

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
City Hall Chambers – 109 James Street
Geneva, Illinois, 60134**

March 7, 2019

1. Call to Order

Chairman Zellmer called to order the March 7, 2019 meeting of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present HPC: Chairman Zellmer, Commissioners Hamilton, Hiller, Salomon, Stazin, Warner

Absent: Commissioner Zinke

Staff Present: Historic Preservation Planner Michael Lambert; Community Development Dir David DeGroot

; Others Present: Mr. Dave Shepard; Ms. Margaret Eagan, Mr. Scott Krill; Ms. Patti Lane; and Recording Secretary Celeste Weilandt

3. Approval of February 19, 2019 Minutes

Minutes of February 19, 2019 Meeting – Minutes were approved on motion by Commissioner Hamilton, seconded by Commissioner Warner. Motion carried 5-0-1. (Salomon abstains.)

4. Downtown Zoning Update

A. Downtown Zoning Update – Review and Recommendation Review and recommendation of proposed amendments to the City of Geneva Zoning Ordinance (Title 11 of the City Code) and the City of Geneva Zoning Map. Related documents are available on the project webpage. A presentation will be provided by the Director of Community Development, David DeGroot, AICP. Community Development Director David DeGroot reviewed the topics to be covered for tonight's meeting which would include reviewing the Downtown Master Plan, project objectives, status of the downtown zoning update project, etc. and the role of the Historic Preservation Commission in relation to the project. Examples would follow. At the closing of the presentation, he would be seeking specific feedback from the commissioners on topics where the working group has made recommendations but are not consistent with the Downtown Master Plan, questions from the community workshops that commissioners can provide feedback on, and some other areas where staff has made some recommendations.

A history of when the Downtown Station Area Master Plan was adopted followed, as well as a summary of its goals and objectives. A history of when the City's zoning ordinance and zoning map were adopted also followed. Because the zoning regulations under the ordinance had not been thoroughly reviewed, a number of conflicts existed between the recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan and the current zoning ordinance and zoning districts, which acted as a barrier for redevelopment and reinvestment in the community.

Per Director DeGroot, the main focus of tonight's update was to bring consistency between the Downtown Master Plan and the City's zoning ordinance and to remove the barriers as well as streamline the review process. Examples of barriers were discussed as well as a summary of the current status of the draft ordinance, to date, and its purpose.

As the presentation moved forward, Director DeGroot asked that the commissioners consider how: 1) the HPC can achieve the City's development objectives within the context of the City's historic district; 2) the proposed changes relate to the character of the historic district as it relates to setbacks, building height, scale of development, etc., and 3) recommendations can be provided to the Plan Commission.

Examples of how staff planned to remove barriers affecting the downtown dining district, the residential district, and the bed and breakfasts, were explained by Dir. DeGroot. He also explained that by consolidating the Plan Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals it would streamline the process, from an efficiency perspective and a cost savings perspective for both the applicant and the City. Other municipalities had done similar consolidations.

Another consideration was to streamline the review process for a site plan if it met all of the standards, bulk regulations, and was approved by the HPC – it allowed the site plan to be administratively approved, thereby removing two additional meetings. Under "Use Determinations", staff was proposing more general land use categories. Should there be questions on the use, the application could be brought before the Planning and Zoning Commission.

An explanation followed on how the proposed regulations were drafted as well as how the district boundaries were determined, i.e., reviewing the opportunity sites, reviewing how density changed in the City since the Master Plan was approved in 2013 (a net increase of 102 units with 97 needing special approval); as well as analyzing individual buildings and uses and comparing them to the proposed zoning regulations and to the existing regulations. Also, identifying any conflicts, noting where the proposed zoning was either more restrictive or less restrictive, and making the changes. Per DeGroot, the working group identified some properties where the proposed changes did not make sense and needed to be changed, or there was a good match. From that exercise, staff consolidated 18 zoning districts in the study area into to 7 zoning districts.

Director DeGroot then reviewed those regulations found in the zoning ordinance that protect the existing character of the residential areas. Specifically, the current teardown/infill regulations will continue to be carried into the residential districts. The non-residential areas will have increased setback requirements and will require landscape screening to protect adjacent residential districts. Proposed will be allowable residential uses in the "Residentially-Scaled Commercial Mixed Use District," as a permitted use in the district. Details followed.

Non-conforming provisions, non-conforming uses and non-conforming structures were described in detail by Dir. DeGroot. No questions followed.

