

APPROVED 9/16/15

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
AND
AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION
PUBLIC WORKS – LUNCH ROOM
5101 WALNUT AVENUE

SEPTEMBER 2, 2015, 6:30 P.M.

Chairman Matthies and Chairman Behm called the September 2, 2015 meeting of the Architectural Design Review Board and AdHoc Subcommittee on Historic Preservation meetings to order at 6:35 p.m. and asked for a roll call:

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

PRESENT: Chairman Matthies, Members Mrs. Acks, Mr. Casey, Mr. Riemer

ABSENT: Mr. Davenport, Mr. Larson, Ms. Englander

AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

PRESENT: Chairman Behm, Members Mr. Birch, Ms. Gassen, Mr. Geocariss, Mr. Jarosz, Mr. Leitschuh, Mr. Zimolzak

STAFF: Deputy Village Manager Mike Baker and Planning Manager Stan Popovich

VISITORS: Mr. Ross Johnson, 5221 Main St., Downers Grove; Chris and Patty Patterson, 4502 Prince St., Downers Grove; John and Kathy Hebert, 802 Maple Ave., Downers Grove; Don Richards, 4735 Main St., Downers Grove; Ms. Kathy Nybo, 5253 Blodgett, Downers Grove; Ms. Christine Martin, 701 Maple Ave., Downers Grove; Irene Hogstrom, Downers Grove; Ms. Melissa Nassen, 900 59th St., Downers Grove; Ms. Phyllis Serbou, 1905 Curtiss, Downers Grove; Mr. Matthew Maher, 819 Maple, Downers Grove; Mr. Scott Lazar, 808 Maple Ave., Downers Grove; Ms. Hilary Denk, 433 Wilson St., Downers Grove; Charlotte and Byron Holtzen, 5226 Carpenter St., Downers Grove

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AD-HOC SUBCOMMITTEE – AUGUST 19, 2015

THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 19, 2015 AD-HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION MEETING WERE APPROVED ON MOTION BY MR. BIRCH, SECONDED BY MS. GASSEN. ROLL CALL:

**AYE: MR. BIRCH, MS. GASSEN, MR. GEOCARIS, MR. LEITSCHUH,
MR. ZIMOLZAK, CHAIRMAN BEHM**

NAY: NONE

ABSTAIN: MR. JAROSZ

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 6-0-1

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – ADRB – AUGUST 19, 2015

THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 19, 2015 ADRB MEETING WERE APPROVED ON MOTION BY MR. CASEY, SECONDED BY MR. RIEMER. ROLL CALL:

AYE: MR. CASEY, MR. RIEMER, CHAIRMAN MATTHIES

NAY: NONE

ABSTAIN: MRS. ACKS

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 3-0-1

REVIEW AND SUMMARY OF AUGUST 5th and 19TH MEETINGS

Chairman Matthies summarized that from the two previous meetings it appears the groups have consensus on some points yet are far apart on other points. Tonight's meeting would focus on finding those points that the two groups have consensus on in order to move forward and allow staff to begin drafting its preliminary ordinance for village council. He briefly reminded members on the stipulations for the Open Meetings Act. Chairman Behm also asked the public to hold their comments to five minutes per person in order to conduct the meeting in a timely manner.

PROPERTY OWNER SURVEY DISCUSSION

Planning Manager Stan Popovich discussed the background of the previous historic building survey completed in 2013 which covered four areas of the village and included 865 properties of which 67 were identified as being significant. He noted the boards were tasked with surveying these properties. Of the 36 surveys that were returned with responses, there was a 50/50 split where half of the responders were not aware that the village had a historic preservation ordinance while the other half did. A quick overview of the survey questions followed, along with their results. Given the figures from this survey, Mr. Popovich summarized that four areas from the survey stood out: 1) too many regulations; 2) residents not understanding the process; 3) residents not understanding the ordinance; and 4) the financial costs involved. However, what was not addressed in the survey data, Mr. Popovich pointed out, were those individuals that were either aware they were eligible or those four homeowners whom would consider landmarking and why they did not apply or hold off.

Staff was asked to explain the split between residential and commercial structures and the reason for numerous PIN numbers or duplicated addresses. Chairman Behm then asked members to provide the comments they received on their surveys for their assigned areas. Mr. Zimolzak noted in the commercial area, the surveyed individuals did not want any other ordinance that would affect them, except to have some other protection, possibly grandfathered in or deal with sign-related issues. One member said one of the surveyed owners was representing three individuals in neighboring towns fighting their own historic districts. Clarifying the cost concern, one member said it was a matter of a compliance cost while Mr. Geocarlis noted the application fee was a concern for the church in his survey area. Details followed regarding the

First Baptist Church and its changes over the years as well as a residential home that changed over the years.

