



City of Aurora

2nd Floor Council
Chambers
44 E. Downer Place
Aurora, IL 60505
www.aurora-il.org

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday
March 10, 2022
7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Miller called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The following Preservation Commission members were present: Justyn Arnold, Fernando Castrejon, Amber Foster, Matt Hanson, Seth Hoffman, Kristin Ludwig, Dan Miller, Simon Munoz, Al Signorelli and Mike Walker.

OTHERS PRESENT

The following staff members were present: Mrs. Morgan and Mrs. Jackson.

Others Present: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

22-0134 Approval of the Minutes of the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on February 10, 2022.

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

COA REPORT

22-0193 February 2022 Certificate of Appropriateness Report

Chairman Miller said my comment on 451 Blackhawk Street is I've seen the siding come off and the original siding is showing. It is very attractive, so that's encouraging.

There were no questions on the COA report.

This COA Report was discussed and filed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

AGENDA

22-0192

Certificate of Appropriateness to install solar panels on the roof of the house and on the rear garage being partially visible from the street at 247 Sunset Avenue (Laura Fuscone- 22-0192 - AU15/3-22.061-COA/HP - Ward 6)

Mrs. Morgan said this is in the Riddle Highlands Historic District. It was built in 1937 in the Colonial Revival style. The applicant is proposing to install 5 solar panels on the rear elevation of the house and install solar panels on the front, the side and the rear of the garage, which is a rear garage. While the garage is located in the rear of the house, the front facing slope is still partially visible from the street, so hence bringing it before the Preservation Commission. Originally the applicant had proposed putting some on the east elevation, the elevation to the right of the primary house. Staff indicated that that would not adhere to that minimally visible requirement that the Preservation Commission approved in the revisions last year. So they resubmitted with this, just showing it on the rear elevation of the house, but then on the 3 elevations of the garage. Staff feels like this does adhere to that minimally visible requirement being located on the rear garage and not readily visible from the street. I can bring up a picture of the house.

Mrs. Ludwig said I have a question. The only thing that surprised me was that on the garage, I would have thought that it would be less visible, instead of on the front of the garage, which you can still see from the street, unless I'm looking at the picture wrong, why wouldn't they put it on the side of the garage? It looks like in the diagram that it's on the back, the front and left side as you face the house, which is more visible. See the 3 that are on the front, if those were instead of on the front, off to the right side. Do you see what I mean? It is still visible, whereas, if you would move those 3 on the front to the right hand side, you wouldn't see them at all.

Mrs. Morgan said unless there is a tree or something that's blocking that. When they removed the ones on the primary house, they still didn't propose trying to add more to the garage.

Mr. Hoffman said they show a little orange dot on that slope there, which appears to be their legend for obstructions, like on the house for the chimney and where things are.

Mrs. Ludwig said do you think maybe this telephone pole?

Mr. Hoffman said unless there's an electrical drop coming down there. I don't know. Otherwise, I would agree.

Mrs. Morgan said maybe something to do with that. It looks maybe there is an electrical line kind of swinging up.

Mrs. Ludwig said and if other people don't see that as a big deal, when I look at it, I'm like why when the whole thing could be completely invisible. You will see it on the garage from the street.

Mr. Hoffman said the front of the garage could be considered minimally visible according our standards and I think that would be consistent with the guideline's approach to garages in general, which is more lenient on vinyl siding and...

Chairman Miller said true.

Mrs. Morgan said correct. I feel like we have, I think there was one similar where we allowed it kind of on a garage, but still partially visible.

Mrs. Ludwig said and I agree. It is not blatant. It was just the only thing I noticed.

Mr. Hoffman said I don't recall any others that have been on garages. I know we've made suggestions to some and the solar developers were not real interested, I think, because you have to dredge in conduit. I know there was somewhere we had made that suggestion.

Chairman Miller said I believe on Blackhawk there was a property that had a large non-historic garage. It's bigger than what we usually see, so it had more roof space and I think they did use it.

