



# City of Aurora

2nd Floor Council  
Chambers  
44 East Downer Place  
Aurora, Illinois 60505  
[www.aurora-il.org](http://www.aurora-il.org)

## Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday

June 10, 2021

7:00 PM

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**THIS PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING WILL BE VIEWABLE VIA  
REMOTE ACCESS ONLINE AT:**

**[www.aurora-il.org](http://www.aurora-il.org) or [www.facebook.org/cityofaurorail](https://www.facebook.org/cityofaurorail)**

**TO JOIN THIS MEETING FOR PURPOSES OF PUBLIC COMMENT VIA TELEPHONE:**

**PHONE NUMBER: +1 312 626 6799**

**MEETING ID: 826 8260 7260**

**THOSE WISHING TO PROVIDE PUBLIC COMMENT MUST PRE-REGISTER WITH THE  
ZONING AND PLANNING DIVISION NO LATER THAN 3:00 P.M. ON June 10, 2021 –  
VIA EMAIL: [COAPLANNING@AURORA.IL.US](mailto:COAPLANNING@AURORA.IL.US) OR VOICE MAIL (630) 256-3080.  
SPEAKERS MUST PROVIDE THEIR NAME, TELEPHONE NUMBER FROM WHICH THE  
MEETING WILL BE ACCESSED, AND TOPIC OF THEIR COMMENT. THE PUBLIC IS  
ADVISED THAT ALL TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND PARTICIPANT NAMES MAY BE  
VISIBLE TO THE PUBLIC.**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

*Chairman Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and stated the following:*

*On June 26, 2020, the Governor of Illinois issued a statewide disaster declaration related to public health concerns. As head of this body, I have determined that an in-person meeting or a meeting otherwise conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act is neither practical nor prudent because of the disaster. This meeting will be conducted by Internet teleconference without the physical presence of a quorum. Prior to the commencement of this meeting, all members of this body were verified and can see and hear one another.*

*I further find that the physical presence of members of the public is not feasible at this meeting due to the disaster, and more specifically, the practical difficulties associated with accommodating the public in an accessible hygienic location that allows for appropriate social distancing. Alternative arrangements have been made to allow the public to contemporaneously hear all discussion and roll call votes live on the City's official website, on Facebook, and via Zoom teleconference. Notice of these arrangements have been given in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The public may address this body consistent with the rules previously adopted and recorded and as adapted by Mayoral order.*

*Jill Morgan, Planner, is physically present at our regular meeting location as those terms are defined by Resolution R20-124.*

*All votes shall be conducted by roll call and a verbatim record of this meeting shall be made and maintained in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.*

### **ROLL CALL**

*The following Preservation Commission members were present: Justyn Arnold, Fernando Castrejon, Jen Del Debbio, 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 Sue Jackson.*

*Others Present:*

*Kurt Makaryk and Elizabeth Sreniawski (216 Lawndale Avenue).*

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**21-0388** Approval of the Minutes of the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on May 13, 2021.

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

### **COA REPORT**

**21-0440** May 2021 Historic Certificate of Appropriateness Report

*There were no questions on the COA report.*

**This COA Report was discussed and filed.**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

*None.*

### **AGENDA**

**21-0438** Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the current garage and build a new garage at 216 Lawndale Avenue (Kurt Makaryk and Elizabeth Sreniawski- 21-0438 - AU15/3-21.166-COA/HP- Ward 6)

*Mrs. Morgan said the property is 216 Lawndale Avenue. It is in the Riddle Highlands Historic District. It was built in 1928 in the English Cottage style. In general, the applicant is proposing to demolish the current garage that is deteriorated and has been deemed unsafe and replace it with a new garage. The current garage is a 2 story*

garage with a front gabled roof and a panel garage door. The new garage will be slightly larger at 22 feet by 24 feet. The garage will have a gabled roof that per the application should be a little steeper than the current garage's roof. It will be clad in vinyl siding and the gabled end will have vinyl shingles to match the house. Let me do a quick screen share. Here is the house. Here are some pictures of the garage. As you can see in the pictures, the deterioration. It is leaning. There are holes in the roof. It has been deemed structurally unsafe. The garage door doesn't open. It's leaning. Let me share another screen of the new garage. Here is the new garage. As you can see, the vinyl siding on the gabled end will have vinyl shingles. It looks like the fish scale shingles in the picture, but there is a note, I talked to the owners, that this is going to match the shingles of the house, not the rounded fish scale shingles. It will have a garage door, a regular person's door on the front and then the side facing the interior portion of the property and the rear will have vinyl windows. A plat there shows you the location of the garage. They also, besides owning this small lot, they also own that larger lot beside them. Since the current garage does not appear to date to the time of the house and it is unsafe and in really poor condition, staff would support the demolition. Since the garage is set in the rear yard and sits mostly behind the home, the use of substitute material would be permitted per the updated Design Guidelines. The door and windows wouldn't be visible, and they would be permitted to be synthetic as well. Staff would agree that a more steeply pitched roof would reflect the home better and that they are proposing to adaptively reuse a garage door that they found elsewhere that's wood. I'll share that as well. Staff would support using a reused garage door. Are there any questions for staff before I hand it over to the homeowners?

