

**VILLAGE OF LAKE BLUFF
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MARCH 8, 2017**

APPROVED MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

A regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) of the Village of Lake Bluff was called to order on March 8, 2017 and 7:00 p.m. in the Village Hall Board Room.

The following members were present:

Present: Paul Bergmann
Mary Francoeur
Janie Jerch
Janet Nelson, Chair

Absent: Robert Hunter
Randolph Liebelt
Cheri Richardson

Also Present: Glen Cole, Assistant to the Village Administrator

2. Consideration of the Minutes from the February 8, 2017 HPC Meeting

Member Francoeur moved to approve the February 8, 2017 HPC minutes as presented. Member Bergmann seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

3. Non-Agenda Items and Visitors

Chair Nelson stated the Chairperson and Members of the HPC allocate fifteen (15) minutes at this time for those individuals who would like the opportunity to address the HPC on any matter within its area of responsibility that is not listed on the agenda.

There were no requests to address the HPC.

Chair Nelson thanked the audience for their attendance.

4. Continued Advisory Review Conference for the Proposed Demolition of the Landmark Home Located at 512 Sunrise Avenue

Chair Nelson reopened the Advisory Review Conference for the Proposed Demolition of the Landmark Home located at 512 Sunrise Avenue. This property is the first time that the Commission has been asked to review demolition of a house that had already been landmarked prior to a Historic Preservation Commission

Chair Nelson invited forward individuals who wished to address the Commission regarding the matter.

Lois Nicol (resident) came forward and stated that she opposed the demolition of the subject property. Ms. Nicol read aloud a letter from Gary Doyle, a former resident of the subject property, who was unable to attend the Commission meeting in person. Mr. Doyle wrote about the unique character of Lake Bluff and of the subject property. He believes that the property is a unique example of a classic Lake Bluff home that should be preserved. He also believes the Village does not provide sufficient protection for historic preservation, particularly for landmarked homes like the subject property. Mr. Doyle does not believe this proposal is right, or is proper for Lake Bluff. Ms. Nicol concluded her reading of Mr. Doyle's letter.

Kate Briand (resident) came forward and stated that she opposed the demolition of the subject property. Ms. Briand moved to the area as a child and recalls walking by this home with her mother and family as well as the other historic architecture in Lake Bluff that no longer exists. She agrees that Lake Bluff has a weak historic preservation ordinance that needs to be strengthened. She believes that historic districts, as discussed at the Commission's February meeting, do not depress property values, but rather improve the character of the Village. She discussed historic preservation in other cities nationally, as well as other elements of Lake Bluff's history. She believes historic districts are necessary in Lake Bluff and that the ordinance to enact them should be considered by the Village Board.

Mary Ann Donahue (resident) came forward and said that the landmarking of a home should have decided the issue of demolition.

Seeing no further members of the public come forward to speak, Chair Nelson closed the period for public comment. Chair Nelson responded to a point raised by Ms. Briand in her remarks, noting that concerns about property rights led the Village Board not to adopt the historic district ordinance when it was previously considered. Property owners are concerned that, if their home is landmarked, they will not be able to change it. She believes the Commission needs to spell out what a landmark stands for and how homeowners can still change things on their property. Member Bergmann, also responding to Ms. Briand, discussed a study of historic districts in Rockford that concluded they have a positive effect upon property values.

Ms. Nichol returned to the podium to note that Barrington also has a historic district overlay. Their publications also assert that property values increase because of the district. She asked the Commission how public disapproval came to be known to the Village the last time historic districts were considered, whether by a poll or public hearings or another mechanism. Chair Nelson responded that, at one or two meetings, a few people came and said they did not want the ordinance enacted. Mr. Cole also responded that the next item on the agenda is in regards to these proposals, and the agenda includes historical minutes from the Board of Trustees consideration of this proposal in 2007. The regulations had favorable hearings before the board in 2007, were recommended to the Village Board in September, and at the Village Board's meeting received unfavorable public comment.

