved by Council if there were a high number of residents objecting.

Mike Fleck inquired about the process to establish a local district. Judy explained that the procedures are outlined in section 38-6 of the ordinance. To summarize, the Historic Preservation Commission would identify the geographic area to be designated, and establish the criteria for the designation. The Commission would put together a preservation plan specific to that district, which is then reviewed at a public hearing. It would also require approval by the Plan Commission, and finally City Council. City Planner Sarah Wallace is in the process of creating resources to define and spell out the process. Staff from the state Historical Society will review before completion, at which point it will be presented to the Commission for review and comment prior to publishing. Mike stated that when the ordinance was created, he assumed that it pertained to local districts also. Judy stated that the ordinance adopted by the City was based on a state model. Members were directed to the sample preservation plan provided on the City website. Online training is also available to HPC members on the State Historical Society website.

Scott Crevier requested a summary of the benefits of a local designation. Gene responded that state and national designation allows homeowners to access historic tax credits for exterior renovations. A local designation makes a statement to the community and future homeowners that maintaining the integrity of the building is important and you want it to be continued. Local designation would allow the Historic Preservation Commission to work with you on following design guidelines for meeting historic tax credits, and allow you to use the resources of the HPC and City staff. A Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) would be the request that you or a future homeowner would use to ensure that the architectural and cultural integrity of the structure will be retained. Sarah pointed out that the CoA applies only to exterior work; this Commission would review an applicant's proposed change to the structure based on the preservation plan in place. Mike stated that a local designation protects against construction in the district that is not in keeping with the historic nature of surrounding properties. He pointed to a recent experience on Fox River Drive as an example.

Discussion followed regarding whether a home listed as contributing in a State/National district can request local designation. Staff confirmed that it is allowed.

B. Review Razing and Moving of Buildings Ordinance

Two years ago, the City amended the razing ordinance to include a 10 calendar day waiting period, in order to allow the Commission chair to seek the property owner's permission to document features of the structure. Staff noted that the waiting period does not apply if a building is being condemned for habitability purposes or safety reasons. Scott Crevier inquired if the City could re-evaluate the 10 day period, which currently

applies to every razing permit, to avoid holding up projects for buildings that have no historic impact. He would like to see a balance between unnecessary delays and having a historically significant building come down without the Commission's knowledge. City Attorney Judy Schmidt-Lehman explained that the reason the ordinance applies to all properties is because the HPC chair can determine if it is on the register or has any historical significance. If certain property criteria were specified, then it would need to be the responsibility of the Building Inspection department, which would be difficult. Scott reported that some Council members have expressed concern about the HPC's ability to delay the process, which could go against the wishes of the property owner. He noted that the language "may be issued not less than 10 days" is causing confusion. Judy suggested that this discussion should be handled as a separate item on a future agenda. If the City is considering changes to the ordinance, the community should be notified.

C. Review Secretary of Interior Standards

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties were provided by staff as a resource for Commission members. Members were directed to contact the City Planning office if they have questions. Mike Fleck suggested that topics can be added to a future agenda for further discussion. City Planner Sarah Wallace asked that such requests include specifics regarding the end goal of the item, so that staff can prepare the agenda with sufficient detail. For example, would Commission members want staff to provide suggestions, conduct research, or create a list of discussion items to be covered.

C. Review Historic Building Article

An article entitled "Is Your Building Historic?" was provided by staff for review by Commission members.

5. Future agenda items.

None.

Adjournment

Sue Sands motioned, seconded by Scott Crevier, to adjourn the meeting at 7:09 PM. Upon vote, motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Carey Danen