

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

November 19, 2013, 7:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Roy called the November 19, 2013 meeting of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call followed:

2. Roll Call

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

Staff Present: Preservation Planner Michael Lambert; Community Development Dir. Dick Untch; City Administrator Mary McKittrick

Others Present: Mr. Darryl Bean, D.R. Horton, 800 S. Milwaukee, Libertyville, IL; Mr. Maurice McNally, Avondale Custom Homes, P.O. Box 3700, St. Charles, IL; Mr. Clyde Jones, 521 Franklin St., Geneva; Ms. Liz Safanda, 1013 Dunstan Rd., Geneva; Mr. Jim Bishop, 228 S. Fifth St., Geneva; Mr. Dave McFadden, 328 S. Sixth St., Geneva; Mr. Adam Gibbons, 33W777 Hill Road, Geneva; and Mr. Dave Myszka, architect for Avondale Custom Homes; Recording Secretary Celeste Weilandt

3. Approval of the October 15, 2013 Minutes

The October 15, 2013 minutes were approved on motion by Commissioner Ploppert, seconded by Commissioner Schock-Soderberg. Motion carried by voice vote of 6-0.

4. HPC Review of Building Permit Applications

A. 200 S. Third Street (Case 2013-103); Exterior Sign; Applicant: Dave McFadden/Past Basket - Preservation Planner Lambert noted this request went before the Plan Commission on November 14, 2013, which was in support of the sign request. Currently, two existing signs were approved by the City Council through a variance. The third sign would be located by the new deck area that was proposed.

Mr. McFadden stated the need for the third sign was due to the new deck area and for a new tenant, reminding the commissioners of that discussion before the Commission last month.

Commissioner Hiller moved to approve the application, as presented, Seconded by Commissioner Ploppert. Roll call:

Aye: Andersson, Hiller, Ploppert, Schock-Soderberg, Zinke, Roy

Nay: None

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 6-0

B. 526 S. Fourth Street (Case No. 2013-104); Demolition of an Existing Residence; Applicant: City of Geneva - Mr. Lambert reviewed the proposal and explained that the home and property were recently purchased by the City of Geneva with the intent to clear the

site for additional parking. A number of city staff did take a tour of the residence. The home is listed as Dutch Colonial in the 1999 survey and is listed as a contributing structure to the historic district; however, it needed repair and maintenance. Photos of elevations and existing conditions followed. Per Lambert, a single-car garage (erected on the site around 1945 and not identified as contributing to the property) sits on the site but may be slightly off the property, as identified in tax maps and other survey information. The garage has also been utilized for some fire department practice at the site recently. Lambert reported the home was built at some time between May 1923 and June 1930.

Discussing the neighborhood context and viewing an aerial photo of the neighborhood, Mr. Lambert explained that the site is not "visually-connected" to the historic neighborhood because the historic housing at the nearby intersection creates a discernible "hard edge" condition and because the subject house is surrounded by a large parking lot to the east and a large vacant lot to the south. Photos of the interior followed with Lambert explaining that while the exterior of the home looked Dutch Colonial, the interior was finished in an Arts and Crafts style. Existing conditions of the basement followed. A summary of facts followed by Lambert, noting that a city parking lot sits adjacent to the site and the subject site was purchased by the City in order to add commuter parking per the Downtown / Station Master Plan.

Per Mr. Lambert, the City has proposed publishing two requests for proposals: either relocation of the home or demolition. A redevelopment summary followed noting the estimated cost to rehab the house on-site is approximately \$428,000. The estimated land value was approximately \$150,000 and for an estimated 2100 sq. foot house in Geneva, he estimated the total value of the property would be \$579,000.00.

Regarding the garage, Commissioner Hiller believed it may be older, given the drop lap siding and some other elements. He wondered if it may have been moved from another location. Lambert felt it may have been relocated and believed it was older due to the milling that was done on it. Getting a second opinion about the garage history was also suggested. Some commissioners believed it would have been better if the fire department held its exercises after the demolition permit had been discussed and granted.

