MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING,
Thursday, December 8, 2016 @ 4:46 p.m.
Five Seasons Conference Room, City Services Center, 500 15th Avenue SW

Members Present: Amanda McKnight-Grafton Chair
Bob Grafton
Ron Mussman
Tim Oberbroeckling
Todd McNall
Barb Westercamp
Sam Bergus

Members Absent: BJ Hobart
Caitlin Hartman
Mark Stoffer Hunter

City Staff: Jeff Hintz, Planner
Anne Russett, Planner
Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director
Anne Kroll, Administrative Assistant

Call Meeting to Order
• Amanda McKnight Grafton called the meeting to order at 4:46 p.m.
• Seven (7) Commissioners were present with three (3) absent.

1. Public Comment
• There was no public comment.

2. Approve Meeting Minutes
• Todd McNall made a motion to approve the minutes from November 22, 2016. Tim Oberbroeckling seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Action Items
a) Flood Control System – New Bohemia Pump Station
• Bill Bogert of Anderson Bogert stated that the following revisions were made to the NewBo Pump Station to address the HPC’s comments: plantings were added to the east side of the pump station, the generator will be painted to blend, banding will be added to the base of the building, the brick will attempt to match the Czech School, and the brick mortar will be tinted to match rendering. The generator will be eighteen (18) inches above grade and trims will attempt to be a limestone tint. For the Sinclair Pump Station trees will be planted on the north side.
• Todd McNall stated that the area has the Czech School, Water Tower Place, Bottleworks, and CSPS so he would recommend trying to stay in that color family but not necessarily
matching the brick at Czech School. If you try to match the Czech School you may not end up with what you want, but if it is in the same color range then it will look like it is in context without having to actually match the school. Bill Bogert stated that they will not get an exact match, but the Czech School does have several different tints so it is a matter of trying to blend in.

- Barbara Westercamp asked if the changes recommended by the Commission caused the project to be over budget. Mr. Bogert stated that the changes do not have exact numbers, but it was less than $30,000 added to a five (5) million dollar project, so it did not go over budget.
- Ron Mussman asked if Bill Bogert’s team gave the information to the Army Corps that was in the letter received. Mr. Bogert stated that his team provided the plan to the Army Corps and they wrote the letter.
- Todd McNall asked if the pump station is engaged into the levee. Bill Bogert stated that it will be, but the levee is not being built in that location right now. For a little while there will be dirt behind it until the levee is built.
- Amanda McKnight Grafton asked about the timeframe between when the pump station is finished and the levee goes in. Bill Bogert stated that piece of levee is designed in the first five (5) years, but it will be three (3) - five (5) years before it is built.
- Ron Mussman stated that Pat Cargin would like to be added back on the list to receive correspondence from the Army Corps about the Programmatic Agreement.
- Tim Oberbroeckling made a motion to approve the recommended changes to the New Bohemia and Sinclair Pump Stations. Ron Mussman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Demolitions Under Review

i. 527 12th Street SE – Private Property
- Bob Grafton stated that the owner’s wish is to have the property released even though the salvage opportunities are still there. If it is released tonight that does not mean that the salvage will not happen. Mark Stoffer Hunter has done photo documentation.
- Bob Grafton made a motion to release the hold on 527 12th Street SE. Barb Westercamp seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Discussion Items

a) Prioritization of Historic Resources
- Anne Russett stated that, in November 2015, City Council requested information that prioritizes the community’s buildings of historic significance and identifies the historic resources that should be preserved. The purpose of prioritization is to help in decision making and identify potential local historic landmarks. Ms. Russett stated that the focus is on individual buildings, not areas or neighborhoods, which is a separate effort. Ms. Russett reviewed what other communities have done in regards to prioritization. Staff recommends the development of a methodology and Ms. Russett shared some sample approaches as well as questions to help narrow the list. This discussion could take several meetings and the Commission could decide to develop a subcommittee for this task.

Sam Bergus arrived to the meeting at 5:08 p.m.

- Amanda McKnight Grafton stated that it would be helpful to use the surveys and City staff could help the Commission by summarizing the information in the surveys. In the
Citywide Survey there were places that were recommended for more intensive survey so those areas should also be looked at for this purpose.

