

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
FONA International – FONA Center
1900 Averill Road
Geneva, Illinois, 60134**

March 19, 2019

1. Call to Order

Chairman Zellmer called to order the March 19, 2019 meeting of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission at 7:05 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present HPC: Chairman Zellmer, Commissioners Hamilton, Hiller, Stazin, Zinke

Absent: Commissioners Salomon, Warner

Staff Present: Historic Preservation Planner Michael Lambert; Community Development Dir. David DeGroot, City Planner Paul Evans and Atty. Michael Rachlis representing the City of Geneva

Others Present: Planet Depos Court Rptr. Joanne Ely; and Recording Secretary Celeste Weilandt; attending public (see attached sign-in sheets)

3. Approval of March 7, 2019 Minutes

Minutes of March 7, 2019 Meeting – Minutes were approved on motion by Commissioner Hamilton, second by Commissioner Hiller. Motion carried by voice vote of 4-0-1. (Zinke abstains.)

4. HPC Public Hearings

Motion made by Commission Hiller to open the public hearing, second by Commissioner Stazin. Motion carried by voice vote of 5-0.

Chairman Zellmer walked through the protocol for the public hearing and swore in those individuals that would be speaking in tonight's public hearing. He noted that due to other items being on the agenda, the public hearing may be continued.

A. South Geneva Historic District (Case # 2018-205). Applicant: Karen Buckley, Bill and Amy Cook, Jill Leo, Gillian McNamara and Marsha Reinecke. Application for Historic District Designation. Historic Preservation Planner Lambert proceeded to walk through a timeline of when the proposal first came to his attention (June 2018) and the steps it took to become tonight's application for a historic district designation.

A map on the overhead identified those properties in the proposed historic district that had been identified to be significant, contributing, or already landmarks. Photos of 20 nominated properties followed. Mr. Lambert explained the goal for the commissioners was to designate the district for the 20 properties which properties represented a century of architectural evolution associated with architects or significant individuals in the community, and to recommend to the City Council the area nominated to be designated as a historic district in the City of Geneva.

Applicant, Ms. Gillian McNamara, 418 Easton Avenue, discussed why she, her husband and daughter chose to live in their current residence and the impetus for the application, *i.e.* the concern for the future development of the Atwater House and the future development of the neighborhood. She introduced the other four applicants who contributed to the application.

Ms. Marsha Reinecke, 464 Easton Avenue, discussed the previous homes she and her husband owned in Geneva, one of which was a local landmark (1101 S. Batavia Avenue) and one of the last properties that was not subdivided. She asked the commissioners to envision what the area would have looked like had she and her husband subdivided that property. Ms. Reinecke spoke highly of having preservation staff as a resource for the landmarking process of her former property at 13 Fulton Street. She closed by reading a newspaper article dated October, 1892 announcing the construction of a new home for William Davis who purchased the land at 1101 S. Batavia Avenue.

Mr. Karen Buckley 425 Easton Avenue, shared her and her husband's support for a historic district, describing what the homes represent and their importance to the community and to the City of Geneva.

Mr. William Cook, 716 Shady Avenue, resided in his home for 20 years and believes the home and its neighboring homes remind the public of a more nostalgic and different time. He shared that the owners of these homes may move out but they never really leave the area. He shared the various characteristics of his home, the details of its construction from the original Swedish builders, and the importance of a stewardship to uphold them. Mr. Cook described some of the concerns he and his neighbors shared with staff regarding the designation of a historic district, but he encouraged the commission and the public to support the historic district designation.

Mr. Ed Romero, 832 Longmeadow Drive, real estate attorney who assisted the Leos with the purchase of their home, read a statement from the Leos who were in support of the designation.

Ms. Gillian McNamara 418 Easton Avenue, returned and discussed how the nomination met all six standards of the designation set forth in the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, pointing out that 15 of the 20 properties have been identified as significant, two as contributing and three as non-contributing. Ms. McNamara provided a summary of historical facts about the prominent owners who used to own the properties and made contributions to the city. She emphasized the importance of the various architectural features and materials used on the homes, the names of their historic builders, and how the properties characterized the entry into the City of Geneva. Also mentioned were the concerns of future development and the demolition of the historic structures, specifically to the west of the proposed district. Ms. McNamara referenced the iconic architecture that many of the designated homes had which impacted the development of the southern portion of the City. She asked the commission to support the designation request.

