

The City of Lake Forest
Historic Preservation Commission
Proceedings of the July 25, 2018 Work Session

A work session of the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, July 25, 2018, at 6:30 p.m., at the City of Lake Forest City Hall, 220 E. Deerpath, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Historic Preservation Commissioners present: Chairman Grieve and Commissioners Wells Wheeler, Jan Gibson, Bill Redfield, Bob Alfe and Carol Gayle.

Commissioners absent: Elizabeth Sperry

City staff present: Jennifer Baehr, Assistant Planner and Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development

Chairman Grieve opened the meeting.

1. Introduction of Commissioners and new staff member – Jennifer Baehr

Ms. Czerniak introduced the new Assistant Planner for the City, Jennifer Baehr. She noted that Ms. Baehr will be supporting the Historic Preservation Commission as well as the Building Review Board. She stated that Ms. Baehr will take the lead on some special projects including updating the City's Residential Design Guidelines. She noted that the guidelines, or portions of the guidelines may be tailored specifically to the local historic districts. She stated that Ms. Baehr will also be preparing an annual report for the Commission which will provide an overview of the petitions reviewed by the Commission over the last year and the actions taken.

2. Report on National Alliance of Preservation Commission Conference – Cathy Czerniak

Ms. Czerniak discussed her experience attending the National Alliance of Preservation Commission Conference in Des Moines, Iowa. She gave an overview of the sessions she attended, which included Preventing Demolition by Neglect: A Community Transformation Strategy, Alternative Infill Design Review in Practice, Beyond Design Review: Building Community Support and Engagement, Using Mapping Technology to Educate and Engage Your Community, and Dealing with Controversial Commemorative Monuments and Memorials.

3. Process Review – Chairman Grieve

Chairman Grieve commented on the challenge of finding the proper balance between being empathetic to petitioners and remaining focused on the Commission's purview during public hearings. He invited comments from the Commissioners on how the Commission is doing and thoughts on how the process might be improved.

Ms. Czerniak offered that referring to specific standards when commenting on a

petition can be helpful in striking the right balance.

Commissioner Gayle stated that standards that speak to “appropriateness” and “compatibility” create gray areas.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that while the Commissioners try to remain objective, the subject matter makes it difficult.

Chairman Grieve stated that during challenging petitions, in order to avoid setting a precedent, it may be helpful to more clearly describe the specific circumstances of the petition on which the Commission’s decision is based.

In response to questions from Commissioner Alfe, Chairman Grieve stated that real estate brokers should be disclosing whether a property is in the historic district to meet legal requirements.

Ms. Czerniak stated that City staff meets with local realtors quarterly and encourages them to share information about the City’s review processes and whether or not properties are in historic districts. She noted that a recent meeting was held at the Historical Society’s new facilities and staff there gave local realtors a tour of their facilities and explained how the archives can be used to research specific properties.

Chairman Grieve stated that it may be helpful to re-enforce the fact that the Commission sees projects that are unique and not necessarily traditional in scope and that the petitions heard by the Commission represent only a small percentage of the total projects that are permitted through the City.

Commissioner Gibson suggested that the Design Guidelines should be reviewed to assure that they address changing technology in exterior lighting and new materials.

Ms. Czerniak said that staff will include the current Design Guidelines in the next Commission packet to allow the Commissioner’s to review them and identify sections or topics that need to be updated or expanded. She suggested that the Commissioners can provide their input to staff in preparation of a review and update of the Guidelines.

Commissioner Gibson suggested that plaques identifying the historic districts be considered.

Ms. Czerniak confirmed that the idea of developing a standard identification plaque was recently discussed with the Preservation Foundation as a possible joint project. She stated that staff will pursue the idea.

OTHER ITEMS

4. Opportunity for the public to address the Historic Preservation Commission on non-agenda items.

No testimony on non-agenda items was presented to the Commission.

5. Additional information from staff.

No additional items from staff were presented to the Commission.

The work session was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Baehr
Assistant Planner