

MINUTES
Historic Preservation Commission
October 2, 2014
City Hall, 100 w. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL

1) Call to Order

LeeAnn Atwood, chairman, called meeting to order at 7:30pm.

2) Roll Call/Attendance

The following Commission members were present: Brice Alt, LeeAnn Atwood, Diana Kenney, Brent Hollenberg, Ryan Pettit, Sarah Jackowiak, Bob Wyman and Lisa Solak. Member Michelle Rozovics was absent. Staff member Kathryn Cowlin was present.

3) Public Comment

No public comment.

4) Approval of Minutes of the September 4, 2014 Regular Meeting

D. Kenney made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 4, 2014 regular meeting.
B. Alt seconded the motion. On voice vote all members voted aye. Motion passed.

5) Certificate of Appropriateness- 50 Caroline – Bertram House

Petitioner Harold Alt was present and gave a description of his history with the property. Harold Alt stated that he buys real estate and flips them, but also holds onto a lot of properties. His intent is to preserve the garage at 50 Caroline. The pictures don't show the structural issues of the garage, adding 7,000lbs of trusses / building material would be needed to add a roof to the structure. The original roof was destroyed several years ago (maybe a fire?), the City made the owner remove the roof. He had a structural engineer (Gillespie Engineering) inspect the garage and the engineer stated that the building material wasn't made to be used in the way it is currently being used. The structure doesn't have the support it needs to add a roof and the structure would collapse from the added load. In the opinion of the engineer, the building could not be saved. This garage is a liability issue in the opinion of the petitioner. According to the petitioner, Building Commissioner Mike Magnussen also looked at the property and stated that a structural engineer would have to sign off on the plan to add a roof in order for the permits to be approved. The patent of the terra cotta blocks is from 1897, and the petitioner would like to save the blocks and use them decoratively on a new structure or donate the blocks to the city. He is open to any solution except spending the money to build a new roof on the current structure.

B. Alt stated that the blocks can be used similar to how bricks are used on homes today, as a veneer. The petitioner could build a structure inside of the blocks and secure them to the structure.

The petitioner didn't think this was a good idea, the size of the garage is already small and building a structure inside of the current footprint would decrease the size even more. Also there are too many damaged blocks to keep the structure the size it is currently.

D. Kenney gave a brief history of the site. The original garage was actually a hobby shed. The owner liked to practice taxidermy in his spare time and used that structure as his work space. The Sanborn Maps show the structure on the property going back to 1929-1936. On the 1936 maps the structure is identified as tile/single car garage. The roof that was removed was a hip roof and it was removed before the 2011 landmark designation. The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency has seen the terra cotta blocks used elsewhere in the state but it is not a typical building material. Prior owner George Brian's mother did have an accident involving the garage, she hit the wall with her vehicle and that is why one of the walls was so structurally unsound. George Brian really wanted to have the garage landmarked to preserve the building material and that is why it was landmarked in addition to the principal structure. D. Kenney agrees that the material should be incorporated as a veneer for a new outbuilding. Also, D. Kenney would like to know if the property is for sale still.

Petitioner stated that the property is no longer on the market, they are going to lease the house to a handyman. They have been improving the interior of the house, had to use lots of KILLZ to remove the smoky scent and fix some of the plaster walls. The home also has low voltage electricity, which the owner finds fascinating. The petitioner also stated that he doesn't plan on working on the garage until the spring so there is time for the Commission and himself to come to an agreement about how to move forward with preserving the terra cotta blocks.

D. Kenney stated that she has pictures of the property from the 1950/60s and would be willing to show them to the petitioner. Also, D. Kenney admitted that she is emotional about this property, but finds comfort in knowing the petitioner has good intentions and is willing to work with the Commission on the garage issue.

B. Wyman stated that the blocks look very delicate and should be taken down with extreme care.

The petitioner stated that the process of removing the blocks will be quite the understanding and that the mortar is stuck to the blocks.

B. Alt suggested that the petitioner get in contact with an architect that worked on the Clif Hun house. B. Alt will try to contact the architect.

The Commission would like to see end plans for the property, they don't feel comfortable agreeing to a demolition unless there are agreed upon plans for incorporating the terra cotta blocks into a new structure. The Commission would also like to get information from the City Attorney about whether the landmark status could be transferred to the blocks if they were used on a new structure.

The petitioner asked if he could contact the members of the Commission to go over plans before the next meeting.

D. Kenney stated that could be a violation of the open meetings act and that the petitioner should contact Elizabeth Maxwell with any questions.

L. Atwood tabled the Certificate of Appropriateness and would like the petitioner to provide plans for how the blocks would be removed and reused.

6) Trolley Tour

B. Alt brought the books from prior tours. Really likes the idea of going to new properties or focusing on different topics if they go to the high school again. L. Atwood suggested meeting early on a Saturday morning. The Commission decided to drive around and check out houses on October 11 at 7am and will meet at Pops Corn Crib.

7) Community Education and Outreach funding

a) Tommy Award

The Commission wasn't ready to discuss this topic yet. They will think it over.

b) Historical Markers

R. Pettit showed the Commission members the websites with some examples and agreed to contact Interpretive Graphics to get some pricing and next step suggestions. L. Atwood suggested everyone think of some content and locations for the first marker. Most of the members agreed that downtown was a good place to start.

8) Member Inquiries and Reports

D. Kenney reminded everyone that the Historic Society will be hosting their annual Dearly Departed event on October 17/18. The story this year is about the case of the burned body from 1879. Also, tuck pointing at the Colonial Palmer House has started and the bids are out for the ramp. The chimneys on the building were redone in the 1970/80s and will have to be redone again. The hope is to add the elaboration that was on the original chimneys on the west side.

9) Adjournment

There being no further business, L. Atwood made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45pm.
B. Wyman seconded the motion. On voice vote, all members voted aye.