Mrs. Morgan said I feel like there was one and maybe it wasn't partially visible and it was a staff approval because it was completely on the side.

Chairman Miller said would that be a concern if the panels on the front of the garage were visible? I'm kind of in agreement. I would call it minimally visible and in line with how we treat garages in general. It is a detached garage and it is behind the house. Technically I can see it, but we've allowed more lax standards for them.

Mrs. Ludwig said it's not right up on the street.

Chairman Miller said no, it's not.

Mrs. Ludwig said like if was attached to the side of the house or something that may be different.

Mr. Hansn said the backdrop of the house is the back of Northgate. It is a shopping center. You're not destroying something aesthetically pleasing.

Mr. Hoffman said yes, the garage is in the very back corner of the property.

Mrs. Ludwig said so probably this picture is shown as the worst case scenario of what you'd see, which is not that bad.

Mr. Signorelli said normally to me the ideal situation is not to be able to see them at all, but again, what we are going to see here is minimal, so I wouldn't be against it.

Chairman Miller said I'm not either.

Mr. Munoz said are they doing a panel on the back of the house too, on the side?

Mr. Hoffman said they've got 5 on the back of the house. It looks like there is more space, but there are roof vents. One of the difficulties in the standard PV panels is they are not able to fully efficiently use the space because they are putting this standard size rectangle, so when there's one little obstruction in a big area, that encroaches on what the next full panel would be and they can't put the panel in.

Chairman Miller said this is a nice proposal. I think it meets the minimally visible

standard. The panels on the back of the house, I think Simon you were asking about, somebody mentioned they would be visible basically from the shopping center. I don't think it is detracting from the ambiance of Riddle Highlands. Are there any other questions about this COA? Any other comments? Do we have a motion to approve?

MOTION OF APPROVAL WAS MADE BY: Al Signorelli

MOTION SECONDED BY: Fernando Castrejon

AYES: Justyn Arnold, Fernando Castrejon, Amber Foster, Matt Hanson, Seth Hoffman, Kristin Ludwig, Dan Miller, Simon Munoz, Al Signorelli, Mike Walker

NAYS: None

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

PENDING

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A) Grants

Mrs. Morgan said I've received a couple of nominations, several calls. I think getting contractors is going to be a hurdle. I am stressing getting 2 contractors, but if they can't, to submit with 1. Some of the ones, if you're painting, there's a lot more contractors out there than the ones who are doing the window restoration, when there are just very few contractors in general that do the work. If they can get 1, I'm going to just go ahead and have people submit. Unfortunately, as far as the application, if the members think that just seems outrageously high, then you just might not get funded.

B) Near Eastside Historic District

No Report.

C) Riddle Highlands Historic District

No Report.

D) Public Awareness

Mrs. Morgan said so Al and I have been talking about the Preservation Awards. Al reached out to the GAR. We've had our reception there once, so Al thought it would be a good idea to maybe do it again. Al, you've met with them and they said they were happy to do so?

Mr. Signorelli said yes. The only date that wouldn't be good for them would be the date of our Board meeting, which would be May 18th, but they are open to any other day. I think it is a win/win to have it there because it gives some publicity to the GAR and there's been a lot of work done, certainly since the last time we had the Mayor's awards there. The whole downstairs just simply wasn't done, if I remember correctly, so bringing some people in and drawing attention to the GAR and having a wonderful historic place for us to do our thing, I think is a win/win. Eric is all for it, as I said, except for May 18th.

Mrs. Morgan said I reached out to our City Council. I would like to have it the 4th Tuesday in May, as long as they are amenable to that. The 2nd Tuesday in May is just kind of quick to try to get it done. We will probably need a special Preservation Commission meeting to approve them in April, unless we don't get a lot of grant applications. To do grant applications and Mayor's Awards seems like a long meeting. I was thinking about having a special meeting in April, so we would have 2 meetings in April, like near the end of April so then that would still give us a month to notify people of the date so that people who are awardees will have time to make arrangements to try to attend the meeting. Hopefully the City Council is amenable to that. We can shoot for that. If by chance we don't have a lot of Preservation applications, then maybe we could do them both and just have a little bit of a longer meeting. I just don't want to go 3 hours.

