

## MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

### URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**DATE:** June 7, 2023

**APPROVED**

**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.

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

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**MEMBERS ATTENDING:** David Hays, Laura O'Donnell, Dennis Roberts, Angela Urban, Andrew Weiss

**MEMBERS EXCUSED** Alice Novak, Trent Shepard

**STAFF PRESENT** Marcus Ricci, Planner II; Lily Wilcock, Planner II

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Susan Appel, Carlton Bruett, Sheena Bruett

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#### 1. CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

In the absence of Chair Novak, Vice-Chair Hays called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

#### 2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

#### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 1, 2023, regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission were presented for approval. Ms. Urban moved to approve the March 1, 2023, minutes as presented. Ms. O'Donnell seconded the motion. Mr. Hays noted a correction to the spelling of his last name in the minutes. The motion to approve as amended was approved by unanimous voice vote.

#### 4. PUBLIC INPUT

##### **Email from Brian Adams regarding the minutes of the November 2, 2022 meeting**

Mr. Roberts commented that Mr. Adams email corrects the statement in the minutes of the November 2, 2022 meeting of the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission that says, "...*what is it about the City of Urbana that we like that is unique. Every other community in this region that the Boneyard Creek runs through has completed beautification improvements to connect the creek to their community. The City of Urbana is the only town that has not done so yet.*" Mr. Roberts noted that in his email, Mr. Adams talks about the improvements made in the Boneyard Beautification Project by the City between 2006 and 2014. Mr. Roberts clarified that his intent at the November 2,

2022 meeting was to point out that the City of Urbana is the only entity that has not had a formal plan of study of the Boneyard Creek since 1978. Therefore, he encouraged the City to consider adopting a plan that connects Downtown Urbana to the University of Illinois campus through a shared use parkway/bicycle path.

## **5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

## **6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was none.

## **7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**HP-2023-L-01 – A request by Reverend B.J. Tatum, on behalf of the Canaan Baptist Church, to designate the Canaan Missionary Baptist Church at 402 West Main Street as a local historic landmark.**

Acting Chair Hays opened the public hearing for Case No. HP-2023-L-01. Marcus Ricci, Planner II, reviewed the written staff report. He reviewed the criteria from Section XII-5.C of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance and stated that staff recommends a finding that the Church qualifies under criteria a, c, d, and e. He reviewed the options of the Historic Preservation Commission and presented staff's recommendation for approval.

Acting Chair Hays asked if any member of the Historic Preservation Commission had questions for City staff.

Ms. Urban commented that she noticed several words were underlined in criterion a indicating significant value. She suggested that "economic" and "educational" should be underlined as well. She added that Reverend Tatum opening the school and the fact that students' test scores ranked in the top 97<sup>th</sup> percentile nation-wide was significant. She added that opening a credit union for low-interest loans was also very significant.

Mr. Roberts mentioned that he assisted Reverend Tatum in completing the landmark application, and he noted a correction in the spelling of Brian Adams' name. Ms. O'Donnell noticed an error with the address being listed as 710 West Oregon, when in fact, it should say 402 West Main Street.

Mr. Hays stated that the staff memo says that the Prairie style was influenced by Art Deco; however, it is the opposite. The Prairie style begins circa 1900, and what we have come to call "Art Deco" began a couple of decades later. The Art Deco features of the proposed building are really advanced features before Art Deco came about. For this to be a style of a church in a community like ours says a lot. It doesn't look like any other building let alone any other church. It is something extremely progressive in its genesis.

Mr. Ricci asked if Mr. Hays saw any Art Deco features in the building. Mr. Hays replied that Art Deco meant many different things and was not coined until 1968. The church's design anticipates

some dimensions of what we would come to call “Art Deco” but also Prairie style. It was such a break from what Royer was doing.

Ms. O’Donnell stated that she was surprised that the Church is a Royer building. Mr. Roberts agreed two of the other churches that Royer designed were in English country style.

With no further questions for City staff, Acting Chair Hays opened the public hearing for input from the audience.

Carlton Bruett approached the Historic Preservation Commission to speak on behalf of the Church. He thanked Mr. Roberts and Mr. Ricci for the work they did on completing and processing the application. He stated that the congregation realizes the historical and architectural significance of the church building. They have never tried to change it in any way and recognize it as a landmark. He said that they are grateful to the Historic Preservation Commission for considering their landmark nomination.

Mr. Roberts and Mr. Ricci talked about the materials that were used in construction of the church and showed additional photos of Reverend Tatum and the programs the Church offers.

Susan Appel approached the Commission to speak in favor of the proposed landmark nomination. She mentioned that she represented the Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA). She stated that they support the landmark application.

Acting Chair Hays read Exhibit E (Public Comments), which is an email from Darrel Foste in support of the landmark nomination.

With no further input from the audience, Acting Chair Hays closed the public input portion of the hearing and opened it for Commission discussion and/or motion(s).

Mr. Roberts stated that he was honored to work with Reverend Tatum on the application. He felt it is important for the Commission members to help and encourage new nominations to come forward. He talked about seeking grants for the church in the future. He recused himself from the case because he assisted the applicant in completing the landmark nomination application.

Mr. Hays stated that he appreciated the congregation respecting the building. This is a great example of how you can have a historic building and make phenomenal use of it.

Ms. Urbana stated that she appreciated learning more about the Church and hopes the community takes notice and sees the beauty of the space and what the Church has done for the community.

Ms. O’Donnell moved that the Historic Preservation Commission find that Canaan Missionary Baptist Church meets the criteria for designation as a local landmark and approves the application to designate the property as a local landmark as indicated in the written staff report. Mr. Weiss seconded the motion.

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Ms. O'Donnell	-	Yes	Ms. Urban	-	Yes
Mr. Weiss	-	Yes	Mr. Hays	-	Yes

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

There was none.

## **9. MONITORING OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

There was none.

## **10. STAFF REPORT**

Mr. Ricci reported on the following:

- R-7 Adaptive Reuse Project – An R-7 Text Amendment was approved by City Council in May of 2022. The City received a project request for 606 West Ohio Street to convert the existing building into an apartment building. The Historic Preservation Commission Chair and the Zoning Administrator reviewed the request and approved the plans.
- Bills House – It appears that the owner repaired the stair railings rather than replacing them.

## **11. STUDY SESSION**

There was none.

## **12. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Lily Wilcock, Planner II, announced some engagement events for the Comprehensive Plan update.
- Ms. Urban mentioned the upcoming Walking Tour of Buena Vista Court on June 17, 2023 at 12:30 pm.

## **13. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Hays adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Submitted,



Marcus Ricci, AICP

Historic Preservation Commission Recording Secretary