

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes

December 9, 2008

Third Floor Conference Room, City Hall
241 W. South Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Members Present: Chris Wright, Vice Chair (Acting Chair); Linda Bennett; Peter Carroll; Katie Jacobs; Josh Willson

Members Excused: Claire Milne, Chair; Erin Seaverson

City Staff: Sharon Ferraro, Historic Preservation Coordinator; LouAnn VanDenBos, Recording Secretary

Guests: Cindy Graham, Housing Resources, Inc.; Pam O'Connor; Tony Holewinski; Curt Aardema

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Wright called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

Ms. Milne and Ms. Seaverson contacted city staff to advise that they would not be present at the December HPC meeting.

Mr. Willson, supported by Mr. Wright, moved approval of the absences of Ms. Milne and Ms. Seaverson from the December 9, 2008 HPC meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (December 9, 2008)

Ms. Ferraro requested the addition of a discussion regarding fundraising efforts for the Iannelli Fountain in 2009. The committee members need to set a date and time to meet with staff from the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Carroll requested the addition of a discussion regarding the cover for the Iannelli Fountain. Ms. Ferraro requested that the discussion regarding the Rickman House be moved to an earlier spot on the agenda; it was moved under item V.

Ms. Bennett, supported by Mr. Willson, moved approval of the December 9, 2008 HPC agenda as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (October 14 (Item B-1) and November 5, 2008 meetings (Item B-2)

October 14, 2008

Ms. Bennett requested that her name be recording in the minutes as "Ms. Bennett" not "Ms. Gentry-Bennett." Mr. Jacobs requested the spelling of her name be corrected to "Katie" not "Katy."

Mr. Willson, supported by Ms. Bennett, moved approval of the October 14, 2008 HPC minutes as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

November 5, 2008

There were no changes to the November minutes.

Mr. Willson, supported by Ms. Bennett, moved approval of the November 5, 2008 HPC minutes as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

V. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wright introduced Pam O'Connor and Tony Holewinski

Ms. Ferraro introduced Cindy Graham from Housing Resources, Inc.

Rickman House SRLHD addition

Ms. Ferraro advised that she received a call from Molly Peterson at the Rickman House. Their low income tax credits are about to expire, and they want to proceed with some work that needs to be done on the building. They are proposing to change some of the rooms upstairs and reconfigure the elevator so that gurneys can get in and out, which they currently cannot do. This would also require reconfiguring the staircase and they would like to be able to use the federal tax credit again for this project. The federal tax credit was utilized during the last remodel and the end of 2009 will be the end of the 15-year period for the low-income tax credit. They expect to have financing in place at that point so they can begin the next remodel. Housing tax credits, historic preservation tax credits, and the new Michigan historic preservation tax credit will likely be utilized for this project.

In order to utilize the new enhanced Michigan historic preservation income tax credit, the Rickman House will need to be included in a local historic district. This is a unique building and could probably be a single-resource district, with the possibility of adjacent buildings being added to the district at a later date. The Rickman House is Kalamazoo's last surviving hotel that is still used for people to live in; the Columbia Plaza has been converted to office space. Nelson Nave was the architect for the last remodel on the Rickman House. The intention is to restore the first and second floors of the Rickman House with the next round of funding along with some work on the upper floors.

Ms. Graham advised that HRI is moving their offices from the second floor of the Rickman House and relocating to the Goodwill Industries offices on Alcott Street in the Edison Neighborhood. The intention is to dedicate the entire Rickman House to the Rickman residents. New units will be created on the second floor of the Rickman House. The first and second floors will be reconfigured to provide more services to the residents. The first floor will be opened up so that more of the original architecture will be visible. The direct service offices are located on the first floor of the Rickman House; the administration offices are located on the second floor. All of those services will be on the same floor when HRI moves to the Goodwill Industries bldg.

Ms. Ferraro stated that she has requested a formal statement from HRI regarding the historic designation. Thereafter, the study committee process will begin. The documentation is already in place, but minor updates will be required. Ms. Graham advised that she takes care of grants and planning for HRI, and she offered her assistance with the historic designation process. Ms. Ferraro advised that it may take between six months and a year for the designation process to proceed to the City Commission for final approval. She suggested initiating an annual designation process for buildings which might be eligible for the historic designation.

