

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**109 James Street - Council Chambers**  
**Geneva, Illinois 60134**

**August 20, 2013, 7:00 p.m.**

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Roy called the August 20, 2013 meeting of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission to order at 7:05 p.m. Roll call followed:

**2. Roll Call**

Present HPC: Chairman Roy, Commissioners Andersson, Hiller, Ploppert, Schock-Soderberg, Zinke

Absent: Commissioner Wehrmeister

Staff Present: Preservation Planner Michael Lambert; Community Development Dir. Dick Untch

Others Present: Nancy Luyten, 124, S. Second St., Geneva, IL (Patten House); Scott McKee, 124 S. Second St., Geneva, IL (Patten House); Terry Adams with Adams Design Group, Geneva, IL (Patten House); Roofing contractor Gerry Klemm (Patten House); Consultant Mike Donahue, Geneva, IL; Maurice McNally with Avondale Custom Homes, 1120 E. Main St., St. Charles; Resident Liz Safanda, 1013 Dunstan Rd., Geneva; Resident Karine Luetgert, 109 S. River Lane, Geneva, IL; Resident Teresa Keenan, 1765 Southhampton, Geneva, IL; Alison King, 212 S. Fifth St., Geneva, IL; Resident Glorianne Campbell, 18 S. Sixth St., Geneva, IL; Resident Lesley Dimmick, 901 Lewis, Geneva, IL; David & Angel Warner, 425 S. First Street, Geneva, IL; and Recording Secretary Celeste Weilandt.

**3. Approval of the July 16, 2013 Minutes**

Minutes were approved on motion by Commissioner Ploppert, seconded by Andersson. Motion carried. Vote: 4-0-2 (Hiller and Zinke abstain)

**4. HPC Review of Building Permit Applications**

**A. 124 S. Second St. (Case 2013-042); Applicant Nancy Luyten; Application for Additional fascia and Internal Gutter/Cornice Repairs** - Preservation Planner Lambert reported this case was returning to the commission due to additional work resulting from newly discovered rotting areas within the gutters, cornice, and soffit (north facade). A recent bee hive was discovered and required the removal of additional fascia material. Also, the wood on the west facade of the pool house was dry rotted and the applicant wanted to include the work in this request.

Applicant, Ms. Luyten and architect, Mr. Adams, were present. Ms. Luyten reported that based on the advice of her roofer, Jerry Klem, she decided to do the gutters in a rubber lining instead of the metal lining. A bee hive was also discovered, which required more removal of the fascia. As a result, a mill worker will be milling the fascia identical to the original fascia. Mr. Adams confirmed that as the work progressed he did find more rotting of the trim work which would be replaced with the same kind of material and profiles. Ms. Luyten confirmed that she would be

using an Avatron (phonetic spelling) epoxy material which would be applied to the corner gutters to seal where they connected to the fascia. Any wood trim being replaced would be sealed on both sides of the lumber. She reported the west facade of the pool house was dry rotted and the wood siding would be replaced with red cedar with the same profile as the original.

Hiller raised concern that if the bees were the cause of the damage they might return and cause the same issue again and that using a synthetic material could be an advantage. Lambert, however, cautioned the commissioners that mixing a synthetic material with wood could be a problem since the two materials expanded differently. Regarding the rubber lining, Mr. Adams confirmed all gutters would be lined and he further confirmed how the lining would not be seen. Mr. Klem, the roofer for the project, also confirmed that the gutter lining would not be visible and would be adhered to the wood.

Ms. Luyten then asked if staff could provide an administrative review of the gutter lining and dry rot as the project moved forward because she was not able to predict what other issues she would encounter. Chairman Roy appreciated the applicant returning to the commission to discuss the issues and recommended that Planner Lambert follow up administratively. Lambert also reported that the current downspout system was not adequate and he envisioned there would be additional downspouts on the building. He was bringing this to the commission's attention. Ms. Luyten said she wanted to make the spouts less conspicuous than what currently existed. Per questions, Mr. Klem estimated he would install four-inch downspouts to match what currently existed; however, Andersson suggested a larger diameter spout.

