

MINUTES
Historic Preservation Commission
March 5, 2020
City Hall, 100 W. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL

1) Call to Order

L. Solak, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

2) Roll Call/Attendance

The following Commission members were present, Hamilton Hale, Nancy Haskins, Diana Kenney, Lisa Solak, Bob Wyman, and Jim Wyman. Staff member Elizabeth Maxwell was present.

3) Public Comment

None.

4) Approval of Minutes of the February 6, 2020 Regular Meeting

D. Kenney made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 6, 2020 regular meeting. H. Hale seconded the motion. All members voted aye. Motion passed.

5) Certificate of Appropriateness – 26N. Williams – Raue Center for the Arts

Richard Kuranda and Penny Hughes were present to represent the petition. Mr. Kuranda presented a packet illustrating several other theaters with electronic signs. In Downtown St. Charles the Arcada, their sister theater, has an electronic sign. Mr. Kuranda also stated that the sides of the marquee have already been amended since the original El Tovar Theater. He wants the theater to continue to be successful and their programming has increased and it is difficult to keep up with changing the letters. Changing the manual copy sign is difficult and dangerous. They have had staff fall from ladders and letters fall from the sign. This new change would just be the sides not the entire marquee.

D. Kenney read a letter from the Downtown Association, which voted to object to the request. She had asked about the ownership. Mr. Kuranda said they pay rent to Home State Bank, which is the lease holder and the Civic Center Authority owns the property. He was not sure what the Civic Center Authority's role is when requesting changes. D. Kenney also noted that Electronic Message Center signs are not permitted in the downtown and it could set a precedent for other businesses. This type of sign does not seem appropriate due to the historic character of the area.

Penny Hughes explained what the sign would look like and that the amber lights would be similar to the color of the perimeter bulbs. She also noted this sign has limited technology and is not proposed to do full video. Having a white background with black letters is much more difficult because to produce the white light all three LED colors need to illuminate so the sign burns out much faster. H. Hale asked if the font style could be changes to make it look more historic. Ms. Hughes answered yes. J. Wyman noted that most communities do not allow modern technology on historic buildings. H. Hale said the Miller, in Woodstock, looks like Las Vegas and it is really not appropriate.

Mr. Kuranda said the Raue has to scrape for funding even with the annual grant from the City. They do 300 shows a year and want to be able to quickly change the sign to reflect the changing shows. He said the funds for this sign are being donated.

B. Wyman asked what technology exists for manual copy signs. Ms. Hughes said not much, it is the same old technology of plastic letters and a pole with a suction cup. The letters freeze in the winter and they break, moving them has become very difficult. The commission wondered if the sign could be redesigned to look more historic.

J. Wyman noted that his uncle Robert Knox worked with Behrns, the architect of record for the El Tovar theater, and there is no mention of him, he would like him recognized somehow. He appreciated the concern about maintenance, and understood the need for newer more practical technology.

J. Wyman made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness. The motion failed due to a lack of a second. D. Kenney made a motion to deny the Certificate of Appropriateness. H. Hale seconded the motion. On roll call H. Hale, N. Haskins, D. Kenney, L. Solak and B. Wyman voted yes. J. Wyman voted no. The motion passed and the request was denied. Staff noted that they are able to come back and appeal the decision.

7) 2020 Trolley Tour Discussion

The commission members discussed their research so far. L. Solak mentioned that while researching she found some interesting information about the dairy and house. J. Wyman suggested researching more about the families that lived in the homes to see if any interesting stories pop up. Staff will get the invoice sent over to the trolley company to reserve the trolleys. The commission will need to get advertisers.

8) Member Inquiries and Reports

D. Kenney provided details on the Historical Society's event. While the room displays are going on, doing research will be more difficult since some areas are blocked off. She hopes everyone can come to the event to see the historic information about the old schools.

B. Wyman asked about demolition. He noted that they have not plaqued a house in a long time. He is concerned with the last piece of the Leonard Hotel the Franz's house. B. Wyman would like to contact the family about plaquing the house. D. Kenney said the wife has dementia and she is not sure if she is still at the house or if the kids are caring for her. She suggested sending a letter with some good background on the commission and the benefits of plaquing.

7) Adjournment

There being no further business, J. Wyman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. D. Kenney seconded the motion. All members present voted aye. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.