CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The following Preservation Commission members were present: Justyn Arnold, Jen Del Debbio, Seth Hoffman, Mike Lord, Dan Miller, Simon Munoz, Al Signorelli and Mike Walker. Fernando Castrejon called in and excused himself from the meeting.

OTHERS PRESENT

The following staff members were present: Jill Morgan.

Others Present: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

18-1166
Approval of the Minutes for the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on December 13, 2018.

A motion was made by Mr. Signorelli, seconded by Mr. Walker, that the minutes be approved and filed. The motion carried by voice vote.

18-1169
Approval of the Minutes for the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on December 19, 2018.

A motion was made by Mr. Signorelli, seconded by Mr. Hoffman, that the minutes be approved and filed. The motion carried by voice vote.

COA REPORT

19-0020
December Historic Certificate of Appropriateness Report

There were no questions on the COA report.

AGENDA
19-0023

The Preservation Commission is providing comments on the National Register Nomination for Copley Hospital, located at 301 Weston Avenue (Illinois Historic Preservation Agency- 19-0023 - AU27/1-19.004 - HP -JM - Ward 4)

Mrs. Morgan said as a certified local government, any National Register Nominations are required to go before the City of Aurora and the Preservation Commission for comment on it. Then the State just takes that into consideration. The State has officially asked us to provide those comments. There is a form that they would like us to fill out. I provided you the entire National Register Nomination form. Just to kind of go over the nomination, this is a nomination for the entire property, so it is ranging from the original 1888 hospital to the 1970 addition to the complex. This kind of shows you an aerial view of the complex. It is a 7.3 acre site. They are saying it contains 2 contributing buildings, 1 non-contributing building and 1 non-contributing structure. The contributing buildings are the Copley Hospital itself and they are saying the hospital is done in 6 phases, so kind of 6 separate additions. One was from the original 1888. The next one was 1916. The next addition was 1932. The next addition in 1947. The nurse’s home was done in 1957, that’s kind of a separate building. Then the 1970 final addition to the hospital. The nurse’s dormitory is also considered contributing. The non-contributing is the 1 story powerhouse, which was built in 1932, but it has been substantially altered, and the helicopter pad. The complex is considered eligible for listing under Criterion A for health medicine with a period of significance from 1888 to 1970. Also to note, there is a 1980 addition behind the 1970 portion that they are considering non-contributing. It postdates their period of significance. Typically with National Register, you are looking at 50 years or older. If it is less than 50, it can be contributing if there is some substantial significance to it. So the 1970’s building is like at 49 years, so almost that 50, as well as a large substantial addition to the entire complex with some Modern Movement architectural styles as opposed to the 1980 small little inks that is an architecturally insignificant building. The hospital contains Aurora’s first purpose built city hospital. That was the 1888 portion. The hospital maintained a nurse’s training school throughout the period of significance. They constructed that nurse’s dormitory in 1957. The Chicago base architecture firm of Schmidt, Garden and Erickson designed the 1932, 1947 and 1970 blocks of the hospital as well as the 1957 dormitory. Brick cladding and limestone trim characterize the contributing building and the contributing portions of the entire hospital complex. The 1888 portion retains the late Victorian design. The 1916, 1932 and 1947 blocks reflect the Classical Revival style. The 1970 block was designed with a Modern Movement style. The 1957 Nurse’s Dormitory is in what we kind of call a Georgian Revival style, so it is kind of a Modern Movement interpretation of the Georgian. Let me pull up some pictures. The first picture is the original 1888 historic photo of that. The one below that is the 1916 portion, so you can see some of the alterations that have been made to that building on the front façade. This is the 1970 historic photo of it. These are the current photos. You can see in this one a little bit of the back of the original portion from 1888. There was also a small addition to the rear of the 1888 portion in 1905 that was used as a dining room. This is the nursing building in the Georgian Revival style. They have like the faux chimneys on the end. This is the 1932 block. This is kind of the big entrance now for the site in the Classical Revival. This was donated by Copley. That’s when it was renamed to the Copley Hospital from the original Aurora City Hospital. To the left of this portion, I don’t think they have a good picture of it, is the later 1947 addition. It is similar in style to the May 1932. That was also donated by Copley. Then the 1970 modern building. This is a good picture of the 1970 modern style movement, which really drastically increased the size of the hospital. A lot of new amenities came in at that period. The
entire complex is significant under Criterion A associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The building is locally significant for the important role it served in providing medical care to the residents of Aurora. The historic blocks of the hospital, including the original 1888 building, are maintained and retain good integrity. It shows the evolution of medical care facilities from the later Victorian period to the Modern Movement. So that’s where they’re coming up with the significance for the entire complex. In one location, one site, you see the history of medicine kind of growing, of hospitals growing. It closed in 1995, so it really brings you to modern medical history. This is the picture, the little 1980, they are saying is not contributing.