**Commissioner Hiller moved to approve the request to work on the gutters, fascia and the west side of the pool house, as presented, and that any further work be administratively approved. Seconded by Zinke. Roll call:**

**Aye: Andersson, Hiller, Ploppert, Schock-Soderberg, Zinke, Roy**  
**Nay: None** **MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 6-0**

**B. 520 Campbell Street (Case No. 2013-076); Applicant: Mike Donahue with Avondale Custom Homes; Application for Demolition of Non-Contributing Residence -**

Preservation Planner Lambert recalled for the commissioners that this house was considered non-contributing, as indicated in the city's 1999 Survey and the commission was to consider the demolition of the residence which was estimated to be constructed between 1950 and 1952. He reminded the commissioners that in 1999 the structures being looked at were those that were built from 1949 or earlier and the question was whether the structure attained any historic significance since the 1999 Survey, and if so, how did the structure compare to other buildings of this classification.

Land planning and zoning consultant, Mike Donahue, was before the commission representing Mr. McNally of Avondale Custom Homes. He reported that Mr. McNally had a contract to purchase the property from owners Allison King and Leslie Demick (phonetic spelling). Photos of similar homes in the area followed with Mr. Donahue confirming that the home was a non-contributing home in the historic district and nothing of significance occurred on the property or at this home. Mr. Donahue proceeded to explain his plans to demolish the home and construct a new homes in its place. However, he was still working with city staff regarding the existing zoning on the block and the Tear Down and In-fill ordinance. Mr. Donahue expanded upon the professional background of Mr. McNally and his custom home business and stated that Mr. McNally was willing to work with city staff and the Historic Preservation Commission when a new home was to be constructed.

Zinke asked that Mr. Donahue explain the three lots that were staked and the reason why this particular lot straddled Lots 4 and 5 on the plat, wherein Mr. Donahue summarized the history of the area and the owners' acquisition of the ranch home back in 1973. He explained the home was maintained as a rental income property retained by the King family and now the owners desired to sell the property. He also believed that anyone interested in the property would want to raze the current home to construct a new home more in character with the historic district. As for how many of the lots were buildable, Mr. Donahue stated those were issues that were being addressed with the planning director and the city attorney. He stated tonight's application was only for the demolition.

Per the Chairman's question, Mr. Donahue expected to present a building permit application in the next month or two. Dir. Untch further acknowledged that as part of this application process, it did not require the applicant to present future construction plans for the site. Commissioner Hiller felt otherwise and did not recall approving demolition without seeing future plans, wherein Mr. Donahue stated that the city ordinance did not require an applicant to present a concept plan or new development plan as part of the permitting process. However, Hiller reiterated the commission's purview was to see how the new structure would fit into the neighborhood and surrounding homes, since it was in the heart of the historic district. He preferred to see the plans but Dir. Untch explained that, as part of the building permit process, he would be able to see those plans in the future, and that, in the past, construction plans were provided to the commission as a courtesy.

Mr. Donahue continued by pointing out that the lot was currently zoned R-3 and the only structure that could be constructed on the lot was a single-family structure that conformed to the R-3 zoning and that it had to meet the requirements of the city's Tear Down and In-fill ordinance. Should the lot remain vacant, it would be required to be maintained per code.

Concern was raised by Zinke that adding three new homes on the block would diminish the value of the property and she hoped the applicant would return with less than three homes. Wherein, Mr. Donahue reiterated that most of the block had three to four homes facing on each block frontage and he would be continuing the land use pattern of the original town as it had evolved since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. To address Zinke's concerns, Mr. Donahue, however, cited more recent examples of new construction within this historic district which met the current Tear Down In-fill Ordinance. Addressing trees during the demolition process, Mr. Donahue stated a tree survey was completed and affected no trees on the properties.