Mr. Signorelli said so how long a period of time would we have for people to submit?

Mrs. Morgan said if I do the 4th Tuesday in May, we meet the end of April to discuss them, I'm hoping to give people a month. Hopefully to get the call out in the next couple of weeks, give people about a month to apply. I've had one application in the years I've been here from an outside source. It's usually this group or possibly like the Scott Pettit's and that group. I usually send out a little flyer calling for applications and then also saying when it is going to be so people who might be interested in attending go ahead and know the date without having to do like 2 mailings.

Mr. Signorelli said but don't you also have to check it out with the Mayor's office as to when he'll be available?

Mrs. Morgan said well that is the City Council meeting. I'm assuming the Mayor, hopefully, will be able to...

Mr. Signorelli said would come.

Mrs. Morgan said if it is not the Mayor, it would be the Mayor Pro-Tem. A couple of years back we changed it to actually having it at a City Council meeting to try to bring a little more publicity to the Mayor's Awards.

Mr. Signorelli said so we'll have to have a Public Awareness meeting then to discuss refreshments and discuss putting together the program for the evening of and so on and so forth.

Mrs. Morgan said especially to come up with ideas. I think that's usually where the majority of the actual word comes from is the Public Awareness Committee. Hopefully we can get everything together. In the future, I'd like to try to, if we know for certain that we have the grants every year and that becomes a routine, to actually publish the grant call for nominations earlier so then that way they don't fall in April and try to get them in February or March. That way it also gives them more time to do the work. Then we wouldn't have them trying to all fall in the same month.

Chairman Miller said that's a good idea. We have our Grant's Committee meeting like early April to review grant applications.

Mrs. Morgan said yes.

Chairman Miller said thanks for that. I look forward to having the Mayor's Awards

again. It's been a hiatus. For 2 years we have not had them.

Mrs. Morgan said we were all ready to go in 2019. We even had some applications that the group had come up with.

Chairman Miller said I assume the Commission would really discuss them. Because I think the way the awards are worded, it's like in the past year or something. I assume we want to show some leniency.

Mrs. Morgan said yes. We may even have to do that for a couple of years because I don't necessarily think we want to do like 15 awards like just with the City Council and so much other stuff that would be on the agenda, so we might have to kind of split up some of the potential awardees in the next couple of years.

Mr. Hanson said I think it is a great idea if they were already vetted and went through the process and the system and they got lack of acknowledgement for what they did compliments of COVID. I would think that would be the place to start with for possible award winners.

E) Landmarks

No Report.

F) FoxWalk Design Review

No Report.

G) Tanner/Palace Historic District Committee

No Report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs. Morgan said the last time I did the violations that have been closed. So these are our active violations. I tried to give some update on where some of them stand. There are a couple that are older violations that are in hearings, so we'll have to make a determination what will happen with those, speak to our legal, whether we'll fine them, close it, recite, or whether we take it to Circuit Court.

Chairman Miller said thanks for providing this. I'm going to take some time to go through it.

Mrs. Morgan said if you have any questions, then give me a call, or email me. I would say we discuss it at the next meeting, but that's probably going to be a long meeting as it is, so maybe just email or call me.

Chairman Miller said the first one here is the one I think is really encouraging, the 451 Blackhawk. They've already removed, I think, multiple layers of siding on that. The last layer added was actually a violation to put vinyl over aluminum.

Mrs. Morgan said vinyl over aluminum and I think there was even some type of like asphalt. They thought it may have been asbestos, but there were several layers.

Chairman Miller said it looks really sharp now, the original wood siding. It has not been restored yet, but it looks very nice and it looks like there would be room to add decorative moldings above the windows that apparently have been removed, so very encouraging.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Castrejon, seconded by Mr. Signorelli, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by voice vote. Chairman Miller adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

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