

MINUTES

BOARD/COMMISSION: Historic Preservation

DATE: 7/20/17

MEETING: Regular

CALLED TO ORDER: 7:04 p.m.

QUORUM: Yes

ADJOURNED: 9:20 p.m.

LOCATION: Glen Ellyn Civic Center

MEMBER ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT: Chairman Marks, Commissioners Christiansen, Darga, Dieter, Loftus, Manak, Schreiber, Vavra, Veum-Welsh

EXCUSED: Student Commissioner Dillman

ALSO PRESENT: Associate Village Planner Purvis, Recording Secretary Solomon, Trustee Senak, Glen Ellyn Historical Society Executive Director Hall, Glen Ellyn residents

1. Call to Order

Chairman Marks called the Glen Ellyn Historic Preservation Commission regular meeting to order at 7:04 p.m., in the Civic Center at 535 Duane Street, Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

2. Public Comment

None

3. Approval of June 15, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Chairman Marks referred to Page 4, #5B and stated the minutes should include an explanation of what the Suburban Alliance is. Commissioner Loftus gave background on the Suburban Alliance so the June 15, 2017 minutes were changed to, "...and several of the commissioners do attend the Suburban Alliance meetings. Commissioner Loftus stated the Suburban Alliance is an organization started by Jenell Scherell of the National Trust as a quarterly meeting of preservation-minded people invited from different commissions around the Chicago suburban area as well as others interested in preservation. Commissioner Loftus stated the meetings move around the suburbs, and Landmarks Illinois now runs the Suburban Alliance."

Commissioner Manak moved to approve the amended minutes of June 15, 2017. Commissioner Schreiber seconded, and the motion carried by a vote of 8-0 with Commissioner Christiansen abstaining as she was not at the June meeting.

4. Old Business

A. Preservation Brochure

This will be discussed at the August 17, 2017 meeting. Associate Village Planner Purvis asked the commissioners to look through the brochure draft and think about why each home is included in the brochure so they can add this copy. Commissioner Loftus asked if Associate Village Planner Purvis needed more pictures to which Associate Village Planner Purvis stated she only needs clarification regarding why these photos were selected. There may be discussion of additional photos in the future.

B. Heritage Tree Listing

Chairman Marks stated he is submitting a start-up list for Village Heritage Trees. The first two listings are for a front-yard oak tree at 667 Highland Avenue and a rear-yard maple at 475 Hawthorne Boulevard. Commissioner Manak stated he still wanted a good definition of a Heritage Tree and would work on a better definition of this for the next meeting.

5. New Business

A. 426 Hill Avenue

Chairman Marks stated 426 Hill Avenue is an 1840's home in for permit to demolish so he will lead a discussion about possible interventions.

Elizabeth Sheet stated she is a former resident of Glen Ellyn, and her mother still lives in the Village. Ms. Sheet stated there is a Facebook page called "I Remember When in Glen Ellyn," and it is on this Facebook page that she saw this home was for sale. Ms. Sheet gave a presentation of the history of the home's original owner, William J. Johnson. Ms. Sheet stated Mr. Johnson was a DuPage resident since 1836, and Mr. Johnson purchased three tracts of land in Glen Ellyn in 1845 and 1846 as United States land patents. Ms. Sheet stated Milton Township was surveyed in 1840, and these three tracts of land were in Section 14. Ms. Sheet stated as of today, Mr. Johnson's land extends from just west of Kenilworth Avenue to just west of Park Boulevard and from Hillside Avenue to a line through the center of Main Street School. Ms. Sheet showed a grid of Grantee and Grantor records for Mr. Johnson which included many purchases and sales of land. Ms. Sheet stated she will donate

her research documents to the Glen Ellyn Historical Society, and it is very important to save this home.

Chairman Marks stated Mr. Johnson was a veteran of the War of 1812, and the home at 426 Hill Avenue is one the last remaining 1840's homes in Glen Ellyn.

Karen Struck, who resides at 844 Crescent Boulevard, stated her home was built between 1863 and 1873, and she has lived in the home over 40 years. Ms. Struck stated her home is plaqued by the Glen Ellyn Historical Society (GEHS), and it breaks her heart to see homes being torn down in the Village. Ms. Struck stated her home was a stop on the Underground Railroad. Ms. Struck stated people need to stop and think about what they are doing to the community. Ms. Struck stated she thought her home was landmarked due to the GEHS plaque.