Dir. Untch acknowledged the concern about over-building but confirmed that zoning was in place for the property and staff was working with the applicant regarding detailed aspects of the subdivision and zoning regulation as they applied to the case before the commissioners. He expected to work through the issues. Dir. Untch reiterated that the commissioners' actions could not override the zoning rights of an individual property. Additionally, the lots were platted as 60' x 150' feet which was the historic pattern in the district. Lastly, he noted that the city promoted in-fill housing in this district and the applicant was providing a plan in harmony with the city's Comprehensive Plan. Dir. Untch stated that the applicant had a right to demolish the building.

Andersson concurred with staff and stated there were no distinct architectural details to the home, no one famous lived there, etc., and she believed it was a good opportunity to place the city's stamp on this property. She encouraged the applicant to create a 21<sup>st</sup> century home compatible with the surrounding area. Ploppert also believed the house, as it sat now, was keeping the square block from contributing more to the historic district. Addressing the concerns raised, Petitioner, Mr. McNally stated he was still working with the City to find the exact plat size he

could work with. He did not want to take down any trees, of course, but indicated he may have to. He did not believe the demolition itself would affect the trees.

Per another question about reducing the three lots down to two and whether the case would come before this commission, Dir. Untch indicated it could depending upon the lot configuration and what "trips" the subdivision plat review, but it was more of a Plan Commission issue. Clarification followed on how the original three platted lots (lots 4, 5, & 6) were acquired through the years and that 520 Campbell was sitting in the middle of lots 4 and 5.

Chairman Roy opened up the meeting to public comment:

Resident, Ms. Liz Safanda, 1013 Dunstan Road, did not oppose the demolition; however, she asked that the city consider having a building permit pulled within 60-days so that a lot does not sit vacant like the vacant lot at Cheever and Shady Lane. She voiced concern about the preservation of trees during construction, noting that while trees may not come down during demolition it does not mean that no trees will come down during construction. She also preferred to see what was planned for the lots. Dir. Untch responded that tree preservation was not under the purview of this commission. He walked through the history of the tree ordinance as it relates to trees on private residential lots and for lots under the development review process, reminding the commissioners about the property rights of owners to remove trees on their own private lots. Details followed. Zinke raised concern about the city's pre-settlement trees, which Dir. Untch explained were no different than trees that fell under the tree preservation ordinance. Hiller reiterated that the Secretary of Interior Standards addressed the preservation of trees.

**Commissioner Andersson moved to approve the demolition request, as presented, seconded by Ploppert. Roll call:**

**Aye: Andersson, Hiller, Ploppert, Schock-Soderberg, Zinke, Roy**  
**Nay: None** **MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 6-0**

**5. Concept Review**

**A. 402 Franklin Street (Case No. 2013-061); Applicant: David and Angel Warner; Concept Review of Partial Demolition and New Additions** - Preservation Planner Lambert stated there was a contract to purchase this home and the future owners, David and Angel Warner, were seeking input from this commission regarding their plans. A historic synopsis of the home and garage followed, along with historic photos. Per Lambert, the applicant would require a variance for the west yard.

Applicant, Mr. David Warner, confirmed he was under contract to purchase as of yesterday and was available to answer questions. Hiller recalled that this house was before the commission a few years back but it was a very difficult house to work with. However, this proposal was a better solution. Per questions about the driveway, Mr. Warner explained that the shared driveway would be cut in half and the one half would be returned to his neighbor while his portion would return to green space. Mr. Warner explained that his plan was to replace the "Brady Bunch" addition with a two-car garage and return that square footage up to the second floor. He planned to have a kitchen expansion offering better views. Eventually, Mr. Warner stated he would like to return the home to its original character, since his wife located some historic photos of the home. Per some questions, Mr. Warner stated his neighbor's garage would actually be taller than his one-story addition. Regarding tree preservation, Mr. Warner indicated he wanted to save the trees but he did need proper access to his garage. (A chimney error was noted on the plans, wherein Mr. Warner confirmed he was not removing the chimney.)

Dir. Untch explained to the applicant that the Fourth Street frontage was the front yard and was the lot line that was the shorter of the two. Therefore, the opposite yard was the rear yard and would be subject to zoning board consideration and compliance with the four variation standards in the zoning ordinance. Questions followed about the new driveway and providing enough space.