Mr. Signorelli said I do have a question. If they do get the tax credits, the federal tax credits, then they have to adhere to the federal guidelines as far as both the exterior and the interior?

Mrs. Morgan said correct. As a site, the National Register is for both exterior and interior. So for any tax credits, it would have to adhere to the Secretary of Interior standards for both. That’s where they would identify some of the character defining features, particularly when you are dealing with interior, to allow some rehab and use of it and identify those characteristics that are important in layout of the interior and retaining those elements.

Mr. Signorelli said because even in the condition that it is in, there are a couple of interior areas that should be restored, like the reception area.

Mrs. Morgan said yes. It is deteriorated, but it still retains some of the beautiful wood paneling.

Mrs. Del Debbio said was the hospital north of McCarty Park? Was that called Fox Hospital?

Mr. Miller said it was called St. Charles Hospital.

Mrs. Del Debbio said did that get a historic classification?

Mrs. Morgan said that did as well. That was listed on the National Register and they used tax credits for the project.

Mr. Signorelli said and it is an award winning rehab project.

Mr. Miller said I was able to do a tour of the St. Charles Hospital. They did a wonderful job. Projects on the National Register of property, they are using historic preservation tax credits. Those are over seen by the State?

Mrs. Morgan said correct.

Mr. Miller said so the State prepared this report, which is very detailed, right?

Mrs. Morgan said no. It was prepared by a consultant and the State reviewed it.

Mr. Miller said then who hired the consultant?

Mrs. Morgan said I don’t know. I’m assuming the owner.
Mr. Miller said okay. That gets to my question as what is the role of the owner. Is the owner supporting this nomination?

Mrs. Morgan said in order to actually be listed as a site, you have to have the owner’s approval. You can be considered eligible for the National Register, but to actually be listed, you have to have the owner’s consent. Then if you are a district, it is a percentage of owners.

Mr. Miller said and the advantage to the owner of the National Register Nomination is that it would involve their use in Historic Preservation Tax Credits to renovate the property. So that’s a reason that they would support this.

Mrs. Morgan said as a complex, since it is the entire range of periods that is considered eligible, that means the rehabs in the building would be eligible for tax credits. It would also then limit if they would want to demolish any sections. It would be difficult to get approval for a demolition of a section since the entire complex is being considered eligible if you wanted to use tax credits.

Mrs. Del Debbio said what if you wanted to use tax credits for expanding it?

Mrs. Morgan said I’m pretty sure the tax credits are not eligible on new construction, so the cost of new construction they can’t get tax credits. There is the possibility of having new construction, but that would still also have to adhere to the guidelines. When you propose tax credits, you can’t limit the scope. You can’t say we are just asking for tax credits on this little portion and then 6 months later we are going to do something that would not adhere to the guidelines.

Mrs. Del Debbio said so you can’t just kind of gut and have a shell existing and then say oh we need to support what we are going to put inside the building by adding an exterior? Like maybe they wanted to tear the walls completely down and create different interior structures and just leave the exterior of the building.

Mrs. Morgan said no, that would not adhere to the standards.

Mr. Miller said you had mentioned the Secretary of the Interior guidelines apply to the interior as well. In the documentation here, I notice in multiple places it states that much of the interior layout is maintained.

Mrs. Morgan said correct, yes. So that’s probably where they would try to retain like the corridor, especially when those are significant to the history of medicine and why they laid it out in a certain way, so they probably would want to retain the layout, but then it would allow you to change the rooms, increase sizes of rooms, but try to retain the central corridors.