Mr. Signorelli said I think this is an easy approval because, as you said Jill, you didn't feel that this was original anyway. The door certainly is not original and there really is nothing at all distinctive in the features of the current garage and the homeowners are planning on doing so many appropriate things with the new garage to compliment the house. This is an easy one for approval.

Mrs. Ludwig said I agree.

Mrs. Morgan said if there are no questions for staff, Elizabeth and Kurt, if there is anything you want to add about the project you can do so.

Ms. Sreniawski said with this steeper roof pitch, we were thinking about that, I think with the garage designer we had talked about increasing the pitch of the roof to match the house, but when we looked back at the pictures, it doesn't look like that got reflected, so as we kind of work with the builder, we're going to make sure that the, I don't think it will be quite as steep, because our house is really, really steep, but it will be steeper to have a little bit more of a matching roof pitch, but anything we build is going to look way better on the property than what we've got now.

Mr. Makaryk said also it was brought up that it is preferable to have small windows in the top of the garage door.

Ms. Sreniawski said I think Jill had mentioned that.

Mr. Makaryk said but because we are trying to repurpose this solid redwood door that we kind of fell in love with, we'd like to paint that that kind of historic dark red that is reflected down the street that we see.

Ms. Sreniawski said and it's on the front of our house in accents, so we think that will

*look really nice.*

*Mr. Makaryk said right, so I think that would really help compliment the house and the property.*

*Ms. Sreniawski said and with the lumber being so rare, and the prices being so high, the opportunity to reuse a door is very welcome by us.*

*Chairman Miller said I support reuse. This home is new to you?*

*Ms. Makaryk said yes just over a year ago.*

*Chairman Miller said congratulations on your new home. It is really attractive.*

*Ms. Sreniawski said thank you. We are trying to improve it and make it look even better.*

*Chairman Miller said the picture included with the door, did you say that was a redwood door? It looks like a dark brown now.*

*Ms. Sreniawski said they painted it. But since it is already painted, the process of stripping it down, I think, would involve a lot of very harsh chemicals on our property. We are kind of proposing just to paint it the red that matches the accents on the front of our house.*

*Mr. Makaryk said it would be possible to strip it down. I'm fairly handy and I could do it, but we still don't know the exact color of what this wood is going to look like, so to be safe, I was thinking matching that deep red.*

*Chairman Miller said painting it is fine. If you've looked at this and this is a redwood door, I'll believe you, but in the picture it just looks like a, maybe because it is painted that dark brown color, it just looks like a regular aluminum door to me.*

*Ms. Sreniawski said we found it. It was another garage project. Some guy just wanted to get a new door and our builder was like I have this redwood door that fits your dimensions. Do you guys want that? Sure.*

*Chairman Miller said it sounds like a good idea to me. I believe in reuse.*

*Mr. Makaryk said as do we.*

*Mr. Signorelli said I know how much brand new ones are because we looked into the cost and oh my God.*

*Ms. Sreniawski said and I think now it would be like a 6 to 8 month wait or something like that, so we could get the garage built and have no door.*

*Mr. Signorelli said hopefully you are getting this door at like bargain basement prices as well.*

*Ms. Sreniawski said yes.*

*Mr. Signorelli said good.*

*Chairman Miller said well that's great. Good for you.*

*Mr. Signorelli said by the way, your house looks wonderful. It is such a neat house.*

*Ms. Sreniawski said thank you, we love it.*

*Chairman Miller said yes it does. Thank you, by the way, for proposing the faux shakes in the front gable. That's a nice touch. This diagram shows a person door and some exterior lighting.*

*Ms. Sreniawski said yes, we are adding like a stone porch on the east side of it because we are outside all the time.*

*Mr. Makaryk said like a stone patio on the ground level.*

*Ms. Sreniawski said that's why there are exterior. Is there exterior on the side? I can't really remember. But on the front, we definitely want some lights because we are outside all the time.*

*Chairman Miller said that's a good idea. I like that. For the style of the door and the lights, I'll direct this to Jill, is that something that they can just submit to you later and you can just approve it? This diagram doesn't show us specifically which door and which lights would be selected.*

*Mrs. Morgan said yes, they can just submit that later. I would say we would be flexible with that since it is not going to be that highly visible.*

*Chairman Miller said right.*

*Ms. Sreniawski said we'll probably try to at least match the exterior lights to the one on the front of the house. The door to enter the garage, we'll probably go for something that's a little more secure just because he'll have a lot of tools in there, but that's like not visible from the street at all.*

*Chairman Miller said I wouldn't be real concerned about it. Does anyone else have any questions for the Petitioners?*

*Mr. Munoz said no I don't think so. There are just some nice vegetables over there.*

*Mr. Makaryk said thank you. You've noticed. We like to grow a lot of produce.*

*Mr. Munoz said that's great. That's nice.*

*Chairman Miller said I liked it too. I walked by this afternoon. I admired the vegetable garden.*

*Ms. Sreniawski said thank you.*

*Mr. Makaryk said if the PVC is off-putting, I'm hoping to put that actual wood support on there.*

