

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Minutes

January 13, 2009

***DRAFT***

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; Erin Seaverson

Members Excused: Josh Willson

Members Absent: Claire Milne, Chair

City Staff: Sharon Ferraro, Historic Preservation Coordinator; Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary

Guests: Pam O'Connor; Tony Holewinski; Curt Aardema; Sean McCann, City Commissioner

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Wright called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF ABSENCES**

Mr. Willson advised city staff that he would not be present at the January HPC meeting.

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (January 13, 2009) (Item A)**

Mr. Wright provided an updated version of the agenda with the correct meeting date. Ms. O'Connor noted that the name of the fountain should be correctly spelled as "Iannelli." Ms. Bennett requested that her name not be hyphenated.

**Ms. Jacobs, supported by Mr. Wright, moved approval of the January 13, 2009 Historic Preservation Commission agenda as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**a. Approval of Minutes (December 9, 2008 (Item B))**

Ms. Jacobs requested the following changes: page 5 under work plan designation, Ms. Ferraro is waiting to hear from Mr. Scott. With regard to the Spring Review Board meeting, strike the comments regarding the deadline not being met. Page 6, 4<sup>th</sup> line, strike the comments regarding funding not being available in time. The last sentence should say that the AIA, not Mr. Jackson, felt it would qualify under both categories.

**Ms. Jacobs, supported by Mr. Wright, moved approval of the December 9, 2008 HPC minutes as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

#### **IV. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Pam O'Connor, Tony Holewinski, Curt Aardema were guests at the January 13, 2009 HPC meeting.

#### **V. CITIZEN COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Ms. O'Connor advised that Governor Granholm signed the tax credit enhancement legislation for rehabilitation. The major provisions of the enhancement are in the Network newsletter (MHPN - Michigan Historic Preservation Network). Discussion followed with regard to membership renewals. Ms. Ferraro advised that the HDC does not receive the MHPN newsletter; they receive the NAPC (National Alliance of Preservation Commissions), but the subscription was dropped. Ms. O'Connor suggested that the HDC members should receive the MHPN newsletter, and she requested that this topic be added to the next HPC agenda. The newsletter is published twice per year, but there are monthly e-mail updates. The cost for receiving the MHPN newsletter is \$100 per commission.

Ms. O'Connor stated that between 2009 and 2013, there will be additional tax credits available through the State of Michigan. Beginning in 2009, there is an \$8,000,000 fund of additional credits available. That tax credit fund is scheduled to increase by one million dollars every year for five years. Accordingly, there will be twelve million dollars in credits to give away by 2013, this is in addition to the tax credits that are already available in Michigan. Developers and property owners can apply for the standard, federal credit, which is 20%, and the Michigan tax credit under the current law, which is 5%. They will also have the option of applying for the enhanced credit, which is an additional 10% to 15% of allowable expenses for their projects.

Ms. O'Connor advised that twenty-five percent of the tax credits will be available each year for small projects with credits that are valued at \$250,000 or less, for projects valued at \$1,000,000 or less. Small projects (\$250,000 or less in tax credits) may opt for a refund on the part of the credit they can't use in the first year. For instance, a project which has \$250,000 in credits, but only uses \$50,000, can receive a refund of 90% of the remaining \$200,000 in credits. This applies only to small projects. A total expenditure of one million dollars or less, would qualify a project for \$250,000 in tax credits under the existing program. Under the enhanced tax credit, a developer that can't use the entire credit the tax liability isn't great enough can ask for a refund, instead of taking 10 years to use the liability against future year's income tax.

Ms. O'Connor commented that this might be useful if a developer is trying to syndicate or sell their tax credits. Ms. Ferraro suggested that this credit/refund might apply to the 100 block of E. Michigan if the buildings were being restored individually rather than as a group.

Ms. O'Connor advised that the assignability for the extra credits is enhanced. It will be easier to partner with another organization and assign the credit to them. For instance, if your partner is a bank, you can more easily bring them into the partnership and assign your credit to them.

Ms. O'Connor advised that there is a condo provision, which currently allows the state to recapture the credit if the property changes hands within five years. Under the new enhanced provision, you can request an agreement with the state that will prevent the state from recapturing the funds. The HPC should be receiving a newsletter next week detailing the new legislation.

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The new applications should be ready around February 1st. This is a separate application process, but it should be similar to the current process.

Ms. Ferraro mentioned that the state of Missouri has a 25% tax credit, and there are a large number of projects as a result. The average tax credit is 10% to 15%. Ms. O'Connor commented that Michigan will have up to 40% in available tax credits, but the legislation expires in five years. Ms. Ferraro inquired if the legislation might continue if the results are positive. Ms. O'Connor advised that it would likely depend on the economy. It is hoped that the enhanced tax credits will help the economy recover.