Mr. Miller said and one way I know that is it came into play with the rehab of the St. Charles Hospital is that corridors are very wide in that building and the company in charge of rehab felt when you are rehabbing to rental housing units, the corridors usually aren’t that wide because you want as much of your square footage to go into rentable space rather than the hallway and the State for the most part did not allow them to narrow the hallways, although in one small portion of the building they did allow it. But the bulk of it they actually did not to retain the character of the building.

Mr. Signorelli said you said that the State would be the body that would oversee this, but if there is any controversy, do we still have input?
Mrs. Morgan said not officially no. The State might listen to something that we would have to say. The State Preservation architect is pretty thorough.

Mr. Signorelli said well I trust them to do the right thing, but I just kind of had that question, but we could certainly give our opinion.

Mrs. Morgan said yes, I think they would listen to the Preservation Commission, just like they are asking for our comments now.

Mr. Miller said I think you did answer another question I had is that once the whole site is approved as a National Register property, it would actually be difficult for them to get approval to tear anything down.

Mrs. Morgan said anything that is contributing. The 1980 portion, the power station, they would be able to demolish those.

Mr. Miller said they did choose to include the 1970’s portion, which is fine. I don’t oppose that, and I understand that it is part of the history of the site and the history of medicine, and it shows how it continued to be a vibrant center of healthcare in the city well past the mid-century period. I could also argue for not including it due to it being adjacent to the Near Eastside District. If we are defining a time period of significance for the Near Eastside Historic District, it wouldn’t include the 1970’s, but I understand looking at the site by itself you can argue for including it. If they chose to include that may mean that they want it landmarked that way.

Mrs. Morgan said they could and the State could have also pushed that and I don’t know. I haven’t talked to anyone from the State.

Mr. Miller said the two Eastside representatives, do you feel any different that the 1970’s contributes to the Eastside?

Mrs. Del Debbio said well personally, as far the aesthetics, I wouldn’t really care either way, but after talking to many people, nurses, there’s a long history of women who had grandmothers and their mothers and family working and birthing children and that hospital has so much significance in their life that they are even talking about I’d love to come back. It would be great to actually have nurses think that they could be a part of something like this and change. I’ve heard stories about women crying when it closed and they had to go to Copley and they had to go to Naperville, so to see something like this happen it really gives a lot of hope for a lot of families. We can revitalize the neighborhood and keep the history of the hospital. It is almost like a rebirth to some people. It is pretty significant with the 1970’s.

Mr. Signorelli said I first came in with the understanding of why they include those 1970’s buildings, but looking at the architecture and certainly compared to some of the other buildings on the site, there were some questions in my mind, but as you were saying and as they stated in the nomination, maybe most importantly about those particular buildings on the site is the fact that they tell the story rather than the architecture itself.

Mrs. Morgan said yes. I wasn’t sure how they would come forward, but after reading the nomination, I agree. I felt that they made a really good case for the historic significance of the entire site.
Mr. Miller said I felt they did too. I would also support it without the 1970’s portions included based on the Near Eastside District simply extend into that time period, but I can completely support this nomination as it is.

Mr. Hoffman said it is very common for hospitals to be added onto and to evolve, but for a period range of time this wide from 1888 to 1970, I’ve done engineering work on various hospitals and I’ve not seen anyone where there’s the original 1800’s structure that’s still connected and in use.

Mrs. Morgan said I thought that would be unusual. I wasn’t sure, but I was like that is pretty amazing to have. Nothing really has been demolished through all the expansions.

Mr. Miller said so the structures deemed contributing actually span a period of 82 years, from 1888 to 1970. Thanks for mentioning that. I can see where that would be unusual.

Mr. Signorelli said just the simple fact that that 1888 portion with very few exterior alterations still exists even and the history just of that piece being, I believe, the first hospital in Aurora being built with funds that were raised from residents, people of Aurora, and there’s that history as well with that portion.

Mr. Miller said you are saying the 1888 portion was raised with fundraising from local sources, similar to our GAR Hall.

Mrs. Morgan said so was the 1916, so all that funding was raised by citizens according to the nomination.

Mr. Signorelli said well I certainly am in favor of the National Register designation for the site.