Planner Lambert elaborated that the request for proposals (RFP) would be for a period of 30 days to allow someone to bid on the house and relocate it to another lot; the RFP would not necessarily require that the home be removed from the lot within 30 days. Asked if there was a deadline to get house relocated or when construction would begin on the site, Dir. Untch explained there was no specific schedule set but he envisioned that actual construction would begin some time in the spring, but that there could be some negotiation. Other staff/commissioner comments followed that the house was structurally sound, the poured concrete foundation was very good, it did need some rehab work, and that someone would get a nice home. Also mentioned was the fact that the request had to be looked at from the perspective of the highest and best use. Staff felt that the home's location, its proximity to the surroundings, and the city's need for parking in the immediate area, was appropriate to view as either a home to be relocated or demolished if relocation could not be obtained.

Those commissioners who toured the residence provided positive comments about the interior, the sound structure of the home, and the fact that there was a market for smaller, charming, homes.

Chairman Roy opened up the meeting to public comment.

Ms. Liz Safanda, 1013 Dunstan Road, stated this home was her “second home” from ages 8 to 12 years old. Her best friend, who lived there, recently sold the home to the City of Geneva. She clarified that the first floor powder room near the kitchen was present in the early 1950s. She agreed the home was not in good condition. As to the site being “just outside the delineation of the historic district”, she objected to that statement made in the PowerPoint presentation and argued the house was in the historic district.

City Administrator Mary McKittrick stated the intent of the City was to put out simultaneously two Request for Proposals (RFP) -- one to advertise proposals for demolition and the other to advertise proposals to relocate the primary structure, starting with a bid of \$1.00 and out for 30 days. Should the City receive proposals for both options in response to the RFP, relocation would take precedent.

Commissioner Hiller moved to approve the demolition of the property at 526 S. Fourth Street with the condition that the property be posted for relocation and if the sale does not place within 30 days, the City be shall be allowed to demolish the structure. Seconded by Commissioner Schock-Soderberg. Roll call:

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

5. Concept Review

A. 212 S. Fifth Street (Case No. 2012-105); Relocation of Carriage Barn, Screened Porch Demolition; Minor Exterior/Site Paving Improvements; Applicant: Avondale Custom Homes - Mr. Lambert reported this site was the former Merritt King property. Historic photos were reviewed, with Lambert noting the carriage barn in one of the photos as being relocated twice to-date. This request would be for a third relocation. Various photos were reviewed, with Lambert pointing out in one photo of the house having a gap between two sections where a bathroom was installed. There is a proposal to complete that closure. For informational purposes, he explained that the brick piers off of the driveway were reported to be constructed in the early 1980s and the brick driveway about 1973, with bricks salvaged from the City of Elgin. Elements of work to be considered under the concept review included the repair of an existing raised patio; the replacement of existing concrete sidewalks with brick paver edging to be replaced with bluestone; the repair of the tongue and groove wood porch deck; and wooden steps to be replaced in kind.

Mr. Maurice McNally with Avondale Custom Homes introduced himself and architect Mr. Dave Myszka. Mr. Myszka reviewed photos of the current home and stated that he planned to keep the original home but repair/restore it to better conditions. He planned to subdivide the lot into four additional lots. The cement walkway leading up to the home, the north side cement patio, and the patio to the west would be replaced with bluestone material. The existing garage/barn (with shed on back) would be reoriented to have the garage doors and new driveway exit onto Fifth Street. The existing entry door to the garage would be relocated to the northwest side of the shed. A full foundation, with concrete floor, would be added to the garage

First and second floor plans for the existing home and the proposed concept plans were presented, with Mr. Myszka indicating that the exterior of the home would be painted but be left alone with just the reorientation of the garage to a better location. Some interior work would be done. As for the gap between the two sections of the home, Mr. Myszka explained that space would be closed off to allow better matching of the architecture of the house and siding. It would also create a nicer closet for the master bedroom. Once the garage was relocated, Mr. Myszka

stated the existing screen porch would be removed. The patio would be restored. Mr. McNally explained that the bricks from the existing driveway would be used somewhere on the site, i.e., as a border for the driveway or somewhere with decorative possibilities.

Regarding the gapped space between the two sections of the home, Mr. Myszka confirmed that the gap was on a 45-degree angle and he did not know why it was created that way. A resident, who lived just south of the property, mentioned that the two windows on the left were for an apartment because the former owner, Merritt King, rented the rooms there. He believes the space was added there in order to provide access to the second floor apartment. Per Andersson's questions, Mr. Myszka stated that some new windows would be added to the existing laundry room area to go along, architecturally, with the house. The kitchen window would be restored to what it was.