Chairman Zellmer invited the commissioners and staff to ask questions. None followed. He invited the public to speak.

Ms. Jennifer Beall, 712 Forrest Avenue, voiced concern about the applicants' comments about the integrity of the neighborhood with respect to the homes. She liked the people in her neighborhood and did not care what people thought about the exterior of her home or her 250 year-old tree. She questioned whether Section 10-6-7 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance was being satisfied and the historical context of the homes being nominated, to which Commissioner Zellmer and Mr. Lambert responded. Ms. Beall further questioned the commission on some of the

terms listed in the National Park Service Bulletin, specifically the term “feeling” used throughout the bulletin and inquired as to what feeling the district conveys to each individual home.

Commissioner Zinke and applicant Marsha Reinecke provided their explanations with Ms. Reincke responding that it was an emotional feeling, which was subjective, but that it was a commitment and a passion to preserve the City’s past.

Further questions from Ms. Beall followed wherein Chairman Zeller explained how the proposed district would be distinctly different from the northern district. Ms. Beall added that she did speak with the neighbors who opposed the designation and asked the commission if it was worth pursuing the designation if the neighborhood did not want it? Was the commission identifying the neighborhood according to the structure or according to the residents who live there? And lastly, she stated the city founders determined how they wanted to live and build their homes and would have probably wanted the same for the current residents.

Mr. Gary Knapp, 515 Maple Lane, discussed the prior Geneva homes in which he and his family had lived (subdivisions) as compared to his current home which felt like a real neighborhood. He explained the enhancements he made to his property and the nice comments he received from the neighbors as contrasted by the comments received by his daughter and son-in-law when moving into their home on 398 Elizabeth Place. He believed the nomination of the historic district has kept them from making improvements to their home. Mr. Napp proceeded to describe some of the challenges his daughter and son-in-law have faced since moving into the home in 2018.

Applicant, Ms. Reinecke, responded to Mr. Knapp’s comments, explaining she will be moving to another region where there is no oversight. She noted the homes in the application have significant historic oversight. Ms. Reinecke appreciated staff working with her to renovate her home and providing her options.

Mr. Jim Kautz, 1305 S. Batavia Avenue, Geneva, read a letter from Executive Director Kelsey Shipton of Preservation Partners of the Fox Valley (“Preservation Partners”), explaining how the nomination meets the six requirements of the designation of a historic district. He emphasized that Applicant and Preservation Partners board member, Bill Cook, recused himself for consideration of, and the vote on, the acceptance of this letter to be submitted on behalf of Preservation Partners. Preservation Partners encouraged the nomination.

Mr. Peter Yi, 505 Prairieview Drive, resides in Fisher Farms currently but purchased a lot at 814 Batavia Avenue in November 2018 and was not aware of the designation issue or its contention within the neighborhood. After learning more about the matter and speaking with city staff to find a common ground, he determined it was not effective at this point. He asked that homeowner rights be protected and asked to opt out of the historic designation. Mr. Yi described why he purchased his lot and believed the designation prohibited construction of his property. He wanted to move into a neighborhood that supported owners’ rights. He asked the nominators to formally withdraw their application.

Ms. Gillian McNamara responded that the process started last June upon hearing the Atwater property was going on the market. She proceeded to relay the conversation she had with the developer.

Ms. Katie Tegge, 398 Elizabeth Place, asked the commission to not recommend the designation stating she and her husband were singled out, ambushed and misled. She proceeded to read part of a letter she and her husband wrote to the neighbors sharing a timeline of events that

occurred since they had moved in. On November 2, 2018 she and her husband took ownership of the home. On November 3 she was contacted by one of her neighbors (one of the nominators) to see if they wanted to be included in the nomination, which she conveyed she did out and noted same on the application. Her husband and she purchased the home intentionally knowing it was outside the Geneva Historic District. Details followed and the fact that staff notified them via letter dated November 20, 2018, that her home and surrounding homes would be included in the proposed district. Furthermore, she contacted Mr. Lambert explaining her intention to opt out and her priority to install new windows due to the current windows being drafty. Mr. Lambert had proceeded to explain to her that no permits could be issued until the proposed new district passed all stages of the process, with the earliest consideration six months away. Ms. Tegge stated her family was being forced into the nomination when the property was clearly not in any historic district at the time of purchase. She encouraged the nominators to move forward but asked that her property not be included in the designation. Further details of a letter that went to other neighbors followed. Ms. Tegge noted that if the district moves forward with forced inclusion, it sets a dangerous precedence.