Chair Nelson continued with the Commission's discussion of the item. The Commission's 120-day ability to delay this demolition will end before the Commission's next meeting. This group may request the Village Board extend the review period for an additional 30 days, from April 1 to May 1. This will be the last action the Commission can take in regards to the demolition. She reviewed the

application to demolish the house aloud, noting that the reason for demolition was to use the lot as a landscaped yard for the owner's adjacent property. Due to the non-conformity of the lot size, the lot cannot be used to construct a new home after the existing property is torn down. The concern still exists that the lot may be used to expand the owner's adjacent building. Chair Nelson and Mr. Cole reviewed the actions available to the Commission: It may end its advisory review, continue the review to next month and allow the applicant to opt-out of advisory review, or continue the review and request the Village Board extend the review period. Member Francoeur asked if Mr. Horvat, the Applicant, had any comment.

Mr. Horvat came to the podium and distributed computer renderings of the proposed landscape design for the property after demolition. Mr. Horvat was asked if there would be screening from the street. He responded that the screening would be similar to that existing upon the property. The Commission discussed various details of the renderings presented by Mr. Horvat and thanked him for providing them. Ms. Francoeur asked about the timing of his construction. Mr. Horvat responded that the timing would depend on the Commission's actions. Ms. Francoeur noted that she would prefer the project was done before the beach opened for the summer reason.

The Chair recognized Ms. Linda Hicks from the audience. She is the owner and a resident of a property adjacent to the subject property. She discussed her past conflicts with the owner of 512 Sunrise regarding his fencing and her lack of trust in regards to his actions. She distributed photos to illustrate her concerns.

Chair Nelson again reviewed the actions that the Commission may take at this meeting. She reiterated that there was nothing the Commission could do to stop the demolition.

Member Jerch stated that she wishes to continue to continue the Advisory Review as long as legally possible. She moved to continue the Advisory Review and request the Village Board extend the Advisory Review period an additional 30 days, to May 1. She continued to comment, saying that the other things she would prefer to see happen are not within the Commission's legal purview. She is very frustrated that the property owner have not appeared before the Commission and explained their reasoning, which she does not agree with.

Member Francoeur noted that the owners never appeared before the Commission, even during their prior requests. Member Jerch believes that this a highly desirable home, and that many other people would benefit from preserving the house.

Member Bergmann is concerned about losing the visual character of Lake Bluff and its pattern of small, quaint houses as compared to newer construction of large homes that block lines of sight. He believes Lake Bluff is changing quickly and dramatically. He reviewed the different buildings and their massing and arrangement in the area surrounding the subject property. He considers Sunrise to be one of the most important streets in Lake Bluff and important to Lake Bluff's history, and thinks it should be preserved.

The Chair recognized Ms. Linda Hicks from the audience. She discussed the tax implications of the demolition with the Commission. She also discussed the owner of the subject property and their residence.

The Chair recognized Ms. Briand from the audience. She is offended that the owner has not appeared before the Commission if they are seeking something from the body. She also believes this demolition sets a precedent that will lead to the demolition of additional homes. She is upset with the process and the Village for not enacting stronger regulations.

Chair Nelson thanked the audience again for their attendance and reviewed the requirements of the Advisory Review ordinance as it relates to the duties of the applicant and the duties of the property owner. She also discussed the goals of historic preservation in the Village generally, as well as her concern for the redevelopment of the one-fifth of Lake Bluff that is occupied by estate properties that are at risk for demolition and subdivision in the future. She returned to consideration of Member Jerch's prior motion to continue Advisory Review and transmit a request to the Village Board to extend the review period an additional 30 days. Chair Nelson and Mr. Cole provided a review of how the process would work if the motion were to succeed. Mary Francoeur seconded the motion, which passed on a unanimous roll call vote.

Chair Nelson introduced Mr. Cole, the Village's new Assistant to the Village Administrator.

5. Continued Discussion Regarding Historic Preservation Regulations and Historic Districts

Chair Nelson introduced the item, a review of the Commission's previous historic district regulations that were proposed to the Village Board in 2007 and were not enacted. Member Bergmann believes the Village should require the landowner to come before the Historic Preservation Commission, and not merely the applicant. Member Bergmann requested that Mr. Horvat ask the homeowner to appear before the Commission next month.