Ms. Jacobs commented that she thought there would be an emphasis on obtaining a historic designation for the State Theatre. Ms. Ferraro advised that owner support is helpful in obtaining the historic designation when these issues are being considered by the City Commission. Documentation for the Rickman House and the State Theatre are in place, they just need to be updated.

Ms. O'Connor advised that an enhancement of the current state tax credit is in the works. The Rickman House might fall into the small projects category of the tax credit. Ms. Graham stated that she has been working with George Larimore regarding the tax credit and he will be visiting with representatives of HRI on Friday. Jim Kurtz will be the architect for the new project. He has worked with HRI on all of their developments. Jerry Vanderveen will be the general contractor.

Ms. Ferraro mentioned that the staircase is marble up to the banister level. By making the elevator bigger and having the staircase wrap around it, this creates issues with installing marble to maintain the historic appearance.

Ms. Bennett, supported by Mr. Willson, moved to begin the process of designating the Rickman House as a single-resource, local historic district. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Jacobs mentioned that Ms. Ferraro's report advises that the low-income tax credit expires in 15 years, which is next year. She inquired as to what would happen if the historic designation for the Rickman House was not completed next year, would the designation be made retroactively? Ms. Ferraro advised that the Rickman House is already a National Register District, the local historic designation would make the Rickman House eligible for enhanced Michigan tax credits. Ms. Graham advised that retroactive approval will not be necessary. Tax credit projects normally begin two years prior to actual construction, and construction on this project will likely not begin until 2010.

Ms. Bennett inquired if there will be an emphasis on "green" updates and increased energy efficiency. Ms. Graham stated that major systems will be replaced and brought up to date. The most energy efficient updates will be utilized whenever possible. Ms. Graham advised that there are currently 84 residents at the Rickman House.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. O'Connor advised that she attended a meeting of the Michigan Historic Preservation Network Executive Committee, and there was a discussion regarding the tax credit enhancement. Representative DeBachman indicated that the tax credit will be approved. George Larimore is assisting with the tax credit process. Representative DeBachman has been the main supporter in

the House of Representatives for the tax credit. He is term-limited and will be retiring shortly, and it is hoped that the tax credit will be approved prior to his retirement.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

None

VIII. FINANCIAL REPORT

a. City (Item C)

Ms. Bennett inquired if there were any other expenditures before the end of the year. Ms. O'Connor advised that she had no further expenditures to report for 2008. Ms. Ferraro advised that the WMUK bill would likely come in after the beginning of the year. Ms. Bennett indicated that there has been a slight decrease in available funding from last year. However, the HPC is on track with their budgeted amount. Mr. Carroll advised that he would not be able to submit his reimbursement request prior to the deadline on the 12th. Ms. Bennett indicated that the money is available to pay the request; it is not critical for the request to be turned in before the end of the year.

b. O'Connor Fund (O'Connor) (Item D)

Ms. O'Connor stated that she received notice of another \$100 gift to the O'Connor Fund, for a total \$1,085 in gifts to the Fund this year. Mr. Willson advised that he would be contributing \$250 to the O'Connor Fund.

c. Kalamazoo: Lost and Found book project (O'Connor)

Ms. O'Connor advised that she didn't sell any copies of the book during the Kalamazoo Public Library signing at the Art Hop on December 5th. The event was well-attended but book sales were slow. Ms. O'Connor will be at Barnes and Noble book store on Sunday, December 14th from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Convention and Visitors Bureau has elected to not carry the book in their shop. Many of the items they offer are at a lower price point than *Kalamazoo: Lost and Found* and that may have been a factor in their decision.

IX. Action and Discussion Items

Ms. O'Connor inquired if the HPC would like to donate a couple of copies of *Kalamazoo: Lost and Found* as raffle items for the Old House Expo.

Ms. Bennett, supported by Mr. Wright, moved to donate two, hard-cover copies of *Kalamazoo: Lost and Found* as door prizes for the Old House Expo in January 2009. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion followed as to whether or not the books would be raffle items or door prizes.