Chairman Marks and Commissioner Loftus explained the process for landmarking a home in the Village. Chairman Marks stated this is the best way to ensure older homes are preserved as the landmarking does protect them. Commissioner Loftus stated when a home is landmarked, an ordinance is created on your home, and in order to tear down a landmarked home, the ordinance would need to be repealed by the Village Board. Commissioner Loftus stated there is also a possible multi-year tax freeze if a home that is more than 50 years old is restored.

Chairman Marks stated 426 Hill Avenue only has the honorary plaque from the Glen Ellyn Historical Society and is not a landmarked home.

Julie Gilbert, whose mother lived at 861 Hill Avenue, stated her mother's home was built in 1865. Ms. Gilbert stated her mother worked very hard to prepare her home in order to get the GEHS plaque. Ms. Gilbert stated a lot of history comes into play with the plaque and stated they thought the plaque meant the home was landmarked and not just an honorary thing.

Courtney Ashley, who lives on Hill Avenue, stated they live next door to the home, and they received a letter stating that a demolition permit had been granted for 426 Hill Avenue. Ms. Ashley stated the letter said the demolition could go forward any time after July 5th.

Chairman Marks stated he talked to the family many months ago who owned the home at 426 Hill Avenue, and they wanted to see the home saved and restored. Chairman Marks stated he received a surprise notification call this week that the home was going to be torn down. Chairman Marks stated the taxes on the property are very high which discouraged one of the family members who was considering the purchase of the home. Commission Loftus stated according to the Internet, the 2016 taxes were \$17,296. Chairman Marks stated he was very surprised things has gotten this far without more notice.

Chairman Marks stated he and Commissioner Schreiber went through the home about two years ago, and the home is structurally sound but just needs some updating which they told to the home owners. Commissioner Schreiber stated there is some seepage in the foundation which is to be expected, but this can be fixed. Commissioner Schreiber stated there is also minor deflection. Commissioner Schreiber stated this home is valuable to the Village as a community.

Commissioner Dieter stated this a great opportunity for the Village show they are serious about preservation. Commissioner Dieter stated if there is a freeze on taxes due to a possible landmarking, this could possibly balance any restoration costs or taxes in the future.

Chairman Marks stated he is a charter member of the GEHS which was formed in 1968. Chairman Marks stated the GEHS started giving out plaques to historical homes, and the GEHS was sure to tell people the plaques were only honorary. Commissioner Manak stated he was told this as well when he received a plaque for his home from GEHS. Commissioner Manak noted differences between receiving a plaque from GEHS and landmarking by the Village, and if owners of this property had taken steps to landmark the property, a teardown might have been avoided.

Commissioner Darga asked if the GEHS has the list of plaqued homes to which Chairman Marks stated they do. GEHS Executive Director Hall stated there are over 100 homes on this list. Commissioner Darga stated letters encouraging landmarking should be sent to the home owners with only the GEHS plaques to which Chairman Marks stated this has been done. Associate Planner Purvis stated 38 homes in the Village are landmarked.

Trustee Senak stated he does not see any way around this demolition permit. Trustee Senak stated the Village Board could rescind the permit, but if the petitioner had complied with ordinances and the permit process, this could be a legal mess.

Commissioner Loftus stated they need a last-ditch effort to try to delay the demolition by talking to the builder and talking to the Village again about the possibility of a multi-home property. Trustee Senak stated the Village Board would probably consider the request for the multi-property home.

Commissioner Christiansen stated there are two issues – one is what could the HPC possibly do which is nothing at this point. Commissioner Christiansen stated the Village needs to be more proactive than reactive, and the Village needs to add a piece to the demolition ordinance that says that any homes that are 50 to 75 years or older must come to the HPC for review before a demolition can happen. Many commissioners supported this.

An audience member stated he is a neighbor to this home, and the home is beautiful to look at, but the home does need a lot of work inside. This gentleman stated you could possibly put two homes on property, but he could understand the home owners not wanting to do a huge restoration on this home.

Commissioner Vavra stated no home owner wants to be told what they can or cannot do with their own land. Commissioner Vavra suggested there be an ordinance drafted that states if you own a home with a Glen Ellyn Historical Society plaque, then permits to demolish the house cannot be issued until you come before the HPC and the plans are reviewed.

Chairman Marks stated the HPC is working on a brochure that will go to architects, builders, developers and realtors to give them information on what they could do to restore a historic home instead of tearing it down. Chairman Marks stated the Village has lost way too many historical or architecturally-significant homes.

An audience member asked if the home is sound enough to be moved to which Commissioner Schreiber stated he feels it is sound enough to be moved. The audience member asked if the home could be moved near Stacy's Corners to which Commissioner Schreiber stated you would need to buy a vacant lot and then pay to move the home and the utilities. Commissioner Schreiber stated it is very costly to relocate the utilities. Commissioner Loftus stated the GEHS owns a property close to Stacy's so possibly the home could be moved there, and then the two oldest structures in Glen Ellyn would be adjacent to each other. GEHS Executive Director Hall stated that this is unlikely as that property has other possible uses planned for it.

