



Village of Plainfield
Historic Preservation Commission
Record of Minutes

Date: August 12, 2010

Location: Village Hall

CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, PLEDGE

Chairman Bortel called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. Roll call was taken; Commissioners Allen, Bright, Derrick, Wright and Chairman Bortel were present. Commissioners Olsen and Spangler were absent. Michael Garrigan –Village Planner; Merrilee Trotz, Secretary were also present.

Chairman Bortel led the pledge to the flag.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Bright moved to approve the Agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Derrick.
Voice vote: All in favor. 0 - opposed. Motion carried

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Wright stated page 2 third paragraph down should read “constructed in the rear yard.” Commissioner Derrick asked to change the work architect to “architectural” on page 5 in the second and fifth paragraphs. Commissioner Derrick made motion to approve the minutes from July 8, 2010 as amended. Commissioner Bright seconded the motion. Vote by roll call. Commissioner Allen, yes; Commissioner Derrick, yes; Commissioner Wright, abstain; Commissioner Bright, yes; Chairman Bortel, yes. 4 yes, 0 no. 1 abstain 2 absent. Motion carried.

Commissioner Derrick made motion to approved the minutes from July 8, 2010 Special Meeting as presented. Commissioner Bright seconded the motion. Voice vote: All in favor. 0 - opposed. Motion carried

CHAIR’S COMMENTS:

None

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:

Commissioner Wright made reference to the placement of the East Side Historic District Signs. One was placed on a Do Not Enter sign which translates you are not welcome. Currently they are placed so high they are not easily viewed. Commissioner Wright asked if this could be revisited. It was the intent of the Commission that these signs were to go above the Street signs.

Mr. Garrigan indicated he was working with Public Works. The Commissioners would like the opportunity for photos if the signs could be moved to the top of the street signs. Some discussion was held with regard to the possibility of a monument sign for the Historic District.

PUBLIC COMMENT: (Items not on the Agenda)

No one approached the microphone. Chairman Bortel introduced Mr. Feagans who is to be appointed as a Historic Preservation Commissioner at the next Village Board meeting.

STAFF REPORT

Mr. Garrigan stated there have been no new proposed applications for landmarks or districts; there have been pre-application meetings for both the Half Way House and also the Clock Tower. There are no new demolition permits. The preservation watch list remains the same.

Mr. Garrigan stated the Board gave the HPC until October to prepare a community impact study for 15307 S. Rt. 59 and to look at opportunities to preserve said property. The starting point was to get an appraisal in order to calculate a market value of the property and to get a structural opinion to determine the integrity of said building.

Staff has been working with several members of the HPC. There is a potential for a grant which would help subsidize the cost of the appraisal and the structural opinion. Chairman Bortel indicated he is working to get the appraisal and stated Commissioner Derrick was working with him on the grant. Also Commissioner Derrick has spoken with engineers to get the structural opinion.

NEW BUSINESS

Case No. 1529-071510.HPC

23839 W. Main Street

Chairman Bortel requested a motion to open the public hearing. Commissioner Derrick moved to open the public hearing. Commissioner Wright seconded the motion. Vote by roll call. Commissioner Allen, yes; Commissioner Bright, yes; Commissioner Wright, yes; Commissioner Derrick, yes; Chairman Bortel, yes. 5 yes, 0 no. 2 absent. Motion carried.

Commissioner Olsen arrived at 7:25 p.m.

Mr. Garrigan stated this is a public hearing and the required notices have been published in accordance with state statute and local ordinance and due notice was given to the adjacent property owners. This matter comes before you as a proposed landmark designation for the property known as the Green-Lutter House located at 23839 W. Main Street formerly known as 222 W. Main. This home was constructed by Dennison Green circa 1845. Mr. Green was born in New York in 1807, married Otila Wheeler in 1831 and moved to the Plainfield area in 1840. It is believed the house was constructed in 1845. This property is one of the older Greek Revival homes in the Village of Plainfield with respect to the cubist style. This house is almost identical to an existing house in Henrietta, New York. The Green family was active members of the Baptist Church in Plainfield and based on folklore this house was used in the Underground Railroad. During the 165 year history – this subject property has only been owned by three families. In 1896 Dennison Green sold the house to his son. In 1929 is the first

time ownership was someone other than the Green family – Mr. and Mrs. Mariano Cucci. In 1947 the property was sold to Harold Lutter (current owner.)

The period of significance for this property is from 1845 – 1960 which reflects the period the house was constructed, owned and occupied by the Dennison Green family descendants along with the 18 years the house was owned by the Cucci and Lutter family.

The Green-Lutter House is nominated for designation as a local landmark in the Village of Plainfield under the following criteria:

(a) Has character, interest or value which is part of the development, heritage, or cultural character of the community, county, state or nation.

The subject property dates back to 1845 and remains one of the oldest remaining structures in the Village of Plainfield. The Greek Revival and cubist style of the structure represents a style of some of the earliest structures in the Village of Plainfield and a period when many early settlers from the east costs were migrating to the Midwestern communities of the United States. The subject house embodies the early cultural and aesthetic impact that the early settlers had on the Village by introducing the Green Revival style to the Village.