Ms. O'Connor advised that Kathy Holtz is coordinating the volunteers at the MHPN conference this year, which will be held from May 14th through May 16<sup>th</sup> in Grand Rapids. Volunteers are needed to help at the conference. If anyone is interesting in attending, they can contact Ms. O'Connor for more information. Ms. O'Connor stated that the MHPN has 30-plus hours accredited this year for the AIA and the AICP. This year the credits were completed in time for the information to be added to the brochure.

Mr. Aardema inquired regarding what happened to the Grapevine building. Ms. Bennett advised that the single-story building on the corner has been demolished. It was suggested that the owner may have taken the building down because he was unwilling to continue paying the property taxes. Concern was expressed about the importance of this corner building being demolished.

Ms. Ferraro estimated that the building was constructed between 1913 and 1919. She advised that the owner of On The Rocks liquor store talked about taking down their corner building, but he was discouraged by the city from proceeding.

Mr. Aardema expressed concern that buildings like the one owned by Grapevine could disappear. He inquired if the owners are required to notify anyone before proceeding with demolition. Ms. Ferraro advised that the owners are not required to provide notification if the property is outside of the historic district. However, they would need to obtain a demolition permit before taking the building down, and that information can be obtained from the city. She referred to a store by the Mexican bakery near Alcott Street; this is an example of an older building in the Edison Neighborhood that has been rehabilitated.

Mr. Aardema stated that the house behind the Mexican market is also gone. Ms. Ferraro advised that there were profound problems with that building, which had been on the Dangerous Buildings Board agenda. Mr. Aardema commented that the rest of the older buildings in the Edison Neighborhood will eventually have profound problems and be removed, and then the only commercial urban district outside of the city will be gone. There is an older commercial district in Vine that is still intact, but it is only one block. He inquired as to what the HPC can do to facilitate preservation in the Edison Neighborhood. Ms. Ferraro referred to the RFP (Request For Proposals) which will be issued for the city's Comprehensive Plan next month. HPC involvement with the plan could be helpful for furthering preservation efforts; it was helpful during the last plan rewrite. The last Comprehensive Plan called for decreasing density rather than increasing density. That factor was helpful in reducing the number of rental units in the Vine Neighborhood.

Ms. O'Connor suggested that Mr. Aardema could begin an effort to involve the HPC in the Comprehensive Plan rewrite. She advised that the historic preservation group got 30% to 40% of

what they requested in the current plan; they had nothing in the prior plan. As an example, Ms. Ferraro now helps oversee site plan review. Also, a city-wide survey was initiated as a result of HPC involvement in the last Comprehensive Plan rewrite. Ms. Ferraro stated that the next city-wide survey is already in the budget and should be approved shortly. This element was added to the budget because the historic review is needed in order to qualify for federal funds.

Further discussion continued with regard to the number of buildings that have already been taken down in the Edison and Vine Neighborhoods and the Central Business District. More attention has been given to the Central Business District in recent years, which makes buildings in that area seem less susceptible to demolition. Ms. O'Connor disagreed and advised that half of the mall could potentially be removed if the right developer/project came along; the buildings in that area are not protected. She suggested that the older buildings in Edison will probably come down piecemeal due to a lack of funding.

## **VI. CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

## **VII. FINANCIAL REPORT**

### **a. City (Item C)**

Ms. Bennett advised that there is over \$13,000 in the budget, which is more than \$2,000 above what was originally designated for this year. Ms. Ferraro stated that the Old House Network will be requesting a check shortly. Ms. Bennett commented that the funds for the Network have already been designated to come out of the current budget. She inquired if there were still expenses to be paid from the 2008 budget. Ms. O'Connor advised that she has an invoice for \$700 to submit. Mr. Carroll stated that he has an invoice of \$365 to submit. Both invoices will be covered in the 2008 budget.

Ms. Ferraro advised that the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions biannual conference will be in Grand Rapids the last weekend in July of 2010. The \$500 commitment from the HPC for this event should be added to the 2010 budget. Ms. Ferraro will be involved in the planning of this event.

Ms. Seaverson inquired if the 2007 ledger items would be deleted. Ms. Ferraro advised that she would request that Ms. Steppenwolf make the deletions.

(7:35 p.m. – City Commissioner McCann arrived.)