Director DeGroot conveyed that he wanted feedback on the following matters:

As for changing the R5 district to the D-MHR zoning district located on the south side of James Street between Seventh and Fifth, Director DeGroot reminded the commission that this district would allow for a reduced setback of 10 feet for a rear-loaded townhome and a maximum building height of 40 feet. Dir. DeGroot asked for feedback on the permitted uses for this district and proceeded to describe what was allowed. A concern raised in the community workshop was whether or not the side by side attached single-family homes should be allowed by right or require a special use. He explained that, currently, the area was depicted in the Master Plan as Single-

Family Residential because the existing zoning allowed for two- and three-family units. Details followed. In reviewing the proposed regulations for the single-family districts, 8 out of the 10 properties would be non-conforming, most because the maximum lot coverage was too low, minimum lot sizes and widths were too low, but not too low in the existing R-5 district or the proposed Mixed Density Residential district. (Project images followed)

The working group recommended going against the recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan and keep the existing mixed density because it was consistent with the existing zoning and land uses and because it was consistent with the goals of the Downtown Master Plan to encourage diversity of residential housing types near the downtown. Preserving the density as is, staff felt the development pressure in other areas would be eased somewhat.

However, Commissioner Stazin inquired whether changing the zoning would jeopardize any existing properties in the area wherein Dir. DeGroot explained that any assemblage of lots or demolition would require HPC review to put up higher density. DeGroot explained that if the permitted uses were being compared to the current R-5 zoning, the single-family attached (up to six units), would not be allowed in the existing zoning by right or by special use. Otherwise, the permitted uses were identical. Further clarification followed. Commissioners were in agreement to have the Mixed Density Residential but require a special use permit for anything beyond three units.

Discussing the R6 zoning along the south side of Peyton Street along north 6th Street, DeGroot said it was proposed for Mixed High Density Residential, as recommended by the working group, but not consistent with the Downtown Master Plan, which reflected the area as Single-Family zoning. After careful review, most of the properties would be non-conforming with the Single Family zoning requirements due to lot sizes, widths too small, not enough lot coverage, etc. Twenty-two out of 55 properties had multiple dwelling units. Examples followed.

Again, Director DeGroot asked if the commissioners thought the mixed density was appropriate for the area and, if so, should anything beyond three units require a special use. Commissioner Hamilton shared that the area was already single family and adding multi-units would change the character of the blocks over time. After discussing the matter, commissioners agreed this area should remain residential with up to 2 to 3 units maximum by special use. Chairman Zellmer felt the edge of the district should be west of Sixth Street.

Resident, Ms. Egan came forward and asked how many houses in the north historic district were non-conforming. She also voiced that others have expressed to her concern over the amount of townhomes coming into the downtown area and when the discussion focuses on keeping the authenticity of the downtown area, she said the potential is lost when too many townhomes are added. She provided the example of when three dilapidated homes become ideal for a developer to come in and replace all three with townhomes, citing Campbell Row being an issue in her neighborhood regarding height, etc.

Commissioner Hiller agreed that height was the issue, it was overwhelming, and was the constant complaint heard. DeGroot concurred, clarifying he needed to hear that type of input yet balance that with the objectives of adding units where the City could, and trust that the processes will work by having the HPC review it and having a special use process in place. DeGroot pointed out that all townhomes so far have had some form of height relief except for Campbell Row and First Street Townhomes. In addition, Preservation Planner Lambert explained that in some HPC townhome discussions there had been the idea of the developer lowering the first floors to reduce scale but allow for overall height, citing the Seventh Street townhomes and the proposal for

Hamilton Place. Wherein, Director DeGroot then asked whether the issue becomes a sunken first floor or a maximum building height of something less, to force the issue.

Mr. Dave Shepherd, 117 N. Fifth Street, who resides in a duplex, directed his comments about the Peyton Street Mixed Use High Density discussion. He reminded the commission that the City's historic area draws people to the area because it is mainly a single-family "presentation." As for the compatibility, the townhomes behind Cocoa Bean were not compatible with the neighborhood. Mr. Shepherd pointed out that even if townhomes and multi-units are allowed as a special use in the historic district, it undermined the argument of it being a lack of compatibility because it was already identified as being an acceptable use. He recommended eliminating row houses for the historic district. On another point, he asked that the 10-foot setback for front porches not be allowed in the historic district for newly constructed townhomes. Lastly, he did not believe the Muses development was representative of the historic district and was opening the door for other projects.

For further clarification, Director DeGroot explained that, as drafted, the new Multi-family district allowed more density for the current R-7 zoning district (apartment buildings, etc.) and if a proposal was not in keeping with the historic district, the 9 standards under the special use were used to evaluate the project. Commissioners concurred that a special use would be required for the area under discussion.

Mr. Patty Lane, 516 Ford Street, asked the commission to support the City's original Master Plan for this area – turning it back to R-3. She recommended making the zoning change from Sixth Street to Burgess Norton because the factory needed buffering. She pointed out the area was a residential neighborhood and that existing multi-family homes were being renovated back to single-family homes, which were in demand.