Another issue that was raised by the members was the survey itself. For instance, Ms. Gassen's surveyed individuals questioned why someone else's home was considered significant and theirs was not; that in speaking to property owners, in general, they did not know they could landmark their home; and misunderstandings of what was contained in the ordinance existed. Similarly, there were comments that there was confusion between the landmark ordinance and the honorarium (plaque) from the Downers Grove Historical Preservation. Mr. Geocariss mentioned that other homeowners, who were, for example, third owners of a home and took much pride and effort in maintaining their home, would consider landmarking with more information. Mr. Casey shared that some of the owners did not want to attract attention to their home but thought it was great their home was considered significant, while another homeowner expressed interest in landmarking his/her home but did not have knowledge about the ordinance nor know that it even existed. A common theme that surfaced, as mentioned by Mr. Riemer, was the fact that many owners did not want something imposed upon them that they did not want and believed the process should be voluntary. Many residents (some on Prince) did not like the restrictions and saw no benefit to the process.

Mr. Jarosz summarized what he found with his five homes – two were knocked down for “McMansions”, one he was unable to contact the homeowner, one owner was surprised his home was in the survey, and the last owner at Prairie/Linscott appeared very proud of his home, was interested in landmarking it, but said if he sold his home he would want his home to remain as is. Chairman Behm commented on the very fine home the Pattersons owned (whom were present at the meeting). The status of the two remaining homes followed along with the pastor's response from Gloria Dei Church, which was very positive and whom wanted to learn more about the program. Regarding Downers Grove North High School, Chairman Behm said the superintendent expressed interest, suggesting that the matter could go to the school board for discussion. He encouraged the village to follow up with those two commercial properties and reiterated that education and more information needed to get out to the public.

Mr. Patterson, 4502 Prince Street, spoke and stated he was not aware of the survey nor his home's significance; however, he was interested in obtaining more information about the process, the benefits, any restrictions and have the home remain as is, if sold. His concern was if it was worth to invest in new windows or would the home become a tear-down. He commented he visited the village's web site and tried downloading information but it was too cumbersome.

Chairman Matthies then questioned whether the facades on buildings could be designated as historic versus entire buildings – citing the southern facade of the North High School. He asked if that could be researched.

Mr. Zimolzak noted an easy-to-read educational pamphlet would have to be instrumental in getting the message out to the public and contain information such as what tax savings a homeowner might expect in a hypothetical situation. Also, it was pointed out that of the survey conducted between the two committees, 4 out of 18 homeowners were interested in landmarking their homes, which was 22%, noting that if more of the public was aware of the process, the landmark designation would “fall into line” along with staff providing assistance to move the owners forward. Further discussion followed. Mr. Birch reiterated that regulation, education and staff support was key to the effectiveness of the entire effort.

One member felt that continued conversation with those owners who expressed interest in landmarking should continue, building on that momentum versus waiting for the village to decide on its preservation ordinance. Comments followed that, most likely, home owners would wait for the village to complete the ordinance review process.

Mr. Jarosz confirmed with staff that if a landmarked property was sold the landmark status would carry over. Staff confirmed same and stated it was recorded with the county. However, Mr. Popovich also clarified that any new owner would have to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness and go before the ADRB to obtain a demolition. Adding to the comments, Chairman Behm explained that an easement could be created and given to a third party, such as the Historic Illinois, who would then hold the protected easement and would have to agree to any major change or demolition to the structure. As to any punitive process involved, Mr. Popovich explained that most likely the village would issue fines which would have to be determined through discussions with legal counsel.

Chairman Matthies pointed out what he and Mr. Davenport discussed – that education and outreach to the public were key and the survey that was taken by both committees reflected same. However, some surprises that did arise when members were giving the survey to the residents was that some residents indicated they knew the ordinance very well but in further conversation, it became apparent they did not. Some asked what were the benefits. Mr. Jarosz suggested that when the new owners of the 67 identified significant properties move in to send them a letter welcoming them into their landmarked home; however, Chairman Behm believed a face to face meeting with them would be more beneficial. Ms. Gassen was curious as to how those owners who went through the Centennial Homes process would answer the survey.

Mr. Popovich then proceeded to discuss the village's CLG status and the update he received from IHPA (Illinois Historic Preservation Agency) regarding the discussions taking place at the village regarding preservation. He told the two committees that if the IHPA had any concerns about ordinance changes it would follow up with the National Park Service. As to obtaining grants, the Village is eligible to receive grant funds and in the past has partnered with non-profits for assistance. He confirmed grants were available and the ADRB could apply for grants in October, which Chairman Matthies confirmed and stated should be part of this groups' recommendations.