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

Ms. O'Connor advised that Norman Jung provided a \$400 gift to the O'Connor Fund. There may be more contributions to the fund; an update will be provided at the next meeting. Contributions for 2008 have exceeded the previous year's donations.

Donations to the fund have surpassed expenses for the solicitation at a rate of 5 to 1. The last time something was sent with the solicitation letter, there was also an increase in gifts to the O'Connor Fund.

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

Ms. O'Connor advised that the Old House Expo is scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> of January. She would appreciate having a volunteer to help with her booth so she can attend some of the sessions that are being offered. Ms. O'Connor will have *Where Place Prospers* available. *Kalamazoo: Lost and Found* will be available for sale. She inquired if the HPC would like to offer the book for sale at wholesale rate for the day. There is an inventory of 5,000 books at the city's records center.

Ms. Ferraro advised that she would bring *Walking Through Time* to offer for sale also. Ms. O'Connor suggested that *Walking Through Time* should not be sold for less than \$5 per copy.

Mr. Carroll inquired if the volunteers could be high school students, and Ms. O'Connor responded in the affirmative. She stated that the volunteers would be working from either 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Mr. Carroll advised that the Kalamazoo Central Honor Society needs community service hours and that he would find out if some of them can help with the Expo. Ms. Jacobs mentioned that there may be interns in her office who would be willing to volunteer. Ms. Ferraro stated that the volunteers would be selling tickets and running errands in the presenters' hall in case the presenters need help. Volunteers in the presenter's hall would be able to see the programs.

**Ms. Seaverson moved to sell the book *Kalamazoo: Lost and Found* at a 30% discount during the Home Expo on January 24, 2009.**

Discussion followed with regard to the appropriate discounted price for the books.

**Ms. Seaverson withdrew her motion.**

**Ms. Seaverson, supported by Mr. Wright, moved approval to offer for sale the hard-cover version of the book *Kalamazoo: Lost and Found* for \$29.50 and the soft-cover version of the book for \$22.50 during the Old House Expo to be held on January 24, 2009. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**VII. Action and Discussion Items**

**a. Planning for Workplan session on Saturday February 7<sup>th</sup>.**

The work plan session will be held on February 7<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. at city hall. Ms. Ferraro will reserve the room, which will be opened at 8 a.m. Attendees should arrive between 8 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. Otherwise, the building will be locked. Discussion followed with regard to refreshments to be provided for the work plan session. Martini's pizza will be provided for lunch, Mr. Seaverson advised that she would check with her husband to find out if he could make the delivery. Ms. Bennett volunteered to bring the coffee and bagels, Mr. Carroll volunteered to bring the donuts. Ms. Ferraro will provide the plates and napkins.

Mr. Wright advised that items 4, 5, 6 & 7 under PM5 on the work plan can be crossed off. Under PM 4, items 1-5 can be crossed off. Mr. Wright stated that he spoke with Alan, who will be forwarding information to be edited. The first draft should be available in two weeks, and the final draft should be available two weeks after that, depending on how quickly the HPC can provide the requested changes.

**b. Work Plan Reports from Team Leaders.**

**i. Designation (D) – Jacobs**

Nothing to report.

**ii. Communication (C) – Wright**

Nothing to report.

**iii. Partnership Development (PD) – Milne**

Nothing to report.

**iv. Preservation Month (PM) – Seaverson**

Ms. Seaverson stated that she and Ms. Jacobs met and put together a calendar of events for each week in May. There are two events each week in May, including presentations at the library, the preservation awards, Mike Jackson, the Great Unveiling and Art Hop. They will be working on publicity next month at 6:30 p.m. before the next HPC meeting. She suggested having the Preservation Awards on May 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> (Monday or Tuesday). The general consensus was that May 19<sup>th</sup> would be the preferred date. According, there will be an event scheduled every Tuesday in May: May 5<sup>th</sup>, Blue Vinyl; May 12<sup>th</sup>, HPC meeting; May 19<sup>th</sup>, preservation awards; May 26<sup>th</sup>, Mike Jackson. The Great Unveiling is scheduled for May 30<sup>th</sup> and will take place near Jefferson and Douglas Ave.

**1. Mike Jackson/AIA event.**

Ms. Seaverson stated that Mr. Jackson's fees would be \$1,500 including travel expenses if he arrived on a Thursday. For any other day of the week, he would charge \$1,000 plus travel expenses and that is what the HPC was considering. Ms. O'Connor recalled that Mr. Jackson would be charging \$1,500 without additional travel expenses if he arrived on May 26<sup>th</sup>. The motion at last month's meeting provided approval for Ms. Seaverson to schedule Mr. Jackson's visit, but costs for the visit were not clarified at that time. Ms. O'Connor advised that she would review the information she received and provide clarification regarding the costs for Mr. Jackson's visit.

