



City of Racine

City Hall
730 Washington Ave.
Racine, WI 53403
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Meeting Minutes - Draft

Landmarks Preservation Commission

*Alderman Mollie Jones
Pippin Michelli
Pamela Deskins
John Monefeldt*

Monday, April 8, 2019

5:15 PM

City Hall, Room 303

Call To Order

Chairman Monefeldt called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Present: 4 - John Monefeldt, Tony Veranth, Pippin Michelli, and Chris Flynn

Excused: 1 - Mollie Jones

Approval of Minutes for the March 11, 2019 Meeting

A motion was made by Veranth, seconded by Flynn, to defer the March 11th meeting minutes. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

[0156-19](#)

Subject: (Direct Referral) 2019 prioritization of implementation goals in the Heritage Preservation Plan (LPC-19).

Attachments: [Racine Heritage Preservation Plan](#)
[Preservation Plan Goal Setting](#)

Assistant Director, Matt Sadowski, introduced the request. He explained the high, medium, and low priority goals as designated by the Commission. The low priority goals include distribute reports, zoning, prepare educational publications, etc... He stated that the entire zoning ordinance for the City of Racine will begin a rewrite this year.

Sadowski stated one of the priority areas was to send promotional letters to all national register and local properties to invite owners to participate in either a new or re-designation as a local landmark. Discussion ensued about the condition of a house on North Main Street (former Pat Hansen's House). Commission members asked what could have prevented the property from being designated as a local landmark or if the current property owner were receiving tax credits from the State of Wisconsin.

Sadowski stated other priorities include to pursue national or local register nomination through grants from the State Historical Society for potential districts such as State Street, West Racine, Uptown, and Jens Jensen Park System; expand membership of the Commission using short-term stints (e.g. 4 months); and training opportunities for members.

Jeff Hintz, Associate Planner, stated that promotional letters would be geared more towards someone who would want to re-designate their property. He stated the letters would be sent in batches at a time. A sample letter was provided to the Commission to

review.

Hintz explained the process in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Sadowski stated he will show the letter to the Director of City Development and then the letter will be sent out to the property owners.

Michelli suggested adding a stronger ending to the letter to promote a "call to action". She stated it will potentially provide a better response rate.

Sadowski explained the goals of staff which include prepare an annual study and a list of nationally registered districts. In response to Commissioner Michelli, Sadowski stated the purpose of the study would be to consider areas for a reconnaissance survey or actual designation and nomination.

Michelli asked if existing landmarks would be monitored.

Sadowski stated it would be a general overview. He stated the ordinance allows for monitoring of landmarks, and that is one of the duties of the Commission, and to send letters and suggestions to property owners regarding necessary repairs. Sadowski explained, however, this is more for the general condition of the district and for other areas that may be eligible. He stated staff would also like to prepare an annual endangered properties list, promote and market existing programs, such as the façade grant program and the housing repair loan program through the Neighborhood Services Division, tax credit assistance through the State Historic Preservation Office, technical assistance, creating an online version of brochures and other materials, and provide training to local realtors and bankers.

Flynn stated that one thing they learned while transforming their old warehouse into a brewery was there were a lot of requirements. She stated it would be helpful to have a solid checklist on what approvals would be needed at the city- and state-level.

Sadowski stated staff is currently working on a development guide.

Brief discussion ensued regarding the submittal and approval process between the City and the State.

Sadowski stated with the permission of the Commission, staff will proceed with the goals provided.

Discussion after the motion:

Sadowski stated he has received the final final version of the Historic Preservation Plan.

A motion was made by Veranth, seconded by Michelli, that staff priorities and Commission priorities be added and made part of the next 12-18 months rolling plan for the Landmarks Preservation Commission. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

[0255-19](#)

Subject: (Direct Referral) Communication from the Wisconsin Historical Society regarding 2017 Wisconsin Act 317,2,4 & 6 and the Landmarks Preservation Commission's reviewing authority. (19-LPC)

Recommendation of the Landmarks Preservation Commission on

4-8-19: That an ordinance be prepared and a public hearing scheduled.

Fiscal Note: N/A

Attachments: [WI Act 280 Interpretation](#)

Sadowski introduced the request. He stated that Act 317 refers to Act 280, which intends to better define the parameters under which the Commission is to review projects, specifically repair and replacement projects. He stated staff is recommending the amendment of the Historic Preservation ordinance in two sections. The first section would be to add language to Section 58.63 in creating 58.63 c. to say that "in the repair or replacement of a property that is designated a historic landmark or included within a historic district or neighborhood conservation district under this section, the owner shall use materials that are similar in design, color, scale, architectural appearance, and other visual qualities." He stated that this is language that reflects the language in Act 280. He stated the idea of the legislature passing the language is that a lot of complaints were received about people coming in front of Landmarks Commissions only to find there were not any real guidelines present. He stated the authority of the Commissions were questioned or the Commission would require standards such as wood windows where it was not economically feasible. He stated the way the guideline is being interpreted is that property owners can now use materials that are similar in design, color, scale, architectural appearance and other visual qualities. He stated the Wisconsin Historical Society sees it as giving Commissions more definite authority. He stated the Commission may not be able to force someone to use wood windows, unless tax credits are being used, however, they can ensure they use windows that look like they belong with the structure.

