

**VILLAGE OF LAKE BLUFF
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING**

**November 13, 2019
7:00 P.M.
Village Hall Board Room
40 East Center Avenue**

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 November 13, 2019 at 7:24 p.m. in the Village Hall Board Room.

The following members were present:

Present: Paul Bergmann
 Janie Jerch
 Randolph Liebolt
 Lois Nicol
 Cheri Richardson
 Steve Kraus, Chair

Also Present: Glen Cole, Assistant to the Village Administrator (AVA)

2. Consideration of October 9, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Member Bergmann moved to approve the October 9, 2019 HPC Regular Meeting Minutes as amended. Member Jerch seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

3. Non-Agenda Items and Visitors

Chair Kraus stated that 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.

4. Significant Demolition Review for 600 E. Prospect Ave.

Chair Kraus stated that a letter of intent has been filed with the Village that proposes substantial alterations to the structure located at 600 East Prospect Avenue. He stated that the proposed work constitutes a significant demolition pursuant to Historic Preservation Ordinance. Chair Kraus asked AVA Cole to give background regarding the application and property.

AVA Cole stated that this application uses the letter of intent path created by the Village Board in early 2019. He described the components necessary for a complete letter of intent and noted that the

applicant had provided each component. He described the mechanism used by the Building Code to determine if a demolition was subject to HPC review. Specifically, he stated that the Code focuses more on floor area than the magnitude of visible changes on the exterior of the property. He stated that little information was present regarding this specific property, but that the available historic information was provided to the HPC in their packet including the historic status of surrounding properties from the beta of *Lake Bluff Online*. He stated that the project would proceed to the Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals the following Wednesday to be considered for variations necessary for the project to proceed. Finally, he described the options available to the commission, including:

- To terminate the review, in the event that the HPC considers the structure to not meet landmark designation criteria;
- To take no action; or
- To extend the demolition review.

He noted that, if the HPC would conclude its review, it should make clear in its motion that it intends only for its termination to apply to the proposed project and not to a total demolition of the site. The HPC had no questions for AVA Cole. Chair Kraus invited the Applicant to present.

Edward Deegan, the applicant's architect, came forward to present to the HPC. He introduced Ms. Denckla, the property owner, who spoke regarding her history in Lake Bluff, how she came to possess the property, and her intent to preserve this structure. Mr. Deegan discussed the limited information they were able to find concerning the property. He discussed the challenges of working with the existing structure and the unusually shaped lot at 600 E. Prospect. He discussed the various design ideas that were considered and the particular design elements included that honor the form of the existing structure and that would allow the owner to age-in-place.

Member Bergmann discussed the difficulties created by the grade changes proposed to remain on the property. Mr. Deegan explained their review of this issue and said that it would be prohibitively difficult to eliminate this grade change, but discussed the other design elements included to support aging in place.

In response to a question from Member Richardson, Mr. Deegan responded that the plan would remove approximately the eastern one-quarter of the structure. Member Richardson complimented the plan and the efforts used to retain the house.

Member Bergmann and Mr. Deegan discussed the proposed shape of a window above the front door (square vs. curved arch) and an existing frontispiece as it complemented the historic roofline. Mr. Deegan discussed the firm's design process in evaluating this design element, noting that they were working around the need to provide a functional front entrance.

AVA Cole noted that two letters of support received from neighboring property owners were present at the dais for the members of the HPC.

Chair Kraus invited comments from the audience.

Mr. Bob and Shiela Nelson, residents, came forward to address the HPC. They stated that they neighbored the property immediately to the east and, while they supported the plan, they had specific concerns regarding zoning issues. He noted that the plan would need variations and asked why the architect did not design a house in conformance with the zoning setbacks; that the plan proposed to move back an existing garage in a manner that would further obstruct views from their backyard than existing; and expressed concerns about drainage as well as sun and shade.

AVA Cole stated that the Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals would appreciate hearing these remarks, as they will consider the zoning aspects of this project at their meeting next Wednesday. He stated that the HPC's review is principally concerned with the historic integrity of the structure. Chair Kraus emphasized that zoning issues are not within the HPC's purview to decide and encouraged the commenter to submit their concerns to the PCZBA for consideration.

Ms. Elisabeth Jensen, resident, came forward to address the HPC. She stated that her property was flanked on two sides by the subject property. She stated that she supports historic preservation and appreciates that the property owner is trying to preserve this structure. She echoed the concerns expressed by the Nelsons but said that she would reserve her remarks for the PCZBA.

There were no further requests to address the HPC regarding the significant demolition review of 600 East Prospect.

Chair Kraus stated that one of the interests of the HPC is to provide information to other Village advisory bodies conducting reviews that involve historic resources. He stated that the Commissioners were welcome to express their view on the design and that these comments would be memorialized in the minutes and transmitted to the PCZBA when they consider this project.

- Member Bergmann expressed that he finds this an interesting design that tries to balance preserving the streetscape while updating the house. He likes the attempt to follow through on the existing structure and that it is consistent with the HPC's preservation goals.
- Member Nicol expressed that she supports the design and believes it benefits the streetscape while maintaining the historic feel of the home.
- Member Richardson expressed her appreciation that the applicant's design does not further exceed the Village's bulk regulations.
- Member Jerch expressed that she approves of the design and supports anyone who wants to renovate an old structure such as this and bring it into the twenty-first century.
- Member Liebolt expressed that the front elevation would be an addition to the streetscape and to Prospect Avenue.