Ms. Seaverson pointed out that May 26<sup>th</sup> is the day after Memorial Day and requested that Ms. O'Connor confirm that Mr. Jackson is available

on that date. Ms. Jacobs requested that Ms. O'Connor ask Mr. Jackson if he would prefer the 26<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup> for the lunch engagement. Ms. Ferraro suggested adding this topic to next month's agenda for final approval.

**v. Iannelli Fountain (IF) – Carroll (Subcommittee Report)**

Mr. Carroll stated that the subcommittee met last Wednesday. He inquired when the National Register designation would be ready. Ms. Ferraro advised that she would call to find out the status of the designation and try to expedite the process.

Mr. Carroll inquired if a packet would be provided to the City Parks and Recreation Department. Ms. Ferraro stated that she is looking at mid-February to meet with the Parks and Recreation Dept. Ms. Ferraro is hoping to add funding for the repairs/preservation of the fountain to the CIP for 2010. This might allow for a larger amount of matching funds if a grant is pursued. Ms. Ferraro advised that she would look into possible dates and provide the HPC with a deadline.

Mr. Carroll requested a status report regarding the proposed fountain cover. Ms. Ferraro advised that if funding is available this year, it would be possible to have the cover made and ready to put on the fountain by October of 2009. The manufacturer needs two to four weeks to fabricate the cover. The cover would not extend over the tall part of the fountain but would cover the rest of it. There is very little damage to the tall part of the fountain because it sheds water. Also, there is concern that once the cover is in place, homeless people may try to use it as a shelter, and steps are being taken to help avoid that situation. It is estimated that the cover will probably last about 15 years, and cost less than \$5,000 to manufacturer. There is a question of how the cover would be repaired if someone cuts a hole in it.

Mr. Carroll advised that the fund raising process has begun. Ms. Ferraro suggested using the old postcards of Kalamazoo that she bought as part of the Fund-raising process. Mr. Carroll suggested partnering with the KIA for the fund raising process; he plans to talk with the Director of Exhibits at the KIA. She is new to the position and she wants to discuss plans for the fountain and then talk with the KIA board. Ms. Ferraro advised that 2010 would be the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Iannelli Fountain.

Ms. O'Connor advised of the need to know the cost of mounting an exhibit so that financial information can be part of the grant application.

Ms. Bennett inquired if other pieces of Iannelli's work would be part of the exhibit. Mr. Carroll responded in the affirmative. There is a gentleman in Chicago who is writing a book about Mr. Iannelli; the book should be ready by 2010. There is another gentleman in the Chicago area who has a collection of the artist's work including the appliances he designed. The Fountain is the only example of the Iannelli's work in Michigan, and it is the largest work that he produced. Having a local exhibit might help create awareness of Iannelli's work.

Mr. Carrol mentioned that a local women's group was responsible for bringing the Iannelli Fountain to Kalamazoo. This is significant because it happened during a period in history when women were not usually responsible for such initiatives. Discussion followed with regard to the professional and business women's club and when it dissolved. It was suggested that this might be a possible topic of discussion for a future presentation.

Ms. Jacobs mentioned that the KIA has a lunch time series on Tuesdays called Art Break, where presentations are provided regarding works of various artists. This might be a venue to consider along with the exhibit. Ms. Jacobs expressed concern about the designation since there has been no progress over the past year. Ms. Ferraro advised that she could write it, but she doesn't have time to do the research. Ms. O'Connor advised that the research is done but needs to be pulled together. Mr. Scott needs to provide the HPC with a deadline so that work can proceed with the designation. Ms. Ferraro advised that the original designation was made in late June of 1940. Accordingly, Preservation Month (May) of 2010 would fall just prior to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the original designation of the fountain.

Ms. O'Connor suggested that the exhibit should be planned further out than 18 months. She suggested the possibility of using the annex for the exhibit. The KIA doesn't have the budget for an exhibit. Preliminary work will need to be done to find sponsors for the exhibit. Grant funding cycles are usually one, two, or four times per year, so it might be necessary to wait until the next funding cycle. It would be helpful to have an individual designation with a national level of significance.

#### **iv. Budget (B) – Bennett**

The City budget should be passed as of January 26<sup>th</sup>.