Monefeldt expressed concern with the repair portion of the ordinance, especially when it comes to street level façade work. He stated while there are some quality materials that can be disguised as the "real thing", there are others, like windows, where the detailing may be difficult to replicate. He asked if a situation ever occurred where wood windows were enforced and complaints were received.

Sadowski stated early in the façade grant program complaints were received.

Monefeldt stated he thinks the ordinance should be divided with a set of rules for repair and a set for replacement.

Sadowski explained the other section would be under alteration and new construction. He stated a new section would be created that states that "repair or replacement activities shall be in conformance with section 58.63". He stated there are also a number of sections that would need to be re-lettered.

Sadowski stated once the Commission approves the request, it would be forwarded to the Common Council who will forward it to the City Attorney for an ordinance to be created. The ordinance will return at the next Landmarks Preservation Commission meeting.

Monefeldt asked what the ordinance currently says for maintenance and repair.

Hintz stated a certificate of appropriateness would be required from the Commission

and there is not a specific requirement.

Monefeldt stated the certificate of appropriateness coincides with the National Park Service requirements.

Sadowski reminded the Commission that the language would only apply to newly designated landmarks, not existing ones.

Discussion ensued about the Uptown and Park Theaters.

In response to Commission members, Sadowski stated the Park Theater was found to be eligible for listing on the national register, so there is some level of protection in terms of slowing down the potential razing of the property.

A motion was made by Flynn, seconded by Veranth, to recommend that an ordinance be prepared a public hearing scheduled. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

[0251-19](#)

Subject: (Direct Referral) National Historic Preservation and Archeology Month (19-LPC)

Recommendation of the Landmarks Preservation Commission on 4-8-19: That staff prepare language to be presented in a proclamation to be read at the Common Council meeting.

Fiscal Note: N/A

Attachments: [This Place Matters - 31 Days of Activities](#)

Sadowski introduced the request. He provided the Commission with a list of possible activities: park cleanup, proclamation, a pub walk, flyers to landmark owners, and designating potential landmarks – City Hall, Memorial Hall, the Water Plant, and the Courthouse. He stated the park cleanup and the pub walk would be a good plan for next or future years as it would take some time to organize and publicize than time would allow.

Sadowski stated the landmarking of the properties mentioned is in motion, however, they are stalled because it takes time to receive approvals from those involved.

Michelli mentioned that Preservation Racine will be recognizing homes that are 100 or more years old that are in good condition and look authentic with a certificate and photograph.

Discussion ensued about the historic properties, structures, and interest points within the City and which properties should receive letters regarding potential designation.

Discussion after the motion:

Monefeldt stated he asked questions regarding a communication he saw about the demolition of a building adjacent to the Sixth Street Bridge.

Veranth questioned if part of the reason that the building was going to be demolished

was for the proposed new bridge and if the property were owned by the city of Racine.

Monefeldt asked if the building had any historical significance, if it were a national register property, and if there were a property condition or building issue. He stated he received a response from Sadowski that stated the building was to be removed as part of the Sixth Street Bridge project, however, he does not remember a discussion with the engineers and designers for the bridge about that building having to be razed or changing the approaches.

Sadowski confirmed that the city owns the building in question.

Monefeldt stated he does not understand why the building has to come down.

Discussion ensued.

Hintz stated the city acquired the building in 2019.

In response to Monefeldt, Sadowski stated the Commission has 15 working days to respond. He stated we could ask for a postponement for the razing of the building, but would like to clarify the reasons why.

Monefeldt stated he thinks a lot of properties are torn down with no plans for redevelopment and the area in question is already blighted and does not need another vacant lot. He stated he does not see the reason why the building needs to be torn down.

The Commission would like postponement to answer the questions on why the building is being demolished and what the plan is for the property.

Monefeldt stated he does not see the value to the community if the building were demolished.

Monefeldt asked about the zoning rewrite. He asked if it applied to buildings, parking, etc.

Hintz and Sadowski stated everything in Chapter 114 in the Municipal Code would be rewritten.

Monefeldt stated it would be a good idea for the City to enact the façade inspection program for commercial buildings 50 years or older. He stated it would help the city move away from demolition via neglect situations.

A motion was made by Monefeldt, seconded by Flynn, to proceed with local landmark designations for the National Historic Preservation and Archeology Month including the public landmarks identified and defer the remainder of the activities until next year. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.