Ms. O'Connor advised that she delivered a copy of *Kalamazoo: Lost and Found* to City Attorney, Clyde Robinson.

a. Work Plan Reports from Team Leaders.

i. Designation (D) – Jacobs

Ms. Ferraro stated that she was waiting to hear from Bill Scott regarding a report on the Iannelli Fountain. The report was originally due at the end of May and then the target date moved to July. It was then anticipated that the nomination to SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) would be submitted in December for a spring review board meeting. Ms. Ferraro advised that the review board meets in May. Accordingly, it would be appropriate to have the report submitted by February or March. Once the description is submitted, Ms. Ferraro would likely be able to complete the rest of the information within two or three hours. The photography will need to be completed when the snow is gone; the information needs to be as current as possible. If Mr. Scott submits the report by January, it should be possible to meet the February deadline. Ms. Jacobs advised that she would revise the target date to February of 2009 for the information to be submitted to SHPO.

ii. Communication (C) - Wright

Nothing to report.

iii. Partnership Development (PD) – Milne

Nothing to report.

iv. Preservation Month (PM) – Seaverson

Ms. Jacobs indicated that Ms. Seaverson provided information to the HPC members regarding an upcoming series of speakers. Ms. Jacobs stated that the AIA and Green Drinks (a meeting of the Southwest Michigan Sustainable Business Forum) were enthusiastic about having Mike Jackson as a speaker.

Eckert Wordell is willing to contribute \$100 for food and drinks for the Art Hop on the first Friday in June. They may also be contributing several bottles of wine to the event.

Ms. O'Connor inquired if Preservation Month and the Mike Jackson/AIA event would be discussed under work plan reports or if those topics would be discussed separately. Ms. Jacobs advised that Ms. Seaverson had requested a discussion about the speaker be added to the agenda and that's why it is a separate item under Old/New Business. Ms. Bennett suggested that the discussion regarding Mike Jackson could have been a sub-heading under Preservation Month/Action and Discussion Items so that the topic does not have to be revisited later in the agenda.

Ms. Jacobs advised that Ms. Seaverson has spoken with the Green Drinks group and the library regarding Mike Jackson's speaking engagement. The AIA doesn't have a lot of funding for such an event. However, they do have a grant they can tap into for this event. Ms. Jacobs and Ms. Seaverson are recommending that the HPC commit the necessary funding (\$1,500.00) to bring Mr. Jackson to Kalamazoo on a Tuesday. Potentially, he may speak to the Rotary at noon but those arrangements have not been finalized yet. At this point, a speaking engagement with the Green Drinks group (5 p.m.) and an evening speaking engagement with the library are under consideration. Mr. Jackson would probably talk for five to ten minutes and then speak informally with the group. Ms. Jacobs advised that the grant is supposed to be used for something architecturally significant and relevant to the community, and the AIA felt this would qualify under both categories.

Discussion followed regarding the amount of funding budgeted for preservation month. The \$1,500 charge for the speaker will be one of the bigger expenses. There are rental fees for the library which should also be taken into consideration. Two thousand dollars has been allotted for Preservation Month, but costs may exceed that amount. Ms. Ferraro advised that the plaques have been about \$400 a piece but could be done for less. Other sponsors and grants may be available to help cover costs. Neighborhood assistance provides \$700 toward Preservation Month but those funds have not been utilized for a couple of years. General preservation education is \$2,650. The budget for 2009 is the same as it was for 2008. Ms. Ferraro advised that she would include a copy of the current budget in all meeting packets starting in 2009.

Ms. Ferraro stated that the library will be doing a series in 2009 regarding the Vine Neighborhood. Ms. Ferraro will provide a presentation regarding history of the Vine Neighborhood, and Lynn Houghton will do a presentation about architecture in the Vine Neighborhood.

Discussion followed with regard to scheduling and advertising for upcoming events. Tuesday, May 26, 2009 was discussed as a possible date for Mr. Jackson's presentation. Concern was expressed about the close proximity of the date to the Memorial Day holiday, and whether or not that might affect room scheduling at the library.

Ms. Jacobs, supported by Mr. Willson, moved to allow Ms. Seaverson to schedule Mike Jackson for a speaking engagement in Kalamazoo on Tuesday, May 26, 2009, and to reserve a meeting room at the Kalamazoo Public Library for that presentation. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Jacobs advised that she would provide Ms. Seaverson with an update regarding the decision about Mr. Jackson's visit.

Discussion followed with regard to the possibility of also securing the second Tuesday in May (May 12th) as a possible date for Mr. Jackson to speak. Since

the HPC meeting falls on that date, Ms. Ferraro suggested the possibility of moving the HPC meeting to either the 11th or the 13th if May 26th is not available.

