

MINUTES
Historic Preservation Commission
September 5, 2024
City Hall, 100 W. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL

1) Call to Order

B. Niequist called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

2) Roll Call/Attendance

The following Commission members were present: Zach Benkert, Judi Halter, Nancy Haskins, Bob Kosin, Brittany Niequist, and Madison Sommerfield. Ana Freund and Bob Wyman were absent. City Planner, Elizabeth Maxwell, was present for staff.

3) Public Comment

Jim Heisler and Joy Neal, Executive Director of Main Street were in the audience.

4) Approval of Minutes of the August 1, 2024 Regular Meeting

B. Kosin made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 1, 2024 meeting. J. Halter seconded the motion. On voice vote all voted aye. Motion passed.

5) 210 McHenry Avenue – St. Mary Episcopal Church Demolition

B. Niequist said that everyone is familiar with the Gates House. Although the building is not landmarked the City has established a process where demolition permits can be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission. She noted that alarm bells went off seeing the demolition of this structure. She stated about half of all the previous trolley tours featured this structure as it is so significant to Crystal Lake's history. She was hoping the church could have a conversation about the structural assessment of the structure.

Reverend Scott Zaucha and Cate Williams, treasure, were present to represent the request. Mr. Zaucha said he just started with the church in 2022. He noted they have had difficult conversations about the Tarpley House. They used it recently for recovery meetings. They found mold, wiring and water issues. They closed it in October of 2023. They have can continue their mission without the building. They do not have the resources to upgrade or protect the building.

Ms. Williams said the church did a building exploration. The Tarpley House is not good for Sunday school. She noted there is extensive damage to the building from neglect. They have already spent \$28,000 to remediate the asbestos. They would need to spend another \$35,000-40,000 in remediation to repair the building as safety and finances are concerns.

Mr. Zaucha said they have made many attempts to have someone buy it. In 1982 when they did the wing addition they contemplated knocking this building down. There are only 53 families as part of the church. They want to focus on their mission.

B. Niequist said she understands the costs and she has personally worked to secure grants for other buildings. She wants the church to pause and work with them on securing funding and fundraising to help save the building. She explained the Crystal Lake Park District barn project

and their current feasibility study. She said the people in the community will give. She asked what will go there.

Mr. Zaucha said they just want to clear the space and make it grass. The cost of insurance on the abandoned building is expensive. There is a big difference in cost on renovation and demolition. They are looking to spend over 1 million dollars in renovation to save the building.

Mr. Jim Heisler asked about the square footage. Mr. Zaucha said it is about 2500 square feet.

Mr. Kosin asked about the timeline. He wondered what the urgency was if nothing is planned but grass. He wanted to reach out to people to help save the building. Mr. Zaucha said they have done a lot of behind the scenes discussions. Ms. Williams said they were unaware that the Historic Preservation Commission wanted a detailed presentation.

B. Niequist said this is what the commission does. She said Landmark Illinois can do a free top to bottom assessment. Ms. Williams said they do not have the resources to do the renovation nor upkeep the building even if the 1 million dollars came to them. B. Niequist asked if they ever thought about selling the building. On the adjacent property the owner was able to save the historic buildings and put apartments into them. Mr. Zaucha said they reached out to Sacred Hearts, but the building is hard to reuse since it is in the middle of the site.

M. Sommerfield asked if the commission can partner with the church on finding resources to save, renovate and reuse the space.

B. Niequist said this is the oldest structure by this well known architect. There are only a handful of cobblestones buildings left. If they plan to demo the building is there any ability to salvage these bricks and stone. Ms. Williams said they plan to fill in the hole of the foundation with the building materials.

Mr. Zaucha said the Bishop is planning to come out September 29th to pray at the building and release it from its service. Mr. Kosin said the Bishop just came out to rechristen the St. Thomas restoration. Mr. Zaucha said for them to put something in writing to him that he can take back to the board.

B. Niequist thanked them for coming and said they would be moving on to the next item.

6) Trolley Tour 2024 Recap

B. Kosin asked Ms. Neal about marketing ideas. She said everyone loves the QR code about the building history walk around Downtown.

B. Niequist said she has talked to a company about a walking tour app. They can sell the app for download and get sponsors to help off-set the cost. They could do a Downtown walking tour. Ms. Neal suggested partnering with Naturally McHenry County as they have an app for similar events.

B. Niequist said they also need to do a traditional trolley tour. She suggested pre 1900 buildings. She feels like lots of these will start popping up on demo requests so to highlight and research them know would be beneficial. They can raise awareness as education is part of their mission.

She wanted to have a post celebration too, not just get off the trolley and leave. Ms. Neal said the Raue House could be used for the gathering. B. Niequist said to think about some buildings for the tour.

7) Other Business

a) America's 250th anniversary in 2026

B. Niequist said the country is celebrating 250 years and it would be great if they could plan a simple recognition for this event. She said everyone's homework is to think of a nice simple way to recognize this history.

b) Hill Park Barn update

Mr. Heisler said the feasibility study for the barn was not completed, so it was moved to the September 19th meeting of the Park District board. He asked everyone to come and speak in support of keeping the barn.

c) Landmark process and hot to help property owners

B. Niequist said they can discuss this at the next meeting, as this meeting is running long.

d) Crystal Lake Train Depot update

B. Kosin said the application is still down state with the State for review. He found that the southeast corner of the waiting room is all original as it existing 110 years ago when Calvin Coolidge walked through the station.

12) Member Inquiries and Reports

Mr. Kosin asked about the e bond from the time capsule.

13) Adjournment

There being no further business, B. Kosin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. M. Sommerfield seconded the motion. On voice vote, all members voted aye. The meeting adjourned at 4:12 p.m.