Applicant, Ms. Gillian McNamara, returned and explained how she met Ms. Tegge and the conversation the two had. She also referenced in the application the question about protecting historic trees.

Mr. Zack Tegge 398 Elizabeth Place, confirmed when he purchased the home with his wife Katie and why they purchased the Atwater home – historic characters, proximity to the downtown area and to raise their family in the community where he and his wife were raised. For the nominators, their goal was to not demolish the Atwater House. Mr. Tegge further stated his property was forced into the nomination and he and his wife had asked to opt out of it. On Page 42 of the second application, he referenced that two properties were listed as being vacant -- his and another one, which was incorrect. Mr. Tegge stated he did not know about the application before they purchased the home, nor when his attorney spoke to the City. He further read language from the Historic Preservation Ordinance as it relates to the creation of a historic district and have asked the city if it could redraw the proposed district boundaries and been met with negative or non-committal answers. Mr. Tegge voiced concern that the applicants had to bear all costs associated with the historic district nomination application, per city code, and asked whether the legal fees will be shown to the public.

Attorney for City, Michael Rachlis stated the costs were already addressed and the applicants paid those costs. Any future costs to be incurred, he could not confirm.

Mr. Tegge, 398 Elizabeth Place verbalized the difficulty of not being able to add new windows to his home due to the designation, while other neighbors were allowed to renovate their properties to their desire and landmark their properties. While he understood why the district was being nominated, he desired to upgrade his home without further restrictions. He asked to be left out of the application in order to be able to improve his property.

Mr. Jeff James, 825 S. Batavia Avenue, objected to the district and did not want to be in the proposed district. He believed this issue was a matter of a bureaucracy trying to tell property owners what do to with their properties.

Ms. Terri Debates, 315 Oakwood Drive and owner of a commercial property at 107 W. State Street (which is in the current historic district), said she was happy to comply with the requirements of the district. She explained that historic districts get established because people like to visit Geneva and like the way it looks -- contrary to other towns – and because people had the forethought of preservation. She shared the restoration and preservation projects she worked

on with local architects who emphasized preservation. Ms. Debates also believed that a good many of the people who did not want to be in the proposed district probably moved to Geneva for that reason. She stated this commission has “been getting a bad rap” for decades and emphasized the importance of this district’s formation, given its significant architecture.

Mr. Edward Gustafson, 932 S. Batavia Ave., stated he grew up here, moved out of state and then returned “for the people.” He did not like, as Mr. Yi and the Tegges stated, being forced into the district. He questioned one of the applicant’s residency and asked whether an applicant had to be a resident of the City. Mr. Gustafson recommended a solution: that the applicants limit the application to their own properties or landmark their own properties.

Given the late hour, **Commissioner Hiller made a motion to continue the public hearing to a date certain, that date being April 16, 2019, 7:00 p.m. Second by Commissioner Zinke. Motion carried by voice vote of 5-0.**

[The commission took a minute break at 9:04 p.m.; reconvened at 9:12 p.m.]

5. Review of Building Permit Applications

A. 318 N. Second Street (Case #2019-001). Applicant: Robert and Michelle Parker, Purchasers; Sean Gallagher with Gallagher Associates, Architect. Application for Front Façade Rehabilitation and Additions at a Contributing Property. Mr. Lambert recalled that the commission reviewed this application in January 2018. Maps reflecting the evolution of the property over time were depicted on the overhead. Photos of the home dating back to 2007 were shown. Proposed was an addition to the north side of the home and to open up an existing historic doorway that was closed in the 2007 renovation.

Mr. Lambert recalled for commissioners that when they reviewed the concept plans in January, they had questions about the appropriateness of the shape of the porch on the new addition, the use of metal roofing, the massiveness and size of the chimney, the windows on the historic porch, and the appropriateness of the shingle gabling on the north addition. (Elevations were depicted.) Mr. Lambert pointed out the double hung windows for the new porch (east elevation), noting an alternate elevation had also been submitted for commissioners to review.

Mr. Lambert further clarified that the metal roofing being proposed would be rolled seam and the architect would be using a clad window with simulated divided lights. Both materials complied with the City’s requirements.