- Ron Mussman stated that the Commission could use the GIS database, but 411 1st Avenue SE is listed as eligible and 417 1st Avenue SE is not when they both should be. Jeff Hintz stated that the GIS database does not have the Downtown Historic District boundaries on it yet, so it needs to be updated, both addresses are contributing to the district. Staff is close to doing that, but Auto Row and a few others need updating as well.

- Amanda McKnight Grafton asked why City Council wants this list. Jennifer Pratt stated that it would be helpful for City Council to see this list. Apart from that as a Commission, to implement the Historic Preservation Plan, that a prioritization list becomes a tool for this group to be looking at the properties and assets and seeing where there are opportunities. Until there is a discussion of what the top assets are then the next step is the strategy. So, if you have five (5) properties in downtown that are absolute is it more effective to do outreach on local landmarks or more strategic to look at a local district.

- Todd McNall stated that this Commission has been asked to do this for the last five (5) years and the Commission has gotten in trouble doing this in the past. There are a lot of buildings out there that may not make the list and that is concerning. Maybe we pick one hundred (100) and set criteria, but then someone will say that a certain building is not on this list so the Commission must not care about it. There are a lot of buildings in Cedar Rapids that the Commission may not think about but are truly historic. The Commission could set up a number of parameters that could bracket any buildings that might come in to question that did not make the list. It is an ongoing process and Mr. McNall is concerned with buildings that do not make the list.

- Tim Oberbroeckling would like to prioritize entire neighborhoods instead of just individual buildings by doing intensive surveys and setting up Local Historic Districts and shared his frustrations that the Commission has a lot of steps to go through and sixty (60) percent of owners have to sign off on it. What happens if an owner owns a lot of property in the potential district and does not want to set up the Local Historic District and the Commission has already put a lot of work into it. Anne Russett stated that the Commission could choose to have those buildings designated as a Local Landmark instead. Staff would like to work on whole neighborhoods, but that is a separate process from prioritizing individual buildings.

- Bob Grafton stated that intensive surveys can take several years and in the meantime the buildings are changing and potential districts are changing. Jennifer Pratt stated that there are two (2) tracks. The intensive survey is the different track that we have to secure funds to get that done, but that will inform the list. When those are completed then that is a reason why the priority list will be updated.

- The Commission discussed owners who receive historic tax credits and whether or not they will seek Local Landmark Status. Jennifer Pratt stated that she believed this to be encouraged as part of the Development Agreements, which the City is involved with.

- Tim Oberbroeckling shared his frustrations that everything the Commission attempts to do takes so much time and he does not understand why all these steps have to be done and why National Historic Districts cannot quickly become Local Historic Districts. Jennifer Pratt stated that this Commission has done a lot of work in the meantime such as updating Chapter 18 and the Design Guidelines. These are all things that will have huge impact long term. As part of this process whether it is prioritization or prioritizing areas it is just a matter of prioritizing for your time. Unfortunately, there is not enough time or resources to do all of it. Mr. Oberbroeckling asked what is going to happen to the list.
Ms. Pratt stated that this is Council’s request, but the HPC will use it a lot more to help protect these properties and use as a strategy tool.

- Sam Bergus stated that the Commission is hung up on rank and order, but that is not really what is being asked. Council seems to be looking for what the HPC’s thought process is. In looking at the Historic Preservation Plan there are maps with ages of buildings in the City. Those buildings that are the oldest that have hosted industry that was instrumental to the creation and growth of Cedar Rapids should go on this prioritization list. Selecting the features of buildings history that you care about more than others is an easier and more effective approach.

- Amanda McKnight Grafton asked staff to help the Commission and start a list of properties. Ms. McKnight Grafton suggested not having a subcommittee, but to keep this item on upcoming agendas to discuss as a group since this is a large undertaking and more people can offer ideas.

- Ron Mussman suggested using the list that was created for the walking tours including the downtown list created by the History Center to help with creating this list.

- Bob Grafton suggested having the properties at 411 and 417 1st Avenue SE at the top of the prioritization list since they are at immediate risk.