Mrs. Del Debbio said me too.

Mr. Signorelli said I move that our Preservation Commission supports the National Register nomination for the Copley site.

Mrs. Del Debbio seconded the motion.

    MOTION TO APPROVE THE NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION WAS MADE
    BY:  Al Signorelli
    MOTION SECONDED BY:  Jen Del Debbio
    AYES:  Justyn Arnold, Jen Del Debbio, Seth Hoffman, Mike Lord, Dan Miller,
           Simon Munoz, Al Signorelli, Mike Walker
    NAYS:  None

A motion was made by Mr. Signorelli, seconded by Mrs. Del Debbio, that this agenda item be approved. The motion carried.

19-0019

2019 Historic Preservation Commission Training

Mrs. Morgan said so just kind of continuing on the concept of training. I passed out to everyone the new member packet. This was update 4/20/2019. It has the new meeting schedule, as well as the updated committee list. It has just kind of basic overview of the Preservation Commission, some contact information and meeting schedule. I added the district maps, the overall map of the National Register one and
the local ones. I also included some more detailed aerial view of the Near East, Tanner, Riddle Highlands and Palace. There is also the list of addresses for the local landmarks. I also didn’t get them all done, but I have a list of the Near Eastside address list. I also included style and building dates, and this is as is according to our survey. There could be some inaccuracies. I’ll try to do these for the rest of them as well. There is also the Chairman Handbook, so if anyone has questions about how the meeting is ran, you can kind of look at that. Then there are the bylaws of how we are supposed to officially run the meetings. It is pretty standard. It is similar to kind of following the Robert’s Rules of Order type mentality. Then there is the Historic Preservation Ordinance. This is what is actually part of our Municipal Code. Legally, our guidelines are included, referenced in the Ordinance and referenced in our Zoning code, but this is where is kind of the legal basis that we would fall back on is the actual Ordinance itself. It lays out a lot of how to create districts and landmarks. Then there is a small section on alterations. The final portion are those memo clarifications. I haven’t got to all of them, but the wood one, I embedded it into the actual guidelines so then if we ever have the ability to reprint them the redline would be gone. The gutters, the fences that we’ve clarified, as well as I added the parking. Then you have the District guidelines itself being attached to that. I thought I would kind of do the trainings in maybe little snippets so we don’t bombard people with too much information. The one thing I wanted to kind of go over and possibly do some clarification on how to best approach it is the concept of when people come before the Preservation Commission they are asking for kind of a variance to the guidelines. Some things like demolitions have to come before the Commission, but when alterations come before the Commission is when staff is saying they don’t strictly adhere to the guidelines. That doesn’t mean that the answer always has to be no because with Preservation things are always kind of contingent. Certain elements are more important on certain buildings. The way a building might be configured might mean something even though it doesn’t adhere to the guidelines it is not going against the intent of the Ordinance. So when they come before the Preservation Commission, the Commission is looking at what is it they are asking for and looking and saying okay they don’t adhere strictly to the guidelines, but do they adhere to the overall intent of the Ordinance as far as preserving the character of the district and the character defining features of the individual structures. So within the actual Ordinance, we have a section on standards and criteria for obtaining any Certificate of Appropriateness. So this is what was imbedded into the Ordinance for how do you approve a Certificate of Appropriateness. Then from that we did guidelines that got a lot more detailed. So I took this and I tried to create on the second page what I’m calling a Findings of Fact. In Zoning when we do variances or do special uses, at the end of it before the Commission approves them they have to do a Findings of Fact laying out why they are approving it and how it meets the standards allowing that variance or special use. So what I’m trying to do is kind of create something similar for the Preservation Commission. We can tweak these as much as we want, but just kind of that when we have a proposal that we can outline why we are doing it. Maybe it doesn’t have to be so many. Maybe that’s getting too complicated. That way it is very clear why we are granting that variance. I think the last one Dan did a very good job of kind of outlining why in this situation with the gutters retaining the half round was not required. I think that’s what we are trying to get at, just making sure we outline that. I think we usually cover it, but then I thought if we did something like a Findings of Fact we make sure we state on the record why the Commission is approving this variation. If you do ever get legally challenged, that sets a clear rationale based on what was outlined in the Ordinance itself why we are allowing it, why it is adhering to the overall intent of the Ordinance. If you want to read that we can discuss it now or we can discuss it at the next meeting.
Mr. Signorelli said also I think it is important that the reasons for the variance are clear as you said because once it’s done, you created a precedence and we want to be fair here. If someone comes and says well you are saying that I can’t do that, but you allowed so and so to do it, you would have a clear reason for allowing that particular variance and not allowing it to happen everywhere throughout a district.