Commissioner Hiller preferred that the applicants move the barn to the southwest corner; he did not prefer using asphalt for the driveways but liked that the driveway would be broken up -- giving it a more architectural look. While he did not prefer the use of bluestone because it was not period appropriate, Hiller preferred using the left-over street bricks for the front walkway or entranceway. Andersson liked the bluestone material. As a last comment to offer, Hiller suggested that if the applicants were not going to use of the extra elements from the barn/garage (cupola, light) that they should give those items to the Geneva History Center to research to see if they were historic elements from other Geneva buildings. Setbacks were also noted. Per Mr. Myszka, the front steps would be rebuilt with a solid material.

Discussing the lots, Dir. Untch confirmed that the corner lot qualified under one of the state's Plat Act exemptions, meaning that it provided space for another lot that meets the minimum lot area and width requirements of the R-4 District without needing City Council or Plan Commission action. Details followed. He pointed out that the three remaining lots were lots from the original town of Geneva and were buildable. Demolition dust was briefly mentioned.

Mr. Jim Bishop 228 S. Fifth Street, stepped forward and stated he lives immediately south of the King House. He spoke about the distance between the King House and his house, which sat five feet from the King's property line. He confirmed with staff that the rear setback for the principal structure and the accessory structure was five feet. Therefore, he objected to the new location of the garage being relocated to the southwest corner due to the location of his patio, which was about three feet from an existing fence, and would be an imposing story-and-a-half structure next to his patio. Regarding the north side of the house, Mr. Bishop believed the new home planned for the lot would be very close to the existing home. He suggested leaving the garage where it was, turn it around to face south, and bring the driveway around, as it would preserve the house as it looks currently. However, he did support the renovations being proposed to the home and stated the bluestone was appropriate.

B. 110 South Street (Case No. 2012-106); New Residence; Applicant: Daryl Bean/D.R. Horton Homes; Christopher Russ/ALA Architects- Mr. Lambert reported there is no address for the subject vacant lot but it does sit at the corner of Route 31 and South Street. The petitioner was here to present a concept plan.

Mr. Daryl Bean, with D.R. Horton and Emerald Homes, stated he purchased the lot and had worked with Planner DeGroot and was seeking input tonight. Proposed was a single-family, Craftsman-style home with a three-car garage. Elevations of the proposed home were reviewed, noting materials would include lap siding, stone, shakes and gables with details. The front porch would be bead boarded to allow for some exterior living space. Mr. Bean stated there was a

change to the rear elevation: the fireplace would be brought to the rear exterior wall. He proceeded to point out the surrounding structures and review the site plan.

Commissioner comments followed that some of the elements could reflect the current time period; some different roofing could be provided; and reducing the massing would be beneficial due to the adjacent house. Other comments included that too many materials/textures were being used and focusing on just the Craftsman-style or another style would be a positive. However, others liked the variety of materials. Per Mr. Bean, the siding would be a Hardi-plank wood (LP Smart Trim) product. Another suggestion included using a higher quality sound insulation due to the trains passing by.

Chairman Roy opened up the meeting to public comments:

Mr. Mike Bruno, 522 Fulton Street, asked about the depth of the porch (9 feet).

Mr. Lambert also added to the conversation that the lot coverage may have to be looked into if the porch was expanded. It was suggested by Andersson to enlarge the front porch since the train would be in the rear. However, even with the train and nearby parking garage, Mr. Bean stated there was a nice tree line located in the back of the home which provided some privacy.

6. Secretary's Report (Staff Update)

Commissioner Training - IAHP Roundtable - Planner Lambert reported the state preservation agency notified the City that there has been no record of commissioners or staff receiving commissioner training certification this year. The last date for this year's training is scheduled for December 7, 2013 in Springfield. Details followed regarding the benefits of such training workshops. Zinke offered to be the representative for next year's training. Commissioner Schock-Soderberg offered to go. However, Lambert stated that if she could not attend, he would attend as a last resort.

