



Village of Plainfield
Historic Preservation Commission
Record of Minutes

Date: June 10, 2010

Location: Village Hall

Chairman Bortel called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Olsen, Wright, Derrick, and Chairman Bortel
Absent: Commissioners Allen, Bright and Spangler
Also present: Michael Garrigan –Village Planner; Merrilee Trotz, Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Bortel suggested an amendment to the minutes indicating that it was Chairman Bortel not Chairman Lambert who called the meeting to order and Commissioner Derrick suggested an amendment to page 2 paragraph 3 line 4 by changing tax basis to tax base. Commissioner Derrick made a motion to approve the minutes from May 13, 2010 as amended. Commissioner Olsen seconded the motion. Voice vote. All Commissioners were in favor. Motion carried.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS:

None

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:

None

PUBLIC COMMENT: (Items not on the Agenda)

No one approached the microphone.

STAFF REPORT

Planner Garrigan stated there has been one pre-application meeting for the property at 14930 S. Bartlett Avenue for a Landmark case. Planner Garrigan stated this landmark case will be continued for additional information to be submitted to fully address the questions that the HPC may have relating to this potential landmark. There have been no new demolition proposals or requests or discussions received and none approved since the last meeting of this commission. The preservation watch list remains the same since the last meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

1513-052410.HPC 14930 S. Bartlett Avenue

Chairman Bortel stated he had met with Mrs. Rogman and indicated he and Mr. Hendricksen would take pictures of her house and prepare an architectural evaluation of the property. Commissioner Olsen made a motion to continue the public hearing for the landmark application for 14930 S. Bartlett Avenue to July 8, 2010. Commissioner Derrick seconded the motion.

Vote by roll call:

Aye: Commissioners Derrick; Olsen, Wright, Chairman Bortel

Nay: none

Motion carried 4-0

15307 S. Rt. 59

Planner Garrigan indicated the Village Board is seeking input from the Historic Preservation Commission on the applicability of a community impact study for this property.

Chairman Bortel presented some materials regarding this property including a chain of title along with some plats of this area. He presented 2 photos of houses known as upright and wing— one of which was destroyed by the tornado in 1990 and the other is located on Bartlett. He presented a plat showing Corbin's Addition to Plainfield dating back to about 1852 or 1853; another plat showing O.J. Corbin's addition which includes the lot known as 15307 S. Rt. 59; and a third map showing Plainfield. There has been a factory, a foundry and the first gas station located in this area.

Commissioner Wright indicated we all agree there is significant history. He suggested code enforcement could be more involved.

Chairman Bortel suggested the house be retained while the other two properties be demolished as recommended by the HPC in 2007. He proposed asking the owners to donate the three properties to the Village and the Village then turning the area into a Visitor's Center for a gateway into Plainfield.

Planner Garrigan said there is no discussion that the Village would purchase the property.

Commissioner Olsen stated she sees the importance of the house, there is a lot of history in that area but was not sure it was a good location for a Visitor's Center or gateway into Plainfield.

Chairman Bortel indicated the HPC would be willing to prepare the impact study. He suggested asking the IHPA to come and do an archeology excavation in the area to see if there are any remnants left from the foundry. We might also contact the Lincoln Highway Association to see if there are any grants available to investigate this site. He believes the house has integrity but agrees it need work.

Chairman Bortel said if the owner does not want to do the impact study and if the Village is willing to give us some time that he could do the impact study.

Commissioner Olsen asked if the owner had any plans and if he was trying to sell the property. She also asked who would be paying for the demolition.

Planner Garrigan spoke with the broker and currently there is no commercial interest pending for development. They think a cleared site might have a higher marketing attractiveness however, they are not in a financial position to clear the site. There is a consensus of the Village Board that this needs to be addressed. The Fire District indicated this property is not conducive for fire training due to the close

proximity of Route 59. Property can be condemned or demolished if it is legally determined that the property is a hazard. There is a consensus of the Village Board that these properties are blight and cannot be salvaged.

Discussion was held on the cost of demolition of both structures.

Commissioner Wright said the discussion is whether we want them to follow through with the community impact study or not. To save the house you have to have a willing owner; perhaps bend some rules to have a PUD work in a challenged site. He felt this was a Village Board discussion. He felt that the HPC was obligated to say it has historic value. If the Village Board wants to save the house the HPC will be there to help them. The Village Board supported the community impact study but did not follow it up.

Commissioner Derrick said when this was discussed in 2007 we did not have all the research that we have now. We knew that the building was old; it is an Upright and Wing; it is a disappearing resource for our community; and it is a collection of properties that sets us apart so at the time we requested a community impact study. She said she still stands behind that request; she felt it was important to know what we are losing and why we are losing it. She respects the opinion that this intersection is a mess; and a lot of that comes from the construction of Route 59. Once the house is gone it is gone forever. Maybe it does not work out that the house is a donation to the Village or a public space that celebrates our transportation history, our pioneer settlement history, and ties all these things together, the rebirth, the foundry site, the early buildings, maybe it will be something else. She said unless we know the vision for the future we do not know that this cannot be a part of it and once the house is demolished we cannot get it back. She would like to express to the Village Board that we would like to part of the creative problem solving there; maybe we can wait for the construction to be done, see if that helps with the eyesore perception; ask that the owner further prevents vandals from getting into that building. It would be a minor cost to board up the back window which is not seen from the public way to preserve the building.