Chair Kraus asked for a motion to terminate their review only of the partial demolition of 600 East Prospect Avenue as shown in the applicant's letter of intent. In response to a question from the HPC, AVA Cole explained that there were limitations on what conditions the HPC could put on the termination of its review; but that, in the present case, Staff recommends the HPC be explicit that their intent is only to authorize a partial demolition and not a complete demolition.

Member Richardson made said motion. Member Jerch seconded the motion. The motion passed on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: (6) Bergmann, Richardson, Nicol, Jerch, Liebelt, Kraus
Nays: (0)
Absent: (0)

5. Next Steps for Choosing Lake Bluff

Chair Kraus invited updates from each sub-committee prior to a demonstration of walking tour software under consideration by the 125 Committee.

Subcommittees - Branding

As the report of the Branding sub-committee, Chair Kraus stated that nothing will be decided until the new ordinance is completed.

Subcommittees - Lake Bluff Online

As the report of the *Lake Bluff Online* subcommittee, Member Jerch reported that she and Member Nicol had been communicating with Chair Kraus and meeting with Ms. Lyndy Jensen of the History Museum. She reported that they are increasingly confident that much of what they want to populate the database with has already been researched and that it really is a matter of making it accessible. She said there are still questions about how much is digitized and how best to spend their time.

Member Jerch said that, at the last meeting, Chair Kraus had suggested researching ten properties thoroughly as a test. She stated that the subcommittee members are still willing to do this but they are unsure about the form to use for this test. A brief discussion commenced about the form to use and the origins of the Village's existing form, and the consensus was to use the Village's existing form. Chair Kraus elaborated that perhaps the committee could choose five well-known properties and five more obscure properties so that they can capture a range of difficulties when it comes to exploring the Museum's archives. He said that these could be used as examples to train volunteers. He also emphasized that they should be mindful of how they would train volunteers on the Museum's filing system.

Subcommittees - Landmarks

As the report of the Landmarks subcommittee, Member Bergmann reported that he has found inaccuracies among the lists of possible landmarks assembled over the years and had difficulty locating some of the structures listed therein when driving around the Village. He said that the subcommittee would continue to review the structures individually. Chair Kraus responded that the 125 Committee's Legacy Walk group could coordinate on this work.

Subcommittees - Districts and Sites

As the report of the Districts and Sites subcommittee, Member Richardson reported that the subcommittee had continued to explore the legislative history of Historic Districts in the Village and the various lists of possible districts. She said that the subcommittee's focus is shifting towards a concept of neighborhoods and educating people on these neighborhoods.

Member Nicol said that it was important to emphasize that so much of Lake Bluff has unique history to celebrate and that historic significance is not confined to limited areas. She believes that a neighborhood identification would be important to add to *Lake Bluff Online* to educate residents and prospective buyers.

Member Richardson emphasized that neighborhoods and districts are distinct concepts and that everyone in the community could appreciate a neighborhood designation.

Member Jerch stated that the Benjamin surveys provide some neighborhood information.

Chair Kraus compared this concept to Chicago's neighborhood areas and said that this concept becomes the honorific designation in any ordinance revision.

125th Anniversary Walking Tour Application Demonstration

Chair Kraus circulated a list of specifications created by the 125 Committee for a walking tour application and described its proposed operation using a smartphone or tablet to explore, view images and narratives, and listen to audio descriptions. He presented examples from Savannah, Georgia; the Old Town neighborhood of Chicago; Memphis, Tennessee; Lake Forest, Illinois; Lake Geneva, Wisconsin; and the Hudson national historic area, located in New York. He described the technical process and division of duties between volunteers and the application developer to create each tour. He concluded by saying that the 125 Committee would continue to work on this project as well as marker plaques and that he would provide further reports over the coming months.

6. Staff Report

AVA Cole asked the members of the HPC to review their calendars in anticipation of any necessary December or January meeting date. The consensus of the HPC was not to meet during these months unless there was a pending request that required the HPC's attention. AVA Cole said he would be in contact to set a date once a request was received.

AVA Cole noted that the hour was late but that Staff had prepared a summary presentation of the newest Benjamin survey. He presented regarding:

- The objectives of the survey.
- The areas surveyed, including 1,359 properties; 56 possible local landmarks; three possible national register historic districts; and 520 structures that would possibly contribute to a national register historic district.
- The development of the Village from 1836 to the present as expressed in subdivisions and development approvals.
- The national and regional context of the Village's development including the influence of World War II on culture and housing.
- The various and diverse architectural styles existing throughout these newer areas of the Village.

He stated that additional maps and charts from the study would be forthcoming, and invited more details questions from the Commissioners to share with Ms. Benjamin when she came to make a more detailed presentation in 2020.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business to consider, Member Richardson motioned to adjourn. Member Nicol seconded the motion. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Glen Cole
Assistant to the Village Administrator