(j) Is suitable for preservation or restoration.

The subject home still incorporates a great degree of integrity as it relates to the massing, window placement and roof-line of the structure. The windows have been modified from six over six to six over one but the placement has not been modified. The Transite siding is not original structure but the general form of the house itself incorporates the general integrity.

The structure could be very sensitively restored by incorporating the following renovations:

- Remove and restore siding
- Replace windows with six over six windows
- Restore shutters

(i) Has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory, history, or other areas of archaeological significance;

There is folklore that this house was used in the Underground Railroad representing an important part in the Village's history. The Green family was prominent abolitionists in the community and the fact that the house was commonly known to hide runaway slaves represents a part of the Village's history. Mr. Garrigan asked for Commissioners comments.

Chairman Bortel explained the pictures in the nomination wherein one picture from 1934 shows the house had shutters and other pictures taken in 1935 show the shutters have been removed. This house is one-fourth the size of the house in New York but they are essentially the same house.

Commissioner Bright asked if the owners were planning to renovate the house.

Chairman Bortel swore in Bonnie Lutter, owner of 23839 W. Main Street.

Mrs. Lutter indicated the changes were done before her time and currently they have no plans for renovating the house. She has been told there was a door on the right side of the chimney. Exhibit D shows a door in the addition but indicated the door is not there now.

Chairman Bortel indicated Exhibit D was a picture prior to 1935 further stating the windows in the foundation are the original windows which are hidden by the shrubs. Folklore is that Mr. Dennison hid slaves in the cellar of the house and in the loft of the blacksmith shop which sat at the back of the property where the garage is now. Mr. Lutter found a pistol in the garden several years ago. Nothing has been done on the property archaeologically.

Mrs. Lutter said in the addition there is a door in the floor and asked if Chairman Bortel knew if that is where the slaves were kept. He did not.

Chairman Bortel suggested contacting IHPA to look at this house because there is no definite evidence that slaves were stationed or kept here. There is another house in town with a similar history known as the Centennial house at the corner of Eastern and Lockport. It would probably be worthwhile to have an archaeological search.

Commissioner Olsen asked if the front door was original and if the steps to the house were stone?

Mrs. Lutter indicated the front door has been there as long as she could remember. She stated the sidelights are still original also. She indicated some of the sidelights have cracks in them and stated the steps are stones.

Chairman Bortel stated as far as Michael Lambert knows the front door is original to the house. The steps to the house are getting bad.

Commissioner Wright asked if we had a source for the folklore. The Transite siding is in the period of significance. He asked if the commission was okay if the siding was forever there.

Chairman Bortel stated he would find the source for the folklore and it would be added to the list of references in the nomination. In further stating he would like to see what is underneath the siding.

Commissioner Bright asked if the woodwork was original.

Mrs. Lutter indicated some of the woodwork is original (living room, dining room and stairway.) She asked if anyone spoke with the Cucci family as they might be able to give you more history on the house.

Commissioner Derrick said if the period of significance encompasses the period of the Transite siding then we would need to discuss the siding if they want to remove it. Removal would be done through a COA.

Mr. Garrigan stated through research he found Transite siding was prevalent from the late 40's through the early 70's.

Commissioner Olsen asked about the 1960 period of significance date. Response was this is the 50 year cut-off date.

Commissioner Wright suggested changing the bullet point under (j) from remove and restore siding to remove Transite siding and restore wood siding and under (i) a source be sited for the folklore.

Commissioner Bright made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Derrick seconded the motion. Vote by roll call. Commissioner Allen, yes; Commissioner Olsen, yes; Commissioner Derrick, yes; Commissioner Wright, yes; Commissioner Bright, yes; Chairman Bortel, yes. 6 yes, 0 no. 1 absent. Motion carried.

Commissioner Bright made a motion to recommend approval of the landmark designation of 23839 W. Main Street based on the criteria outlined in the staff report.

Commissioner Wright moved to amend the criteria in the staff report under (j) from remove and restore siding to remove Transite siding and restore wood siding and under (i) a source be sited for the folklore.

Commissioner Derrick suggested changing replace windows to repair windows that are original and replace non-original with wood sash windows that match in appearance the original or those documented by the HABS recordation of 1934/1935.

Mrs. Lutter stated the upper windows slide now, before there was like a box and the windows pulled up.

Commissioner Olsen seconded the motion. Commissioner Allen, yes; Commissioner Olsen, yes; Commissioner Wright, yes; Commissioner Derrick, yes; Commissioner Bright, yes; Chairman Bortel, yes. 6 yes, 0 no. 1 absent. Motion carried.

Commissioner Olsen asked when this would go before the Village Board. Response – September 20th meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

Chairman Bortel stated he met with the new owner of the Clock Tower while they were removing the concrete block addition to the back of the Opera House. The owner is willing to give the staff and HPC a tour of the building before major renovations are done inside. The owner will be happy to work with the HPC on renovation of the building.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Commissioner Derrick indicated LDDC did not have a quorum.

DISCUSSION:

None

ADJOURN:

Commissioner Derrick made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Olsen seconded the motion.
Voice vote: All in favor. 0 - opposed. Motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,
Merrilee Trotz - Recording Secretary