Overall, the commissioners were in support of the concept plan and looked forward to seeing plans in the future.

## **6. Secretary's Report (Staff Update)**

Administrative Review Summary - Mr. Lambert reviewed comments from the commissioners regarding his administrative review summary. As to awnings and signs, he pointed out that the city's sign regulations had been codified as part of the most recent sign ordinance amendments and so his review is limited to certain items such as size, area, location, mounting and lighting. The consensus for signs was that staff continue to do what the code states. Dir. Untch explained, however, that there are occasions when there is a choice of the signage being on the awning or on portions of the building. His experience has been that there has not been a strong preference stated by the commissioners because it was very straight forward. Andersson preferred seeing new stand-alone signs in new locations, signs attached to a building, and brand new sign packages. Staff believed the new stand-alone/free standing signs needed to come before this commission.

Regarding masonry cleaning and painting unpainted material, Lambert reported that currently the city did not require a permit for masonry cleaning and painting of unpainted material. He offered to discuss with the commissioners if they wanted to require a permit for this type of work. Other communities handled this type of work as an administrative review and worked to educate the owners, unless it was a chemical process. Some commissioners and Dir. Untch agreed that this item was more of an educational process. Asked if there was some process to prevent someone from painting a historic brick wall, for example, Lambert offered to look at other communities to get some answers. Dir. Untch believed it would have to be an educational process and also an enforcement issue. Lambert suggested it may be a matter of getting the historic district updated and getting some information out to the home owners regarding the "do's and don'ts" for their historic property.

Regarding shutters, Lambert believed this was an educational process for owners and since shutters were not structural, staff could not review them. As to window rehabilitation and due to the variety of commissioner responses, Lambert and Dir. Untch believed window rehabilitation should be an administrative review since window rehabilitation could cover many facets and the fact that staff was constantly coaching applicants in the office on this matter. Dialog followed that not all window projects could be tracked by staff, unless a permit was pulled. Commissioners supported staff doing an administrative review for window repairs only.

As to a language change for windows replacements located in a rear public alleyway, Lambert reported there were very few public alleyways and very few buildings affected by the change. Most window replacements were for security purposes. Andersson preferred to see all window replacements except for rear facade, non-contributing structures, which could be administrative reviewed. She also preferred to see front facade window replacements on non-contributing structures because those same non-contributing structures could have now become potentially contributing. The majority of the commissioners were comfortable with staff completing administrative reviews of all windows at rear facades along public alleyways.

Turning to accessory buildings or structures greater than 100 square feet the commissioners' consensus was that they should be administratively reviewed. Andersson again, voiced her concern about the gap in the historical age of a structure that may not have been identified as contributing, potentially significant, or significant in 1999. Lambert reminded commissioners that if he had questions on any "gray" areas, those cases would be brought before the HPC. Per a question from Hiller, Lambert stated that staff supports a position that fences for side and rear yards would be administratively reviewed while permanently-installed fences for front and street yards would come before the commission. Andersson then asked to see all ramps and lifts on contributing and non-contributing structures because she believed they affected surrounding properties and she wanted to see how they would be finished. However, Lambert explained he and Dir. Untch did discuss this matter and for those ramps or lifts located in the rear or side rear areas, they were basically a function of the ramp because many of the lots were tight. Other commissioners were fine with ramp administrative reviews for rear, non-contributing buildings.

## **7. New Business**

A. From the Commission - Dialog was raised regarding the update of the 1999 survey and who would be charged with doing the work. Zinke offered to assist with the survey. Concern was raised that some owners may not want to be re-surveyed wherein Lambert pointed out that houses over 50 years old were automatically assumed to be potentially significant and it was actually necessary to identify those structures that were non-contributing.

An update followed on the winners of the photo contest. Per Lambert, a presentation will be coming to the city council.

B. From the Public: None

## **8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m. on motion by Zinke, seconded by Schock-Soderberg. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote of 6-0.