- Anne Russett stated that staff can put together a list to start with and add the additional information heard here in terms of questions to ask and buildings to include.

- Bob Grafton asked about funding sources for the surveys. Anne Russett stated that staff could apply for a CLG grant for the surveys. CDBG past funding for flood recovery was discussed. Jennifer Pratt stated that staff will continue to look for funding resources.

- Amanda McKnight Grafton recommended that when staff starts the list they should first focus on the structures that are at risk for significant alterations or demolition.

Barb Westercamp left the meeting at 5:48 p.m.

- The Commission agreed that staff will compile a draft list and the Commission can add to that list. Anne Russett stated that staff will need some time to compile the first list, but it can stay on the agenda for updates or for the Commission to give suggestions.

- The Commission discussed the pros and cons of doing the list geographically and how important the criteria is for choosing which buildings to add to the list. The Commission also discussed not calling it a prioritization list, but an awareness list.

5. Announcements

- Jeff Hintz reminded the Commission to send in their historic training or changes to their contact information to staff for the State CLG report.

6. Adjournment

- Todd McNall made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:03 p.m. Tim Oberbroeckling seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anne Kroll, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development
Aesthetic Revisions

- Revisions to the NewBo Pump Station to address HPC comments:
  - Plantings added to East Side of Pump Station
  - Generator painted to blend
  - Banding added to base of building
  - Building brick to attempt to match Czech School
  - Brick mortar to be tinted to match rendering

- How other comments addressed at NewBo:
  - Generator will be 18” above grade
  - Trims will attempt to be a limestone tint

- Sinclair comments:
  - Trees will be planted on the North side
Prioritization of Historic Resources

Background

• November 2015
  – City Council requested “information that prioritizes the community’s buildings of historic significance and identifies the historic resources that should be preserved”

Research Summary

• Portland Plan 5-Year Action Plan
  – In coordination with neighborhoods, begin a phased inventory of historic and culturally significant resources, and develop a strategy to preserve key resources. Give priority to areas in the Central City, in Centers and Corridors, or other areas likely to experience redevelopment pressure.

Background

• Purpose of Prioritization
  – Help in decision making
  – Help to identify potential local historic landmarks

Background

• Focus is on individual buildings

• Separate from the effort to prioritize areas identified for intensive surveys in the Cedar Rapids Citywide Historic and Architectural Reconnaissance Survey
Research Summary

- Texas Historical Commission
  - High Priority Property: Demonstrated significance in the community or is a rare example of its type. It also has a high degree of historic integrity and would most often qualify individually for NR designation.
  - Medium Priority Property: Is also historically significant but is slightly less of a priority, perhaps because it is relatively common or has been altered. Although it may not qualify for individual designation, it would likely be a contributing resource if within the boundaries of a NR district.
  - Low Priority Property: Either lacks a demonstrated historical significance, or has been substantially altered. It would most likely not qualify for historical designation.

- City of Iowa City
  - Conversation with member of the City of Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission

Example Approaches

- Staff recommends the development of a methodology, for example:
  1. Exclude local historic districts and landmarks
     Local historic districts and landmarks are already protected by the adopted regulations and guidelines.

Example Approaches

- Focus on areas that have been surveyed and identify properties contributing to a historic district or a potential historic district or are individually eligible for listing
  Need to demonstrate that the building is historically significant. Surveyed areas provide the justification necessary for prioritizing a building.

Example Approaches

- Focus on areas with redevelopment pressure
  May be at risk of being significantly altered or demolished.

Example Approaches

- Focus on buildings that are well-preserved
  Positive way to approach the list.

Narrowing the List

- Possible additional questions to help narrow down the list:
  - Does the building have local importance?
  - Is the architecture unique to Cedar Rapids or designed by a local architect?
  - Is the building historically significant under more than one National Register of Historic Places criteria (i.e. architecture, events, people, and archeological)?
Guidance from Preservation Plan

- Stakeholders identified key resources as part of the development of the Historic Preservation Plan

What’s Missing?

- Discussion could take several meetings, but we want to start the conversation
- Commission could decide to develop a sub-committee to focus on prioritization