Mrs. Morgan said yes. Is it clear to everyone that when using the word like the variation that what it is that they are asking the Commission why you are able to grant a change to the guidelines? Does everyone feel comfortable with that?

Mr. Miller said the last case with the gutters I was more comfortable with it because we did have the clarification and it was stated why you need to replace your half round gutters with new half round gutters even though they were more expensive. In that particular house, it didn’t really seem to conform with a statement of why we required that. They were not character defining for that house.

Mr. Signorelli said I think that’s a good example. I came in thinking there wasn’t a particularly good reason why that homeowner should not replace with what was originally there until some of the Commissioners like Mike and others said that those type of gutters simply wouldn’t be adequate to take the water away from the house. I hadn’t thought about that. There was clearly a reason why that should have been allowed.

Mr. Miller said on the other hand, it seems that some of our request have been COA’s asking for approval of vinyl siding or vinyl windows probably after they are already installed. I would feel a lot less comfortable giving a variance for that and creating a precedent as Al stated. The siding and windows actually are character defining elements for virtually every property.

Mrs. Morgan said and I think, going back to understand that the guidelines, while they are imbedded in our codes and you are required to follow them and we have the shall and should differentiations, still at the end of the day they are guidelines trying to get to the overall intent. You do have the ability to alter them. There needs to be rationale, but that it’s not going against the Ordinance by giving that variation if it adheres to the overall intent.

Mr. Signorelli said I think it is also important to mention the importance of getting information out to homeowners talking about the rules and guidelines so that we can prevent the kind of situations where the work is already done and then they’re coming before us. I think it is important to get information out to folks.

Mrs. Del Debbio said I’ve had a few calls from quite a few homes in the district that are multi-units, young guys wanting to buy as an investment long term. I’ve had 3 or 4 calls already about them. They are really unclear. They have a lot of hopes of replacing and making it efficient. I was trying to explain to them that there is an aesthetic, that there is a quality to the house that they have to stick to, but in some cases the homes, like the home we were looking at with the garage in the back, that home really didn’t seem to have a clear design sense. So I’m not sure in our district how we would be able to explain some of these. Not that it is a negative. It is just not a plus. Some of the homes are just interior doors that are exterior doors. All the front windows have been replaced and some of them have plexi. So how does someone like that come to the Board and say well it is a plexi window that was just chopped into place. I want to go to Home Depot or Lowes and grab something. How are they then to analyze the home that doesn’t seem to have a clear character and come to us and
ask for help? I was kind of talking to this one guy on the phone and I thought well that’s a question.

Mrs. Morgan said there have been discussions to re-look at the surveys, but I don’t think we’ll have that ability. On a case by case basis you could come to the Board and make the argument that a building is no longer contributing. If it’s been substantially altered to the point that it’s lost all character, there is an argument that it is just no longer contributing. When we are dealing with non-contributing properties, it’s the impact to the overall district, so not necessarily preserving the historic fabric of that building or historic character of the building, but allowing it does have a negative impact on the whole district. Our guidelines, I don’t think, cover non-contributing very well. Actually, I don’t know really if they cover it at all. It has a general statement about non-contributing like in the front. I have taken that and kind of interpreted that. There are a few that I’ve already said non-contributing like a 1970’s building. To me, they want vinyl windows. I approve it, like it is a non-contributing resource that does not negatively impact the character of the district. If it is actually an older home, they could come before the Commission to argue that it should be considered non-contributing. I saw one case years ago where someone tried to make that argument to allow vinyl siding. It did not pass. You have to kind of weigh while it is maybe covered in aluminum siding and has vinyl windows, what’s underneath? That’s where it gets a little more complicated as far as you have to consider it. Some of them have had additions put on that kind of cover the entire front, like the entire porch has been enclosed and covers half the front façade. I can see in that situation where you might be able to make a case that it is no longer contributing because it would take completely redoing the whole building to bring it back to the character, as opposed if it is just covered in aluminum siding and you take off the siding and the wood siding is still there. I would say it depends on how much has been altered.