Per questions, Director DeGroot explained the definition of the Medium Density Single-Family zoning. Commissioners reached a consensus that anything more than 3 units in this area would require a special use permit and review by the HPC. Mr. Lambert pointed out that the commissioners seemed to be struggling with the maximum density for the downtown area. Discussion followed that the commission also seemed to favor the smaller 2 and 3 units and not the six-unit row homes which would change the area's character.

Commissioner Warner was supportive of having the area all single-family with residentially-scaled buildings that permit 2 or 3 units. For example, two units could be on the main structure while a coach house could have a third unit, as long as it looked residential. He did not support the row house appearance since it changed the character; however density in the downtown area could be obtained the way he explained.

Ms. Lane returned and preferred to see row homes created between Fifth and Sixth Streets, backing up to the factory. She believed the market was leaning towards the homes being returned to single-family, wherein Commissioner Stazin queried where her information was obtained, and if that was the case, then the point of discussing this matter was moot. Ms. Lane pointed out to place a six- or four-unit townhome development in a residential neighborhood was concerning and believed they needed to be grouped together. Having the multi-family homes owner-occupied could also assist with the pride of ownership, etc.

Commissioners agree to allow 2 or 3 units in the area with a special use, but not allow six units. Some commissioners felt the zoning district should start west of Sixth Street, near Burgess Norton, while others felt it should be west of Fifth Street. Consensus was not reached on this item.

Next, Director DeGroot queried commissioners on the height for townhomes, wherein commissioners agreed pressing down the first story was fine and keeping the height at 35 feet.

Mr. Shepherd recalled the height of a building was based off a rear loaded garage, allowing for an increase in the building's height, as an incentive.

The other incentive, Director DeGroot pointed out, was to reduce the required front yard setback in order to have the rear loaded unit. Chairman Zellmer reiterated he did not support the increased height. Commissioner Stazin inquired as to how the 35 feet height was established and what the difference was between 38 and 35 feet when the goal was to reduce the density of a 3-story structure. He further pointed out having a taller building with a deeper setback, from a street perspective, was better than a 35-foot building with 10-foot setback. Discussion followed. Consensus was 35 foot height with a 10-foot front yard setback to allow for a rear-loading garage.

Reviewing areas where the proposed zoning was consistent with the recommendations of the Downtown Station Area Master Plan, but not with the working group, Director DeGroot specifically addressed 18 S. Fifth Street, where the owner raised concern about his property being rezoned to a residentially-scaled commercial mixed-use zoning. The owner preferred the current B2 zoning district since it was flexible. Director DeGroot reviewed the owner's plat of survey discussing what would and would not meet the proposed regulations. The owner believed his property should not be listed as the beginning of the transitional area given the intensity of the uses surrounding him and the fact that he faced Fifth Street. (Photos on the overhead followed.) Details followed by staff.

Director DeGroot then asked the commissioners: 1) whether they saw 18 S. Fifth Street as the start of the Transitional District; and 2) should the State Bank of Geneva, if ever redeveloped, be in a residentially scaled commercial district or go to a higher intensity. Director DeGroot discussed the trade-offs between the red-colored district and the orange-colored district. The consensus was to keep 18 S. Fifth Street as proposed (orange) and keep the State Bank orange.

Regarding the existing B2 district and changing it to the D-RSCM zoning between James and Campbell Streets, along east side of Third Street, Director DeGroot described the current zoning and the proposed zoning and was not sure why it was proposed as such by the working group. To preserve the current presence of the buildings, the consensus was to go to red.

The following properties were staff recommendations and consensus was reached on the following: The properties at 404 and 426 S. Third Street would remain orange and the properties at 511 and 513 S. Third Street would remain red.

Per Director DeGroot, this matter would move forward to a March 28th Plan Commission public hearing.

Commissioner Hiller questioned Director DeGroot about the definitions of Bed and Breakfasts and Inns, wherein DeGroot explained that Bed and Breakfasts and Inns would be permitted with a special use, but a review process would be required. Distinction between the two uses followed. There was commissioner support to keep Inns out of the single-family districts. Because the definitions were suppose to match the state's definitions, DeGroot would follow up.

Commissioner Stazin briefly returned to the discussion about his take on the northern historic district where he supported having a special use for six-unit buildings in the entire proposed area versus defining a specific parcel. He would not oppose it since there was a consensus. However, he shared details on what he had seen in other cities, citing that there were

ways to keep the residential character in those neighborhoods. DeGroot agreed this matter could be addressed in the design guidelines for townhomes. Lastly, Stazin stated that in the peripheral downtown area there were places for row homes and townhomes. Chairman Zellmer concurred, but in considering the southern district, he personally supported having two and three-units added to increase density between the yellow and orange districts. DeGroot said this would be a topic discussed with the City Council.

5. Public Comment

No comments received.

6. New Business

A. From the Commission: None.

B. From the Public: None.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Historic Preservation Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:49 p.m. on motion by Commissioner Stazin, second by Commissioner Hiller. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote of 6-0.