Planner Garrigan said there was a consensus last month and there is always the opportunity to change the Village Board's perspective and that consensus could disappear. The Village Board has not heard the HPC's perspective and you have provided some excellent history about the house which might be illuminating to the Village Board as it relates to the history and heritage. The Board has not addressed the details such as who pays for the demolition. Discussion on this house will be on a future board agenda.

Chairman Bortel said his research on the house shows the house is probably older than 1855. Corbin bought the property that the house sits on sometime in the early 1840's. It appears this is the house Corbin lived in before he sold 3 lots (3, 8 and 10) to Elihu Corbin. Elihu Corbin kept lot 3 probably for investment and sold lots 8 and 10.

Commissioner Olsen asked what is the hurry in condemning this property when you do not know what is going there. She agreed with Commissioner Wright with regard to code enforcement.

Planner Garrigan reminded the commissioners that the applicant came in for demolition 3 years ago. If they had been allowed to do so then code enforcement issues would be mote.

Chairman Bortel suggested the owner or someone else should board up the broken window. Planner Garrigan stated he is looking for the HPC's reiteration that their original deliberation continues to be the consensus of the HPC. It appears the owner has no intention of obtaining a community impact

study and it sounds like the board does not support the impact study. The board has never seen a creative concept wherein this house could be incorporated into a future development.

Commissioner Derrick stated she still supports the original request for a community impact study. She stated Chairman Bortel has done additional title research and has tied this building to prominent local families which supplements the information we had in 2007. She hoped this would strengthen the argument that the HPC should do parts of the community impact study. She said we have offered our assistance. She asked whether the village board pictures this as a gateway or are they looking at it as a new commercial development. She said Plainfield could be very unique in that we have a historic building tied to our very unique history, pioneer settlement, transportation history, agriculture industry, and implement construction industry. She would encourage the board to have a dialog with the commissioners.

Planner Garrigan asked if the HPC believed this house is historically contributing; or significant because of its architecture or because of its history.

Chairman Bortel said the architecture is difficult to ascertain at the moment due to the aluminum siding and the developer has not provided any plans.

Planner Garrigan said it would take creativity to incorporate this house and it is easier to clear the site.

There was discussion as to how many structures were originally surveyed.

Commissioner Derrick said there are challenges to this property. Because it is on a major thoroughfare, no one is going to live in this house; you have challenges with access even if you do it as commercial property with entrances and exits. Plainfield is unique; there were 68 properties identified at the time of the survey. This 68 of the early pioneer settlement included both Upright and Wing as well as the Gable L. Of the 68 count 21 were non-contributing. The really special thing that Plainfield has is we have or had a rather sizable collection of these early pioneer buildings. Plainfield is the oldest community in Will County. If we loose all these buildings, we cannot give anyone the sense of that. Early settlements were built close to the transportation route.

Commissioner Derrick said this house is boring with the aluminum siding; but if you remove the siding it would reveal the banding under the eave line, the fascia boards, the window headers and the sills and the dimension that is created from all this. This building retains some older windows that have the divided light that creates some rhythm to the building that is appealing. In Rockford they rip off the aluminum siding and sell it; then repaint the house. Restoration is going to be expensive but we do not know it is not in the cards for this property unless we can have a discussion about the possible uses and options. She wanted to convey to the Village Board that this building can be very interesting. The beauty of this building is that this house has both architecture and historical ties. In the 2007 minutes we have a discussion that this house may date to as early as 1837.

Planner Garrigan indicated the board needs to hear this kind of history and the passion that you articulate.

Commissioner Wright said we are always passionate about the historic areas of Plainfield. He said this property has been on the demolition watch list for years.

Chairman Bortel said they can talk with the Village Board. He feels these 3 lots are very significant.

Commissioner Olsen stated she did not want to see the house demolished just because of how it looks.

Planner Garrigan indicated they would like to tear down both structures at the same time as it would be more economical.

Commissioner Olsen said she would still support the impact study. She would like to get the study, get Route 59 cleaned up, do a little code enforcement; get the yards cleaned up, and board up the back as needed before the board agrees to demolition.

Planner Garrigan said we are discussing this one house and one lot and whether it has to be demolished for the overall site or if it can be incorporated into a future development. He said to loose this house to a certain type of development would be a step back. Planner Garrigan said the Village Board wanted to celebrate the legacy of Route 66 and Lincoln Highway.

Planner Garrigan said there seems to be a consensus of the HPC to have the community impact study.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

None

DISCUSSION:

IHPA CLG Training Workshop in Crystal Lake

Chairman Bortel and Commissioner Derrick plan to attend the workshop in Crystal Lake. Commissioners Olsen and Bright also plan to attend.

Commissioner Olsen asked about the signage for the East Side Historic District. Planner Garrigan stated he is working with Public Works to coordinate a ceremony to install the signage.

ADJOURN:

Commissioner Wright made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Olsen seconded the motion. Voice vote. All the Commissioners were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,
Merrilee Trotz - Recording Secretary