Mrs. Del Debbio said it seems to be an issue for people who are potentially buying the homes in the districts.

Mrs. Morgan said I’ve heard from several similar people.

Mr. Hoffman said it might help to show them examples of some of the de-siding transformations. The Preservation Awards is probably a good list to go through.

Mrs. Del Debbio said windows too. Some of the windows have been chopped in, just kind of put some, I hope it is, 5/8 plywood to replace the bottom part of the window and they literally only have a top hung part of the double hung window in its place and this kid is calling me up saying well if I buy this house am I going to have to replace it with a historic window. I didn’t know what to say to him.

Mrs. Morgan said I’ve gotten that argument too, well isn’t it better for me to come in and put in new vinyl windows. Once you put the vinyl window in it is in there for 15 to 20 years. Whereas there could be a homeowner coming in who would be willing to put in the work for original windows.

Mrs. Del Debbio said that’s usually the way the conversation goes. I’d say well if you are looking for a long term ownership and you work on one window, see how it works out and then move to the next.

Mrs. Morgan said it could be on case by case basis. Again, that would have to come before the Commission, but the Commission could say replacing one or two with a vinyl maybe that’s not on the front. In order to preserve the building and keep it from
further deteriorating, we’ll approve it with a condition that that window can only remain for 10 years and then once some investment has gone into the property, it would need to be replaced. I don’t know if the Commission would support something like that.

Mrs. Del Debbio said that would be something to look into only because there are so many homes that are in a state of limbo as far as how do you define what type of home it was originally and what’s happened to it in the past 100 years it sat there on a lot that doesn’t even allow parking in the back or on the street. So a lot of these homes, at least I’m thinking of three, are really tight fitting into the neighborhood, so they are kind of lost. They are a good price right now and if people are interested in buying them, I want to know what to tell them about the historic district and where they could go with it.

Mrs. Morgan said as far as windows, with the Commission kind of allowing kind of the wood clad, it is not a cheap vinyl window, but it’s maybe something that’s a little cheaper and easier to come by than like doing a custom wood. A house that’s been completely changed like that would be open to allowing the aluminum clad wood.

Mr. Miller said that’s probably a good point with a house that much of the original character seems to be gone or hidden or covered. I think this only works with really a preservation minded buyer in any case, but if much of the original character has been removed that may give you a little more leeway to make an argument if there are no original windows in the house. Maybe we don’t really care if they have a 1 over 1 double hung or 3 over 1 and maybe you can make an argument why either one is appropriate.

Mrs. Morgan said I think in that situation a 1 over 1 I would say would be appropriate. Throughout the district they are on all types of styles of homes throughout the district.

Mr. Hoffman said do you have something where you help applicants through the process of determining what might be appropriate when there’s not (inaudible)?

Mrs. Morgan said yes.

Mrs. Del Debbio said if I could have something I could rattle off to them, some type of non-conforming ideas for a potential buyer, they would think it wouldn’t be such an overwhelming situation. Some of them look at these homes and think it’s a lot and they just pass it by and I don’t want people to pass by the homes in our district. We do want them sold and cared for.

Mr. Hoffman said I think one of the positives is that provides encouragement for improvement. In some cases where they have been re-sided and bad windows and not even properly replaced, the guidelines can nudge them toward better decisions as well as the properties around them through the process and so over the course of repairs they can improve the condition of what’s there now.

Mrs. Del Debbio said improve the condition and maybe perhaps define some stuff because you want to have a home that has some kind of defining style too.

Mrs. Morgan said and then when in doubt I would say keep it simple, again like the 1 over 1, or if you are doing a porch like just a square, like a square railing. At least you are not trying to add a style that you don’t know what the style is or you are not mix and matching styles.
Mrs. Del Debbio said or putting a back yard porch deck, a back deck of your house, on the front. We have a couple of homes like that. It looks like the back porch at the front door.