Ms. Jacobs advised that Mr. Jackson charges \$1,000 per day plus travel expenses for any day other than Thursday. Further discussion followed regarding expenses to be paid for the speaker. It was suggested that Mr. Jackson provide an estimate for his travel expenses; those details should be discussed and finalized at an upcoming HPC meeting.

v. Iannelli Fountain

Ms. Ferraro advised that she would like to set up a meeting between Keith Hernandez, the Director of Planning, Ms. Ferraro, a member of the HPC and either Mark Polega or Francis Jewell from the Parks and Recreation Department to discuss the HPC's concerns regarding the fountain. The goal for 2009 would be to add the Iannelli fountain to the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) as a budget item. If that is accomplished, work could begin on the fountain in 2010. The cover for the fountain would be included in the budget. Tom Nehil did a condition assessment for the fountain and he advised against rushing to get the cover this late in the season since one more winter would not create significantly more damage. However, it would be beneficial to take the time to make sure the cover is designed correctly and fits properly. There is already enough money in the current CIP for the cover, and it would be helpful to have the funding approved from the current budget so the cover can be purchased as soon as possible. The cover can be made to fit over the repaired fountain, rather than creating it to fit the fountain in its current state of disrepair. Discussion followed with regard to funding for future repairs to the cover due to vandalism, etc. Ms. Ferraro advised that would be part of the discussion to be covered by the group she hopes to convene in late January or early February.

Ms. O'Connor suggested making interpretive markers a part of the discussion with Parks and Recreation. Ms. Ferraro advised that should be a separate discussion.

vi. Budget (B) – Bennett

Nothing to report.

X. Old/New Business

1. Mike Jackson/AIA event (discussed earlier in the agenda.)
2. Rickman House SRLHD addition (**Item F**)

XI. Coordinator's Report

- a. Site Watch & Issues

Ms. Ferraro stated that she is preparing a report for the East Campus Task Force with regard to how other campuses have redeveloped buildings with similar challenges. Mr. Aardema commented that most campuses use their old buildings. Ms. Ferraro advised that most campuses have older buildings which are contiguous to newer construction. Western Michigan University's campus is different because it expanded on the other side of a valley.

Ms. Ferraro advised that a car ran into the State Hospital Gate Cottage on Oakland by Wheaton Ave. Friday morning, December 5th. Two of the stone blocks in the foundation were displaced and one piece of wood was chipped. Ms. Ferraro went inside the building to check for damage but found none. The accident occurred as a result of icy road conditions. The driver was not injured but the car was totaled.

Ms. Jacobs referred to the work plan on the back of the agenda. She inquired as to why it does not reflect the items that have been crossed out. Ms. Ferraro advised no one had been assigned keeping track of the work plan and crossing off items that are complete. Ms. Jacobs requested an updated copy of the work plan. Ms. Ferraro and Mr. Wright both have the electronic version, which should be updated after every meeting. Mr. Wright volunteered to make the updates. Under D3, items 1, 2 & 3 should be crossed off. Under D2, items 1 and 2 should be crossed off. Also, item B1 "Prepare Budget 2009" should be crossed off.

Ms. Ferraro advised that she sent an e-mail to the contacts she had for neighborhood newsletters and DKI. The email states that nominations will be made in January and it suggests mentioning that in the neighborhood newsletters. Someone in the Oakwood Neighborhood suggested nominating the Sears house on Madison Ave. So far, the responses have been positive. The nominations are due by the last Friday in February. Properties do not have to be in the Historic District to be nominated.

Ms. O'Connor inquired about the historic preservation newsletters to be e-mailed to historic district property owners. Ms. Ferraro advised that the HPC is not allowed to advocate. Accordingly, the HPC would not be able to do the newsletter independently, it would need to be done in cooperation with the city. The newsletter would provide information about preservation in Southwest Michigan. The biggest challenge is putting together a mailing list of email addresses.

Further discussion followed with regard to the possibility of crossing off C4 and C5 from the work plan. Ms. Ferraro suggested leaving those items until more information is available about the 100 block of Michigan Ave. If the current plan regarding the 100 block does not come to fruition, the HPC may still want to pursue the items on the work plan.

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Adjournment

Ms. Bennett, supported by Mr. Wright, moved to adjourn the December 9, 2008 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.

Submitted by: _____ Dated: _____
Recording Secretary

Reviewed by: _____ Dated: _____
Staff Liaison

Approved by: _____ Dated: _____
HPC Chair