Regarding last comments about the survey, Chairman Behm believed the original survey and website needed to be updated with accurate information. Mr. Popovich asked that if members spoke to the owners they surveyed and their information was inaccurate for some reason, to contact him to update it. Mr. Geocar is then questioned a resident's comment on page 7 of the survey, stating it related to the culture of the community and, as a result, he believed a more tempered ordinance, versus aggressive ordinance, should be considered.

(The two committees took a five minute break at 7:30 p.m. and reconvened at 7:35 p.m.)

DOWNERS GROVE – KEY POLICY DIRECTION DISCUSSION

Chairman Matthies asked to focus on a few topics to reach a consensus in order to direct staff. Of note, he confirmed with both committees that they were of the consensus for removing the \$400 application fee for landmarking. However, in order to cover administrative costs, he

recalled there was discussion about increasing the demolition fee. Staff also explained how the \$400 application fee was determined initially. Dialog then continued that it was not up to the two committees to determine the actual fee amounts and where they should come from. Instead, staff, through this groups' recommendation, would determine the actual fees to be eliminated, i.e., demolition or permitting fees on renovations, and forward that recommendation to the village council, once the two groups reviewed staff's draft ordinance. Ms. Gassen also recommended removing the COA fees in addition to the application fee, but others agreed it would be better to waive all fees associated with the preservation ordinance.

Other ideas were voiced, including that a resident should not need to obtain a COA as part of the landmark status if the resident did not need a permit initially, i.e., primarily for maintenance items: landscaping, exterior painting, repairing roof shingles, etc. Members supported that recommendation. Windows were then discussed with staff differentiating between window replacements that were similar in size needing no permit versus windows being replaced of not similar size requiring a permit. Members then discussed the idea of reducing the COA requirements on some of the smaller items and items not seen from the street. The groups concurred on not requiring a COA for items not visible from a street. Due to a dialog about windows and siding and their importance, Chairman Matthies recommended discussing these two topics in the future. Members concurred.

Returning to the education goal, the two groups agreed that the village should apply for a grant or have staff seek a non-profit entity to partner with that could educate the public about the village's historic preservation ordinance. The two groups agreed an educational pamphlet at the counter was necessary as a first step, but then staff could draft a strategic outreach plan in the future addressing the various types of outreach that could occur. Chairman Behm noted these are all passive approaches and it was important to continue taking an active approach with targeted outreach.

Chairman Matthies then summarized that marketing the preservation ordinance would be important. Specifically, he reminded the two groups that the ADRB discussed at its prior meetings the following: 1) better exposure on the city's web site; a simplified explanation page; and a future interactive mapping system similar to Naperville's website. Mr. Casey mentioned that when the initial survey was done, the residents were contacted via one robo-call but no follow-up interaction was ever done afterward. Comments followed that personalization was important as was a plaque recognition program or a similar program awarding the best renovation or addition project, etc. Mr. Casey suggested the village could brand itself as "Historic" Dowers Grove when additional landmarks were created.

Then the topic of historic districts arose, wherein members agreed the topic did not have to be discussed currently and the focus should be on individual landmarks, which would, in essence, create a historic district as individual landmarks were added in the future. Some members preferred that the topic of historic districts be reviewed later; however, some members preferred to hear public comments on the subject. Consensus was to leave the language alone in the ordinance for now. As to the village's preservation application packet itself (42 pages), Ms. Gassen recommended to divide the village's current application into two separate applications -- one for landmarks and one for a historic district -- and make both concise. (The St. Charles' application packet was seven pages.)

Per a question, Mr. Popovich clarified that the reason the village's application packet was not on the web site was because staff preferred to meet with an applicant individually to explain the process. Detailed steps followed. It was noted staff could review the application with a keen eye and eliminate extraneous information and the make it simpler. Chairman Matthies recommended that rather than presenting a 42-page application, staff may want to approach the process from a softer perspective and provide some general information initially to an applicant. If the applicant was still interested, then print off the application and walk through it with the applicant. It was suggested surveying neighboring towns to see if their application was on-line and what it entailed. Ms. Gassen suggested of creating architectural guidelines (not rules) was also offered and could be for those owners who had older homes but wanted to keep the integrity/style of their home in tact, which the chairman suggested to place on the village's web site.

Addressing the groups' goals, someone pointed out that back in 2007 the village council discussed the same goals/plans for the preservation ordinance as these two committees were. This same person questioned why the ordinance appeared to be stalled and asked whether it was because the ADRB was inactive at the time. He hoped this group could prevent that from occurring in the future. Mr. Popovich explained that in the first two years, there were two landmarks. After that some of it had to do with the economy and the fact that it was not a priority at the time. Mr. Zimolzak believed having an ongoing budget for the ADRB would also keep the effort from diminishing.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Matthies opened up the meeting to public comment.