### **IX. Old/New Business**

#### **Old House Expo**

Ms. Ferraro advised that the vendor hall will be full for the Old House Expo this year. The Heritage Company will have a display this year. The Southwest Michigan Paranormals will also have a booth at the Expo. WNWN has been airing full minute ads for the Expo and the Old House Expo will be sponsoring the weather on WKZO. The PSAs (public service announcements) will go on one of the WKZO stations, there will be advertising in the Kalamazoo Gazette, the Irving Gilmore Foundation provided a \$2,500 grant, and Gordon Bock will be doing two interviews prior to the Expo with two radio stations. The Old House Expo was incorrectly printed in the Gazette as Old Home Expo. The Old House Journal has also been running ads for the Expo. A former intern, Gretchen Sawatzki who worked with Ms. Ferraro has been blogging about the Expo for the Gazette and getting feedback at that venue. Gretchen and another student will be talking with patrons at the Expo, and a written survey will be completed with the information that is provided. The information will be utilized for the Old House Network. An e-mail list for the workshops at the Old House Expo will be promoted. The Gilmore Foundation suggested getting statements from instructors at the Expo as to the value of



their time so that information can be used to obtain matching grant funds. Last year, instructors contributed over \$3,000 of their time.

Ms. Ferraro stated that she would ask Ms. Steppenwolf to issue a \$500 check for the HPC grant to the Old House Network to support Gordon Bock's speech.

## **X. Coordinator's Reports**

### **a. Site Watch & Issues (Item D)**

Ms. Ferraro advised that when the East Campus Task Force met on Thursday, they provided her with a yearly pass to the sexton's lodge in Mt. Home Cemetery, which the Fairmont Neighborhood uses for their office. Their furnace failed on the 21<sup>st</sup>. When the plumbing failed shortly thereafter, it flooded some of their computers. Ms. Ferraro is working with city staff to deal with the issues at this building, including damage to the pressed tin ceiling. There is already a 6' x 6' hole in the ceiling from previous work damage. Someone provided advice on how to dry out the cavities without taking out the walls. The moisture has caused the lead-based paint to peel off the walls. Ms. Ferraro will oversee the rehab work to make sure it is done correctly.

There has been discussion about the Fairmont Neighborhood moving to station #6. If that happens, Ms. Ferraro suggested to city staff from the Public Works Dept. that they partner with the Old House Network and possibly Education for Employment to utilize the Sexton's Lodge as a learning lab after the repairs are made. There may be grant money available to assist with the cost of repairs.

Ms. O'Connor advised that federal blight abatement funds may be available for training programs in Michigan. The Network will try to steer those funds toward the preservation trades.

Ms. Ferraro stated that she had no further news regarding the 100 block of E. Michigan. The developer is aware of the enhanced tax credit, which might help fill the existing financial gap.

Ms. Bennett and Ms. O'Connor referred to a drawing on the front of the Lawyers Building at 232 West Michigan which depicts south-facing glass. The building, constructed in the mid-1960s is currently being renovated. The question arose as to how this passed the design review process. Ms. Ferraro stated that the design went through review at two separate DDRC (Downtown Design Review Committee) meetings and the committee approved the design.

Ms. Ferraro advised that the DDRC has finished making changes to the guidelines, which will now be standards rather than guidelines. The language will be simplified and easier to download. The DDRC will meet on February 2<sup>nd</sup> to review the changes, which will then be placed on the Planning Commission agenda and then the City Commission agenda for approval.

Mr. Aardema inquired about the Corporation Hall building at 154 South Kalamazoo Mall – previously Athena Books and the Soup Kettle. Ms. Ferraro advised that she had heard

there was a serious offer. Mr. Aardema confirmed that the building has been sold. Ms. Ferraro advised that she has no information regarding the plans. The original walls of what was City Hall are gone under the façade. The inside of the second and third floors is a curtain wall of brick supported by girders holding the wall in place; much of the original detail is missing. In 2006, The DDRC did a preliminary approval for condos in that space, but the developer never proceeded with the plans.

**b. Fourth Quarter Section 106 Report (Item E)**

Ms. Ferraro inquired if there were any comments regarding the 106 Report (historic resource review of Federally funded projects), there were none.

Ms. Ferraro advised that she does have the official letter from HRI requesting the single resource historic designation for the Rickman House. She suggested that this designation be added to the work plan. She is hoping that the designation for the 100 block of E. Michigan can be done at the same time.

**XI. Commissioner Comments**

Mr. Wright advised that he hasn't heard from Ms. Milne. Ms. Ferraro advised that new board/commission members are elected in February/March.

**Adjournment**

**Ms. Seaverson, supported by Ms. Bennett, moved to adjourn the January 13, 2009 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission.**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Liaison

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_  
HPC Chair