

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE: November 6, 2024

APPROVED

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: City Council Chambers, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Laura O'Donnell, Dennis Roberts, Trent Shepard, Angela Urban, Andrew Weiss

MEMBERS EXCUSED: David Hays, Kathryn Holliday

STAFF PRESENT: Marcus Ricci, Planner II; Teri Anzel, Planning Administrative Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT: Susan Appel, Phyllis Winters-Williams

A. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

Chair Urban called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

B. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

C. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes of the October 2, 2024, Regular Meeting

The minutes of the October 2, 2024, regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were presented for approval. Mr. Shepard moved that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the minutes of the October 2, 2024, regular meeting as written.

Chair Urban recommended an amendment at the end of the “*Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan” discussion under Staff Report to add the following language, “Chair Urban requested to have the topic, ‘Discussion of the *Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan,’ added to the next regular meeting agenda under Study Session” so the Commission members can discuss their assigned homework.

Mr. Weiss seconded the motion with the amendment. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Minutes of the October 23, 2024, Special Meeting

The minutes of the October 23, 2024, special meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were presented for approval.

Mr. Shepard moved that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the minutes of the October 23, 2024, special meeting as written. Mr. Weiss seconded the motion.

Mr. Shepard requested an amendment on Page 5, Paragraph 5, to state as such, “Phyllis Winters-Williams, representing the Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA) and as a homeowner in the Main Street Historic District, approached the Historic Preservation Commission to speak.”

The minutes were approved as corrected by unanimous voice vote.

D. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

- Email from Stewart Berlocher dated October 23, 2024 regarding 108 North Webber Street
- Email thread between Kathleen Jones and Angela Urban regarding 108 North Webber Street
- Proposed Amendment to the Historic Preservation Commission Official Bylaws submitted by Dennis Roberts
- Map for Monitoring Historic Properties
- Monthly Staff Report – November 6, 2024
- CLG Grant Application - Joseph Royer Education Project
- CLG Grant Application – Historic Preservation Website Education Projection

E. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Susan Appel, representative of the Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA) and former Professor of Architectural History, approached the Historic Preservation Commission to speak. She talked about the Gothic Revival Cottage located at 108 North Webber Street. She said that she often referred to the local landmark as an example in her Architectural and American History Architectural classes. She said that it has always been a mystery as to the date when it was constructed. If Mr. Berlocher has new information that ties it a little more precisely to a date, then she would find it useful for her purposes.

F. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

G. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

H. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

I. NEW BUSINESS

Historic Preservation Commission Bylaws – Review of Proposed Changes

Chair Urban opened this item on the agenda. Marcus Ricci, Planner II, stated that Planning staff were directed by the City’s Executive staff to postpone working on the bylaws. Executive staff wants to address the bylaws of all boards and commissions in a consistent fashion.

Mr. Roberts stated that upon reviewing the bylaws, he has brought forward a recommendation for an assertion within the bylaws concerning how agenda items are created by the Commissioners. Mr. Ricci encouraged Mr. Roberts to email the changes to himself and to the Chair, and he would submit them to the Executive staff.

J. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Mr. Shepard mentioned that there is a roll-off dumpster sitting in the driveway of the Royer House located at 701 South Busey Avenue. He believed the house to be vacant. Mr. Ricci stated that the dumpster has been there for a while.

Mr. Ricci talked about the map he handed out indicating proposed landmarks and districts grouped together by color that members of the Historic Preservation could monitor. He reviewed each group noting their location. He suggested that members go by each of the properties in their group and report on any changes to the roofs, windows, signs, and accessory structures. Members could also take photos and post them on the Google Drive. Chair Urban encouraged the members to volunteer to monitor a group of properties.

Mr. Roberts volunteered to monitor the following properties:

- 115 West Main Street – Tiernan’s Block/Masonic Temple
- 120-124 West Main Street – Busey’s Hall/Princess Theater
- 210 South Race Street – Hotel Royer
- 104 North Central Avenue – Halberstadt House
- 402 West Main Street – Canaan Baptist Church
- 108 North Webber Street – Gothic Revival Cottage

Mr. Shepard volunteered to monitor the following properties:

- 305 West High Street – Richards/Latowsky House
- 404 West Illinois Street – Ezekiel Boyden Home
- 710 West Oregon Street – Van Doren House
- 801 West Oregon Street / 701 South Busey Avenue – Joseph Royer Historic District

Ms. O’Donnell volunteered to monitor the following properties:

- 502 West Elm Street – Sutton House
- 504 West Elm Street – Gus Freeman House
- 508 West Elm Street – Bills House
- 312 West Green Street – Lindley House

Mr. Weiss volunteered to monitor the following properties:

- 612 West Green Street – Ricker House
- 1 through 8 Buena Vista Court – Buena Vista Historic District

Chair Urban volunteered to monitor the following properties:

- 1207 South Busey Avenue – Reed/Sutton House
- 601 West Delaware Avenue – DeWolf House
- 801 West Indiana Avenue – J.E. Smith House
- 1404 South Lincoln Avenue – Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority House
- 604 West Pennsylvania Avenue – Colvin House
- 702 West Pennsylvania Avenue – Hieronymus House

Mr. Ricci stated that he would talk with Ms. Holliday and Mr. Hays about monitoring the West Main Street Historic District. He said that he would also put the folders with the applications and historic resource inventory surveys on the Google Drive so the Historic Preservation Commission members could see the characteristics and photographs of each property from the date of becoming a local landmark/district.

K. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Ricci reported on the following:

Items of Interest:

- ***Imagine Urbana* Comprehensive Plan Comments**

Mr. Ricci asked the Commission members to submit their comments as soon as possible on the *Imagine Urbana* portal. City staff will continue to take comments up until they present a draft to the Plan Commission for review and recommendation to City Council. Chair Urban asked that this topic be put on the agenda for the next regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission and encouraged the Commission members to prepare and submit their comments to City staff via the *Imagine Urbana* portal.

- **Historic Preservation Commission Bylaws**

Mr. Ricci stated that the Commission had already discussed this earlier in the meeting.

- **CLG Grant Opportunity**

Mr. Ricci stated that the Commission will discuss this after the staff report is completed.

- **Preservation Plan**

Mr. Ricci proposed that the Historic Preservation Commission start reviewing the Historic Preservation Plan after the Certified Local Grant applications were submitted to the State. Chair Urban requested that staff add this to an agenda as a Study Session item for an upcoming meeting.

- **Preservation Month Activities**

Mr. Ricci mentioned the Mid-Century Modern Home Tour that is still scheduled for May 31, 2025.

Historic Property Activities:

- **Landmarking and Districts**

Mr. Ricci stated that there are no recent inquiries.

- **Certificates of Appropriateness in Progress or Review**

Mr. Ricci stated that there are no significant changes in the status of the Certificates of Appropriateness. He mentioned that improvements to the interior continue to be made at Hotel Royer. The owner and staff have had some discussion about installing two new monument signs and some possible landscaping. He talked about preserving the limestone path that is near the location where the owner wants to install one of the monument signs.

There was an issue with the audio and as a result some discussion was not recorded.

L. STUDY SESSION

CLG Projects Update

Joseph Royer Education Project

Chair Urban opened this item on the agenda. She asked Mr. Roberts to talk about the project application. He summarized the work that he, David Hays, and Ilona Matkovski had done preparing information for the grant application, which included preparing a budget for the costs of printing the brochure once it is updated, gathering and reviewing documents about the intent and the purpose of the Royer District, making an outline and abstract of the project, and submitting his resume to be designated as a professional to submit a grant application. He asked what other information was needed and if staff would be completing the application using the information the Commission members provide.

Chair Urban mentioned that the Certified Local Government Program Guidelines states the items that are needed to be in the grant application. She encouraged the members to put the information they provide in the order shown in the guidelines to make it easier for Mr. Ricci to complete the applications. She said the information looks great, but it just needs to be put in the order recommended by the State. She also asked that they be sure the budget, even though it is an estimate, covers all of the items that they plan on potentially using. She mentioned that during her conversation with Jon Pressley with the State Historic Preservation Office, he had recommended translating the brochure into Spanish as well as French. So, they might want to add an estimate into the budget for the translation. Mr. Ricci added that he wanted to create a template with the application information the State is asking for to help the Commission members write their narratives for their projects.

Mr. Roberts said that Ms. Matkovski had suggested having a permanent display. They would need to ask for permission from the owners. Mr. Ricci stated that they should go ahead and plan that as part of the project, including asking for funds in the budget to cover any expenses, before getting approval. Once the application is approved, then they can ask the property owner(s) for permission to put up the display. If we do not get the owner's approval, then we simply do not do the display.

Chair Urban stated that she feels the Urbana Free Library would be the ideal spot for the display because it is public, and it could complement the opening of the Hotel Royer. She added that she spoke with the President of the Urbana Free Library Board about this, and they expressed interest, but we would need to provide specifications or details if any information or elements related to the Library, since the Library is one of Joseph Royer's creations. Mr. Ricci added that Hotel Royer would be interested in providing a space for a small display as well that could then redirect people to the Urbana Free Library for the full exhibit.

Mr. Roberts stated that, in addition to updating the Royer brochure and making the map, it would be wonderful to have individual rack cards or pamphlets printed that are color-coded to the services that each building provided. Providing these at the display sites would provide more in-depth information about each property. Mr. Ricci wondered if the rack cards could be done in a postcard format, so people could mail them or keep them as art. Mr. Roberts said that this could be included in the project in addition to rack cards. He felt it was an opportune time to provide a rack of postcards regarding Urbana as part of the outreach process. Mr. Weiss noted that Mr. Hays is having audio issues but is listening to this meeting, and Mr. Hays thinks the postcard idea is brilliant. Chair Urban agreed that postcards would be a nice touch for this project.

Historic Preservation Website Education Project

Mr. Weiss talked briefly about the website education project that he and Ms. Holliday worked on. He stated that the largest unknown is the budget because they do not know how much the cost would be for a full-time intern for the summer at the City of Urbana. Chair Urban said that Mr. Ricci could help in getting the estimated cost for an intern.

He went on to say that knowing that the Commission will be working on updating the Historic Preservation Plan in the next year will be like getting the scaffolding in place to convey information in a contemporary manner whether it is education or otherwise. This is kind of the spirit of the grant application. Chair Urban noted that Mr. Pressley was interested in the website update and in the elements that were added. She said that she appreciated that they added the element related to homeowners and realtors. Mr. Weiss stated that it all orbits the same idea which is to improve how we convey information.

Chair Urban stated that when speaking with Mr. Pressley, he recommended doing one or two projects, so the Commission decided to do these two projects. He also recommended holding off on submitting a grant application for updating the Historic Preservation Plan until the City is ready to move forward with the process. She mentioned that the Commission will hold Study Sessions to review the Historic Preservation Plan to prepare for the next grant cycle, which will be in 2025.

Mr. Ricci asked that the Commission members get him the project information by November 13, 2024 so he has time to complete the grant applications.

M. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There was none.

November 6, 2024

N. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Urban adjourned the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marcus Ricci". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Marcus Ricci, AICP
Historic Preservation Commission Secretary