Mr. Sean Gallagher, architect for the project, submitted images of a standing seam roof along with its colors. The owners were considering Matte Black for the standing seam roof color. Roofing would be architectural shingles and in the color of charcoal. The chimney was eliminated. The windows in the master bedroom were narrower by 6 inches and lowered somewhat to give the illusion of being taller. Mr. Gallagher explained that the original entry to the home would be restored. To give certain windows a taller proportion, he explained that awning units with wood panels below would be created. The alternative, however, was two windows -- one existing and another one mirroring it around a centered post, giving the owners more sun in the room. He asked the commissioners what option they preferred.

Commissioner Hiller commented that it appeared that too much activity was going on with the windows. He preferred the shorter ones. Per Hamilton’s question, Mr. Gallagher had no historic evidence on the size of the window. Mr. Lambert explained what was found at 516 Ford Street, stating it offered good flexibility to interpret. Commissioner Zinke asked why Mr. Lambert

did not like the longer two windows, wherein Mr. Lambert explained it was precedent-setting and false historicism.

Owner, Mr. Parker, was just happy to have a window but preferred the two longer windows because the kitchen worked better.

Mr. Lambert voiced concern that the commission could be setting a precedent. Commissioner Stazin recommended looking at past projects, citing a previous project. As for the shorter windows, commissioners liked them except for Commissioner Zinke, who recommended adding window boxes to make them look longer, or, adding a curtain to the lower portion. Mr. Lambert offered another solution and explained what the HPC approved in the past, i.e., a double-hung window with the repurposing of the upper sashes and eliminating the panels. Mr. Gallagher stated he would follow Mr. Lambert's suggestion – have no fake panels, place the sill at the bottom and add siding underneath. Commissioners supported that solution.

Commissioner Hiller made a motion to approve the proposal, as presented, with the condition that the proposed, paired, “double-hung” windows at the historic front porch (an operable upper sash with a “dummy” lower sash) be replaced with paired windows that were of the same approximate size as the upper sash of existing, historic windows and the new windows align with the upper sash of the existing, historic windows at the front façade. Seconded by Commissioner Zinke. Roll call:

**Aye: Hamilton, Hiller, Stazin, Zinke, Zellmer
Nay: None**

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 5-0

B. 405 S. River Lane (Case #2019-012). Applicant: Chris and Dana Huot, Owners; James Hess with Hess Architects. Application for Proposed Second Floor Addition at a Contributing Property. Mr. Lambert located the property on the overhead map and stated the Frasier and Raftery home was before the commission at prior meetings. The proposal was to add a second floor to the 1940s addition which was enclosed in 2015. The new addition would be for a master bedroom and would match the 1930's addition.

Applicant, Mr. James Hess with Hess Architects, walked the commissioners through the proposed addition, explaining the horizontal cedar siding was consistent with the original home. Any new materials would match somewhat to the original yet be complimentary to the home.

Commissioner Hamilton inquired about the roof height of the new addition wherein Mr. Hess explained it was a cross gable that would match the height of existing masonry residence.

Discussion of the roof height for the new addition followed. Chairman Zellmer voiced concern about a parapet. Addressing the southern elevation, it was noted by Mr. Hess that the porch would be new. Mr. Hess further explained how the materials for the addition would be slightly different than the main house. Asked if Mr. Hess had thought about having the space between the two windows with vertical siding to deviate and reflect as new, Mr. Hess said it could be considered. Chairman Zellmer asked commissioners about the rooflines, to which Commissioner Stazin indicated were not symmetrical. Commissioners voiced concern about the massing of the addition's roofline but that it was difficult to see. Commissioner Stazin liked that the addition added more symmetry to the elevation.

Commissioner Zinke recommended adding some elements to differentiate it. Asked if the size or height diminish the original building, the chairman did not believe so, nor did Mr. Hess, pointing out the large masonry portion would always stand out.

Commissioner Stazin made a motion to accept the design for the 405 S. River Lane property, as proposed, second by Commissioner Hamilton. Roll call:

Aye: Hamilton, Hiller, Stazin, Zellmer
Nay: Zinke

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 4-1

6. Secretary's Report (Staff Updates) – NONE.

7. New Business

A. From the Commission: None.

B. From the Public: None.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Historic Preservation Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 10:11 p.m. on motion by Commissioner Hiller, second by Commissioner Stazin. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote of 5-0.