Mr. Hoffman said well especially with like the smaller simpler turn of the century homes that are elegant in their consistency and simplicity, not throwing on the whole bargain bin of fancy looking features. There’s a particular house on our street that’s a Craftsman Bungalow and this lady has put Victorian fan brackets and columns on the front. Adding fancy things doesn’t always make something better.

Mrs. Del Debbio said in talking with some of the people in my neighborhood, I don’t know if it is just a common phrase, but a lot of people know Arts and Crafts or Queen Anne. This one particular man that we were talking to said that he lived in a Queen Anne and it wasn’t anything near a Queen Anne. It was an Arts and Crafts house and he called it a Queen Anne, so I thought I’d like to be able to tell him in a certain way or maybe show him these pictures that you’ve presented us and so then he will be knowledgeable about his home and if we wants to do repairs now he’ll have the right description for his house.

Mr. Hoffman said there is a good summary on the website. I’ve run across it. It just gives a little overview of the common house styles in the districts.

Mrs. Morgan said and in the guidelines there is some information. I do think there is a brochure or something that kind of outlines some characters. The Arts and Craft is popular. You can find a craftsman door like at Home Depot. It must be popular and it is easier to find then when I’m trying to have people find a door that’s like not that.

Mrs. Del Debbio said well this is nice, the Findings of Fact. This is very good even when discussing with people about their home. It is grounded in a factual statement.

Mrs. Morgan said so if you want to take a look at that. We can discuss it at the next meeting and then we can also adopt something and then kind of keep it changing once we actually try applying it. We don’t want to get it too complicated and I may have here. I know at Planning Commission sometimes when we go through Findings of Fact it seems repetitive. So maybe we can even condense it a little more.

Mr. Miller said so under this Findings of Fact, there are questions here about vegetation, which we usually don’t discuss.

Mrs. Morgan said that’s probably more if they are thinking of doing like a new construction or new addition and having it really impact the landscaping and vegetation.

Mr. Hoffman said you are drawing from the section. This is almost a checklist.

Mrs. Morgan said I was trying to keep it following that as much as possible, trying to condense it where I can, but that way we can say it is falling back on the Ordinance.

Mr. Hoffman said I think this is very useful as just a reminder, a checklist as we are going through and discussing so we wouldn’t necessarily need to actually verbally go through each one of these, but can use the appropriate ones as talking points to summarize what the conclusion is.

Mrs. Morgan said that’s true too, that only 1, 2 and 4 apply and we can actually mention those.
Mr. Signorelli said well I realize the landscaping may not be the most important issue that comes before us, but I think there are some instances, even though the guidelines may not talk about it directly, I can see instances where it would be in my mind the Commission's job to try to convince a homeowner not to do something with the landscaping that would be totally out of character with the home and/or the district. Like for example using Riddle Highlands as an example, I would not want somebody to come in and throw white rock down with trimmed up evergreens, sculptured evergreens and wagon wheels and things like that. That's the kind of things that I think we should discourage, even though the guidelines don't necessarily talk about it.

Mrs. Morgan said I think we could discourage this. I'm a little hesitant on forcing too much of the landscaping because it is not the built fabric.

Mrs. Del Debbio said it is a cultural thing too in my community. I know one maybe in the historic district, the fountain must be about 5 feet by 6 feet in the front yard right under the big picture window. It does not go with anything else and it takes up the entire front yard, but they love it. I grew up next to a man, he was an Italian neighbor of mine, and he trimmed up all the foliage with the ladies and the pictures of water draining out. It is kind of a cultural thing too, so we wouldn't want to stop someone from expressing themselves.

Mrs. Morgan said especially when we restrict other areas that is not the built fabric.

Mr. Hoffman said it is more toward paint colors in the spectrum of permanence. I'm just happy when they keep bushes and tree branches clear of the sidewalk.

Mr. Miller said the fountain is a good example. It is not a permanent change to the structure. It can be removed. Then we don't have documentation really in our guidelines about what you can or can't do with landscaping.

Mrs. Morgan said anything else?