Ms. Liz Safanda, 1030 Dunstan Road, mentioned the fact that Preservation Partners held previous workshops where commissioners from all three towns were invited. Asked if that could be considered appropriate training, Mr. Lambert thought it could be as long as it was approved by the IHPA. She would follow up with Mr. Lambert.

Staff updates included:

- 327 Franklin: Petitioners were going to remove a fireplace (1950's addition to the home) that was falling off the side of the house -- upon investigation with the fire department, significant upgrades will have to be done to create an active fireplace. The owner is now requesting not to replace the fireplace and fill in the gap with siding to match the home, soffit and fascia details. Asked if the commissioners would like to see Mr. Lambert handle this case administratively, all commissioners, except Andersson, were fine with an administrative review.

- Patten House: A conflict exists of what has been drawn (regarding the front porch) and what was being constructed. Lambert said he was asked by the contractor to construct a cedar deck since the walking surface was not covered. He had concerns about constructing a tongue and groove deck floor. While it was not initially approved by the Commission, Lambert said the petitioner was anxious to move forward, due to the weather. As a compromise, he approved the decking with a 3/16th-inch gap but required an edging board to be installed that would have the traditional bull-nose and traditional details at the front side of the porches. He felt it was a better

long-term solution. The deck will be stained as close as the painted color with everything else painted as proposed in the plans presented.

Mr. Adams Gibbons, a resident, inquired about the reuse of the pillars on the original small portico, wherein commissioners did not recall them being reused. Mr. Lambert spoke about how the pillars changed over the years but the petitioner would not be reusing them at the exterior; however, Lambert was unsure whether or not the petitioner would be reusing them as part of the interior decor. The petitioner, however, has saved and used historical elements of the home in the renovation.

Mr. Lambert provided an update on Mr. Flynn's garage on Fifth Street and referenced his monthly activity report.

7. New Business

A. From the Commission - Commissioner Zinke distributed a copy of her notes to Chairman Roy regarding the concerns of residents and friends regarding the preservation of the Mill Race Inn property or a part of it. She recommended that staff begin the process of landmarking the Julius Alexander Blacksmith Shop and the enveloping additions which make up the original Ann Forsyth 1933 Mill Race Inn. Zinke discussed her recent investigations of this property done at the Geneva History Center.

Commissioner concerns were raised whether the original blacksmith shop could be found within the structure and whether it would be intact. Hiller and Zinke offered to research the building (under staff supervision) while other commissioners believed starting the research process was important first before landmarking anything on the site.

Per questions, Dir. Untch stated there was a contract purchaser interested in the property and the commission could initiate a friendly landmark status process but any active effort should include the purchaser in the conversations for his/her input. While he reminded the commissioners that there was the federal tax credit advantage, the highest and best use criteria had to be considered for the site. Andersson suggested, as a first step, for staff to share its concerns with the parties and that commissioners do their own research of the site. Planner Lambert, however, suggested that, logically, it made sense to first gain access into the interior to see what actually exists before commissioners get too far ahead in their research process. Additionally, Dir. Untch cautioned that what may exist may be in the flood plain, which also had to be addressed, especially in regard to regulatory requirements of other agencies.

Dialog followed that the logical person to get into the structure would be Planner Lambert, whose background includes early settlement structures. Dir. Untch stated he and Lambert would contact the owner/purchaser-contractor to get inside the building. Lambert suggested commissioners might create map overlays to determine where in the present building he should be concentrating his investigation.

Ms. Liz Safanda, 1013 Dunstan, asked what happens if the owner objects to the request, wherein Zinke responded that it is her hope that the Commission would continue the discussion, educating the potential purchaser of the value of the building, if something of historic significance were found to exist. However, some commissioners agreed to take one step at a time and not lose a potential interested buyer.

Resident, Mr. Adam Gibbons, proceeded to discuss his copy of a 1890s photograph of the Bennett Mill where he identified the blacksmith shop in the background. He suggested reviewing the Sandborn maps to better identify the location of the shop.

Per Andersson's question about a new commissioner, Chairman Roy said he reviewed some applications but he has heard nothing as to an appointment of a new commissioner.

B. From the Public - None.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m. on motion by Commissioner Ploppert, seconded by Commissioner Andersson. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.