Mr. Cole reviewed the documents provided for the Commission in the agenda packet. The attachments document the history of consideration of the historic district ordinance from the Historic Preservation Commission to the Village Board, as well as a prior chart comparing various Historic Preservation measures in the North Shore. News clippings regarding a controversy regarding demolition review in Highland Park were also included. Mr. Cole stated that Village President O'Hara is forming a new ad hoc committee to consider various land use issues concerning the Village, including historic preservation, and recommended that the Commission consider providing some guidance to this ad hoc committee regarding the historic preservation issues the commission see in the community.

Chair Nelson asked if the members of the Commission are in favor of the concept of historic districts. She discussed the definition of historic districts and areas that may make sense to define as a historic district. Member Bergmann stated that districts define themselves. His experience in making National Register nominations and similar work in Lake Forest suggests that observing the built environment will provide enough guidance as to the boundaries of the district and those buildings that are and are not contributing to the district.

Chair Nelson discussed the prior historical architectural surveys performed in Lake Bluff and how they can inform the creation and definition of districts. She noted that Lake Bluff's downtown is already considered a historic district under different criteria. Chair Nelson asked the board members to review the proposed ordinance establishing historic district regulations in 2007 to discuss at a

later date. She continued to discuss the restrictions that are and are not established by this proposal as property rights as concerned.

Member Bergmann was and remains satisfied with the 2007 proposal and its criteria. He complemented the flexibility of the proposal, noting that it scales well to individual streets or large areas. He does not believe it is necessary for the Commission to start over in designing historic district regulations.

Member Jerch asked, and the board discussed, the history of the 2007 proposal's consideration. She believes the Commission needs to pursue better outreach and education regarding.

Chair Nelson recognized a member of the audience who resides on Maple Avenue. She believes it is an education and a fact checking issue. She asserts that the Village Board is interested in marketing Lake Bluff right now, and this proposal, combined with the Barrington case study, provides another way to brand and promote Lake Bluff as a unique community.

Chair Nelson recognized Ms. Kate Briand from the audience. Ms. Briand discussed multiple studies that assert that property values rise in historic districts at a faster rate than other areas. She understands community concerns about property rights, but she also believes that people enter into a social agreement when they move into the community that must be taken into account. Allaying fears, educating, and getting people excited about this proposal will be key to making it succeed.

Chair Nelson invited further comments from the audience.

Ms. Liz Jensen was recognized by the Chair and came forward. She asked if there was any way to poll the community regarding this subject. She believes this will help publicize the Commission's work and generate a broader sense of the community's consensus on this issue. Chair Nelson responded, stating that this is a good idea and that Village President O'Hara's ad hoc committee will likely conduct a broader poll in regards to their work. Member Bergmann stated that the Commission has previously wrote to owners of historic homes advertising workshops on landmarking your home that received little interest. He reviewed the history of the Commission and the discussions around property rights in the Village, including the demolition of a structure at 210 Center Avenue that triggered community interest in favor of historic preservation regulations and the seating of the Historic Preservation Commission after a substantial delay from when the Commission was established by Village ordinance.

A resident came forward and commented on polling and the interaction of the Village's zoning regulations with the Commission's goals. She believes that the Commission may warrant more consultation in zoning decisions regarding historic homes and their lots. Chair Nelson discussed how certified landmarking, a voluntary process in Lake Bluff's historic preservation ordinance, differs from zoning regulations.

Another person came forward from the audience came forward to ask if Ms. Hicks would have any recourse against the property owner for the grievances she described in her testimony. Chair Nelson recommended that Ms. Hicks should write a letter to the Village.

Ms. Nichol came forward. She suggested that the architectural review board should play a larger role in the review of historic homes that are to be altered, demolished, or rebuilt.

Chair Nelson thanked the audience for their participation. She looks forward to a discussion of historic districts at the next meeting. Member Francoeur suggests that the Commission consider a short survey to include with the Village quarterly newsletter as well as other ways to be more inclusive and invite more participation from residents.

6. Chairperson's Report

Chair Nelson had no report.

7. Staff Report

There was no Staff report.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business to consider and upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 8:42.

Respectfully submitted,

Glen Cole
Assistant to the Village Administrator