Mr. Ross Johnson, 5221 Main Street, said he owns a commercial property on Main Street and this was his first meeting. His property was on the list. He asked if the groups would consider a follow-up survey because he did not believe many in the village knew what the two groups are trying to accomplish or either the residents glossed over it. Because he felt the number of survey responses were low, he believed better preservation communication was in order and added that the face-to-face contact was difficult and time-consuming. If there was going to be limited participation, he thought the effort may not be worth it.

Mr. Scott Lazar, 808 Maple, with Downers Grove Families for Sensible Historic Preservation noted there were five members in attendance representing Maple Avenue and Denburn Woods. He turned members' attention to page 7 of the survey, specifically the statement, "I am likely to make an application to designate my house as a historic landmark," and stated that 50% responded were "somewhat" to "very likely" to do so and there was sufficient interest. In addition, since robust and voluntary participation in preservation was the ideal, the challenge of it becoming a reality involved two things, however: having a timeline and having a scope with the right expectations. Unfortunately he said because the issue around the ordinance was highly charged and had a perceived sense of urgency, he did not want to see the groups' efforts be thrown away because someone had different expectations about a realistic timeline. He encouraged the two groups to review the ordinance the right way and to not rush it. He believed the 90-day timeline was ridiculous. There was a reasonable perception that certain elected officials wanted a historic district and, regardless of the recommendations made, they may decide to make changes. He did not like the discussions about urban development zones since it took the decision away from homeowners. There was also the risk that changes could be made "through backdoor zoning" due to newly appointed ZBA members.

Chairman Matthies reiterated that the two groups had come to a consensus that they did not want to push the ordinance but to make it as “organic” as possible and voluntary, which would be done through education, marketing and refining the preservation ordinance to make it easier to read. Ultimately, if council decided to follow otherwise, the public always had the right to vote.

Mr. Lazar added few more points: He believed historic districts should be addressed now since the efforts on Maple Avenue were fresh in everyone’s mind because he did not like the alternative, i.e., conservation districts. He asked that when staff removes the fees to make it easy to understand and that when the preservation pamphlets go out, that the village controls the message and that they are authorized materials from the village.

Ms. Irene Hogstrom stated she was with the Pierce Downer Heritage Alliance, Friends of the Edwards House, and on the village’s Plan Commission. She stated the PDHA was very excited to assist with the outreach activity regarding the preservation ordinance. In October, the PDHA would be holding a public meeting with the hopes of having a historic preservation program on the agenda. She noted Mr. Popovich has come to a PDHA in the past to discuss historic preservation. On a personal note, she said she has requested a preservation packet from staff for her historic home.

Ms. Charlotte Holtzen, 5226 Carpenter Street, stated this was her first meeting with no one contacting her regarding the survey. Her home was renovated and plaqued (Centennial Home). While she appreciated the discussions taking place, she believed the village needed to speak to the residents who lived in the homes and find out what the issues they were running into when renovating their historic home. She noted the costs associated with renovations of historic homes.

Ms. Christine Martin, 701 Maple Avenue, is a member of the Friends of the Edwards House and believed her group of volunteers would be happy to assist with any distribution of pamphlets from the village.

Ms. Hilary Denk, 433 Wilson St., stated this was her first attendance at a meeting and appreciated the members’ time spent on this matter. She reminded everyone of the homes that were coming up for the next Centennial. More recently, a bungalow was razed on her street and only three bungalows remained, resulting in a significant change in neighborhood’s character. Ms. Denk invited the two groups and the public to attend two upcoming events -- one on September 12, 2015 to discuss the results from a suburban preservation survey (sponsored by Landmarks Illinois, the Illinois Association of Historic Preservation Commissioners, the Chicago Suburban Preservation Alliance, and the Evanston Historic Society, to be held in Evanston) and another event on September 16, 2015, hosted by IHPC president, Doug Karre, the historic preservation planner for the Village of Oak Park. Also at that meeting she said will be a speaker from the Morton Arboretum discussing the importance of tree preservation. She will be videotaping the September 16th event for those members from this meeting who cannot attend.

Last comments and for the record, Chairman Behm stated the two groups here were not political at all. They are not following guidelines from anybody and are speaking their minds. They are trying to cross the differences between historic preservation and property rights and have been diligent from the start. They are trying to look at what is best for the community as a whole. All sides of this challenging topic were being discussed.

APPROVED 9/16/15

ADJOURNMENT

MR. LEITSCHUH MOTIONED TO ADJOURN THE AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION MEETING AT 9:20 P.M. SECONDED BY MR. ZIMOLZAK. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE OF 7-0.

MRS. ACKS MOTIONED TO ADJOURN THE ADRB MEETING AT 9:21 P.M. SECONDED BY MR. RIEMER. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE OF 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Celeste K. Weilandt
Celeste K. Weilandt
(As transcribed by MP-3 audio)