Mr. Miller said well this is good. Thanks for bringing this. I like the points laid out here. At some point, I know I've phrased things wrong in the past saying I like that or I don't like that, which technically is irrelevant whether I like it or not and it used to come back to me. I'm saying that I don't like something because it doesn't conform to the guidelines. Maybe we simply need to refer back to the guidelines that it doesn't conform to.

Mrs. Morgan said yes, trying to probably avoid I like or I don't like, but it is hard.

Mr. Miller said it's come off that way sometimes and then I think as soon as I say it well that was wrong.

Mrs. Morgan said because are trying to not talk jargon. I think we try to talk to the person so they understand. So at least then if we go back to a Findings at the end, we can go back to it and say well the basis for why we said that was why we made the determination.

Mr. Hoffman said most of the applicants have gone through their COA with you first. Do you go through Section 37-62?

Mrs. Morgan said I don't and I think that's probably a good point for me to do that as
well with the people, but at this point, no I haven’t been going through it with them.

Mr. Hoffman said if they are making a strong case, they should be answering those points.

Mrs. Morgan said and I do sometimes, like the gutter lady, say like I don’t want to argue it for them. When they are like how do I feel this out, I would mention their issue with the water and that it is not very visible. If I do feel like they have a case, I oftentimes try to identify or actually even identify it for them when I don’t agree with that. There are other things that supersede that argument, but it is still an argument that you can make.

Mr. Miller said a lot of them we’ve heard are clearly wrong. There isn’t a good argument for your vinyl siding, but sometimes there is. There are situations that are so unusual that there wouldn’t be any guidelines written that would specifically address it as far as interpretation.

Mrs. Morgan said sometimes I don’t agree with their argument, but I see what they are trying to say so I’ll help them phrase it better. It is not a strong enough argument for the variation, but I understand what they are trying to get across.

PENDING

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A) Grants - Dan Miller, Chairman

No Report.

Mrs. Morgan said we have sat down internally with staff, including our Finance Director, on how this needs to be structured, so we are moving forward with creating a program. It is probably going to be a revolving loan program as we originally presented it.

B) Near Eastside Historic District - Jennifer Baird-del Debbio, Chairperson

No Report.

C) Riddle Highlands Historic District - Fernando Castrejon, Chairperson

No Report.

D) Public Awareness - Mike Walker, Chairman

No Report.

Mrs. Morgan said I did talk to my boss, Ed’s boss even, about the Expo. I think everyone is on board that it is not going to be worthwhile and there are other ways that funding could go to try to increase understanding about the districts.

Mr. Miller said I especially appreciate Simon’s comment about events that are already happening, such as Juany Garza in the 2nd Ward does so many events, so if there is
some way of hijacking them. Juany has been a great supporter of historic preservation as well.

Mr. Signorelli said should we have a Public Awareness meeting to talk about what we want to do? So we are still going with, am I understanding correctly, that we are going to take advantage of Ward things and include an expo type?

Mrs. Morgan said I would say probably holding off. I think we are working on getting the funding program up and running and then we’ll look at the expo and ideas of that. If there is something happening, like an event that we think would be a good one to start with, let me know on that and then I can maybe rush it, but right now I’m trying to get the funding program up.

Mr. Signorelli said I guess part of my question is, is there any chance that any of the other activities or some ideas that some of us have come up with are possible for say Preservation Week or including it in with Ward activities or whatever?

Mrs. Morgan said yes. Preservation week is in May, so maybe trying to get something together in February or March. I’m hoping by February I’ll have a little bit more headway on the funding.

Mr. Miller said Simon, would you like to be on the Public Awareness Committee because you had some good ideas?

Mr. Munoz said I’ll ask her about events she has coming up and make a schedule of what’s she’s got.

Mr. Miller said I thought you might be good on that committee. I suggest we run kind of the awareness stuff through that committee.

E) Landmarks - Al Signorelli, Chairman

No Report.

F) FoxWalk Design Review - Fernando Castrejon, Chairperson

No Report.

Mrs. Morgan said Fernando has been officially appointed to the FoxWalk Design Review Committee to represent the Preservation Commission. We will actually be meeting next week on two projects.

G) Tanner/Palace Historic District Committee - Justyn Arnold, Chairperson

No Report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Signorelli, seconded by Mr. Hoffman, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by voice vote. Mr. Miller adjourned.
the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

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