Chairman Marks asked if Trustee Senak would ask the Village about a possibility of a zoning variation on the lot. Trustee Senak stated the home owners need to be the ones to ask for this due to the private interests. Trustee Senak stated land owners can do what they want with their land. Trustee Senak stated his goal would be to incentivize things to help with preservation.

An audience member asked if a tax abatement could be given by the Village for five years to help the home owners out. Trustee Senak stated the Village does not have control over this, the Village's portion of the tax bill is small and there are many other taxing bodies involved.

Chairman Marks stated he will call the current home owners and ask to meet with them regarding any possibilities. Commissioner Schreiber stated the Village does have ordinances regarding where things could be placed so as not to hurt tree-root systems so he is not sure a home could be built on the front part of the lot. Commissioner Schreiber stated there may need to be research done on this before this possibility is communicated to the home owners.

An audience member asked if the HPC could explore the possibility that someone in the Village might want the home and would be willing to move it. Commissioner Schreiber reminded everyone that moving the home could be very costly in utility relocation costs. Commissioner Dieter stated it would be good to look into the cost of doing a home relocation.

An audience member stated there is a vacant lot on the 300 block of Hill Avenue which he thinks is part of William J. Johnson's original property and suggested the home could be moved here.

Trustee Senak stated he encouraged people to take action which would be better action than imposing legislation on private property owners. Trustee Senak stated the Village cannot encroach on private property rights.

Chairman Marks told the audience they were welcome to call Associate Village Planner Purvis in order to keep informed on this issue.

6. Architectural Review Commission (ARC) Report

None

7. Historical Society Business

Glen Ellyn Historical Society (GEHS) Executive Director Hall passed around a flyer of the GEHS' upcoming events and reviewed these events. GEHS Director Hall invited the HPC to hold their September meeting at the History Center.

Saturday, July 22nd from 1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. - Reception celebrating Early American Life magazine Publisher Tess Rosch and her Staff – Chairman Marks stated this will be a great event, and Ms. Rosch will speak at 3 p.m.

Tuesday, July 25th at 7 p.m. - Between Two Comets: the Life of Mark Twain

Tuesday, August 8th at 7 p.m. – Historic Revolving Jails

8. Chairman's Report

Chairman Marks stated the jazz concert and bike race were wonderful events this past weekend, but he did hear from several residents that these two events need to be on separate weekends. Associate Village Planner Purvis stated the Village is already considering this, as the two events on the same day make it difficult for the police and fire department. Chairman Marks stated there needs to be a banner as there had been previously at Main Street and Crescent Boulevard to help advertise major events in the Village.

9. Trustee Liaison's Report

Trustee Senak stated the Board has approved the Residential Refuse and Recycling Rates, and there will be a \$15.00 to \$17.00 reduction in cost per household. Trustee Senak stated the Village is at its reserves for storm reserves so the Board decided to suspend the storm reserve surcharge for now.

Trustee Senak stated the Board did discuss the possibility of granting a sales tax rebate incentive program to Pete's Market which may lease space in the Baker Hill Shopping Center.

Trustee Senak stated the Board did discuss combining the Architectural Review and Plan Commissions into one new Plan Commission as well as reducing the number of Plan Commissioners from 11 to 9.

Trustee Senak stated the Board did discuss the Village's policy on credit-card acceptance. Trustee Senak stated limiting the fees does create a loss in the Village so the Board discussed ways to recoup some of these lost credit-card fees.

Trustee Senak stated the Board is considering letting College of DuPage use space in the Civic Center to start an innovation center. Trustee Senak supports this highly.

10. Staff Report

Associate Village Planner Purvis encouraged the commissioners to complete the Metra Station survey which is available at the bottom of the front page on the Village's website. Associate Village Planner Purvis stated this is a good opportunity to provide input and be a part of the decision-making process regarding an important project in the downtown area. Trustee Senak stated there will be community meetings in August for additional participation and thoughts on this project.

11. Confirmation of Next Meeting Date and Adjournment

Chairman Marks stated the next meeting will take place on Thursday, August 17, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

With no further business, Chairman Marks asked for a motion of adjournment. Commissioner Schreiber motioned for adjournment, and Commissioner Manak seconded. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Submitted by: Debbie Solomon, Recording Secretary

Reviewed by: Kelly Purvis, Associate Planner