

MINUTES
Historic Preservation Commission
December 2, 2021
City Hall, 100 W. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL

1) Call to Order

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

2) Roll Call/Attendance

The following Commission members were present, Nancy Haskins, Diana Kenney Brittany Niequist, Lisa Solak, Bob Wyman and Jim Wyman. Hamilton Hale and Judi Halter was absent. Community Development Director Kathryn Cowlin was present for staff.

3) Public Comment

None

4) Approval of Minutes of the November 4, 2021 Regular Meeting

J. Wyman made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 4, 2021 regular meeting as presented. B. Niequist seconded the motion. Members Haskins, Niequist, Solak, B. Wyman and J. Wyman voted aye. Member Kenney abstained. Motion passed.

5) 178 S. Heather Drive Demolition

B. Wyman stated he went by the home and it is a 1950 era home. The owner wishes to take it down and construct two new homes. There were no issues raised by the commission.

6) Website Handouts

B. Wyman started by reviewing the application for historic preservation/designation and suggested streamlining it. K. Cowlin reviewed that when an application is submitted, city staff creates a summary report for the Commission to review and discuss at their meeting. The recommendation from the Commission goes to the City Council for review and approval. B. Wyman reviewed the legal requirements for landmarking a property and verified that some of the language in the application is required by the City Code. D. Kenney added that the language in the application and handout could be more friendly and that could help homeowners understand the process.

B. Niequist stated she printed all of the handouts and applications out to read through. There are some discrepancies that need to be corrected. She will share those notes with city staff. The guidelines for plaquing a property should also be updated to reflect how people can research the history of the property, it is outdated. D. Kenney stated that would be great and could help guide the change and squash the fears of homeowners on the landmark status. B. Niequist added it would be helpful to have FAQs.

There was a suggestion to invite interested property owners to a HPC meeting in 2022. This meeting could be dedicated to discussing and going over FAQs. All members agreed this would be a great opportunity to educate the public on landmarking property. There could be an advertisement in the city newsletter and posted on social media. L. Solak suggested the March meeting.

There was a discussion on the \$500 grant and if more money could go to homeowners. B. Niequist asked if a special one-time grant for up to \$5,000 for bigger exterior projects would be possible. B. Wyman asked about reducing property taxes. D. Kenney noted that a property would have to be on the National Register to qualify for tax credits and that this Commission is the only one that even gives a grant. The money comes from the funds generated by the Trolley Tour fundraiser. Other communities' organizations only educate about historic preservation, not incentivizing it. There have not been many grant applications recently, either, so should those funds be spent on other projects like the headstone project? B. Niequist asked if a project could apply for a grant over a number of years. D. Kenney said yes and that has been done in the past. B. Wyman asked if the city would kick in more funds. K. Cowlin shared the city has been reducing budgets, not increasing them during the pandemic. L. Solak suggested looking at other organizations for grants for home improvement projects like McHenry County, HUD or Illinois Historical Society.

D. Kenney said you first need to get people interested in landmarking a property. The updating of the application, guidelines and creating a FAQ sheet would be great. K. Cowlin added staff will take a look at the language on the website and a possible intern project could be creating a StoryMap of the landmarked properties, which would be more interactive than the current PDFs.

7) 2021 Projects Lake Avenue Cemetery and Veteran's Research Book

D. Kenney started by asking about the Dropbox. B. Niequist provided an update on the Dropbox and how the draft research articles are supposed to go through the folders. J. Wyman is editing grammar, B. Niequist is reviewing the research provided and comparing it to the article. Your back-up research needs to be saved in a folder for the Palmer House. D. Kenney can help get research to the Palmer House so the documents can be used for future projects.

8) Member Inquiries and Reports

D. Kenney shared she found extra trolley tour books and if the commissioners want one to let us know. The 2022 Historical Society Calendars are also available. There will be an open house December 17th from 4-7pm to celebrate a German Holiday Christmas and information on Crystal Lake's sister city.

B. Niequist asked if the 1920s display was still up at the Palmer House, D. Kenney shared it has been taken down.

B. Niequist shared it will be the Dole Mansion's 100th anniversary for the Crystal Lake Country Club portion of the building. D. Kenney stated the addition was added in 1926. B. Wyman suggested it should be landmarked like the house portion of the Dole. D. Kenney did not feel there was any architectural significance for the addition. B. Wyman added the new windows are a great improvement.

9) Adjournment

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