*Ms. Sreniawski said we had like a squirrel apocalypse last year.*

*Chairman Miller said I don't think we are too worried about your garden right now. I*

*think this will be fairly easy. There are two, let me look back to the guidelines here, it's in our packet, and I'll direct this to the Commissioners, under the guidelines under Section B.2.6, Section A, garages, carriage houses or outbuildings that contribute to a property's historic character, shall be preserved and maintained. It does say shall. I'm proposing, and I think we probably all agree, we would actually approve demolishing this garage, as it actually does not contribute to the property's historic character.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said yes, I was thinking that the wording when you read it that way, there's nothing to preserve or maintain. You already have a garage that's already not contributing to what it is. It is not like it is a garage that is of historic value falling out of disrepair that we want brought into that. There is nothing to maintain or preserve in this case.*

*Mr. Signorelli said and it's not original.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said because it is not original, there is nothing to preserve or maintain, exactly.*

*Chairman Miller said I think this is a case where it is likely very old. I don't see any architectural features tying it to the nature of Riddle Highlands or to the house.*

*Mr. Hoffman said it might date in similar age to the house, but it's just sort of a stock garage builders model. It wasn't built with the house.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said it is not a carriage house.*

*Mr. Hoffman said it would be the same if he went and had a coach house just put up there, standard plain book one garage now.*

*Chairman Miller said as a counter example, I would offer the house next door to you where I think they joined their garage to the house with a breezeway or something and that garage is actually stone with, I think, cedar shingles in the gable. That one is architecturally significant and yours just isn't. In addition, we probably all agree that this particular garage, it was visibly leaning when I looked from the street. I don't see anyway to bring it back.*

*Mr. Munoz said no. There is nothing there to be fixed.*

*Chairman Miller said so I think we would all agree that we can approve that this garage be demolished. Then the next would be to approve the design for the new garage. Does anyone have any questions or concerns about the design for the new garage?*

*Mr. Hoffman said I do have one comment. I think it might have been in Jill's notes here about the soffits. It is the standard sort of flat bottom soffit and it will end up with a porkchop transmission at the front, which is usually inconsistent with traditional soffits. It is interesting looking at the house itself. The second story has just standard flat box soffits, but the first story actually does have likely the oldest case of porkchop soffits I've seen that are boxed in with a square transition. In this case, I don't think it would be inappropriate for the garage to use that type of transition. In the drawings, they look a little bit out of scale from the house. My comment there would be to try to match the proportions of the soffit of the house.*

*Mr. Makaryk said we've had some discussion with the builder and there are certain things that it sounds like we can change fairly easily if there were a stipulation like of*

*the design.*

*Mr. Hoffman said the drawings are not dimensioned to scale, but they show the flat bottom side on the side soffit wrapping around farther than necessary on the front. It just kind of makes them look bulky down at the corners. If you look at the house, they're a little slimmer by the front door. You've got slimmer little triangles. That's just empty space that's not dictated by the rafters or the fascia and you are using, it looks like, stick framed. It is not trusses. That's a reasonable (inaudible). It would take a measurement on the house, look at it and then follow that on the garage.*

*Ms. Sreniawski said we can talk to them about that. They are really flexible.*

*Chairman Miller said I think the drawings here indicate the soffit is like 8 inches deep. Would you think Seth that maybe on the house they are less than that?*

*Mr. Hoffman said no. I'm talking if you look at the front or rear elevation and transition the little porkchop on either side.*

*Chairman Miller said oh right. I'm looking at that also. The drawing here in the front of the garage, I think, says 8 inches for the...*

*Mr. Hoffman said that's the overhang.*

*Chairman Miller said the width of the overhang, yes.*

*Mr. Hoffman said it might be a little bit more, maybe 10 or 12 inches. More overhang is better. That's my personal guidelines.*

*Chairman Miller said okay, so you are just suggesting the size of that like box return (inaudible) has to be reduced if possible?*

*Mr. Hoffman said yes, just to better match the proportions of the ones on the house.*

*Chairman Miller said are there any other comments or questions here?*

*Mr. Hoffman said nothing else from me. I think you guys have done a nice job.*

*Chairman Miller said I think it looks nice too.*

*Mr. Hoffman said it is a good size too. A 22 by 24 is a good size to actually be able to park 2 cars in there.*

*Ms. Sreniawski said especially modern cars. Maybe 30 years ago, cars were smaller and it would fit 2, but if we kept the same size, we'd have a hard time fitting our 2 vehicles in there side by side.*

*Mr. Hoffman said you could fit 2 cars in a 20 by 22, but you can't fit anything else.*

*Mr. Makaryk said right. I grew up with a garage like that.*

*Chairman Miller said I have a garage like that now. If I were rebuilding a new one, I would make it a little bit bigger. Would we be ready to approve this design or do we have any other questions or do we want to add any stipulations? Do we have a motion then?*

*Mr. Signorelli said well do we want to move to approve the design as talked about or is the overhang an outstanding issue?*

*Mr. Hoffman said I think it is something we can approve just with the (inaudible).*

*Mr. Signorelli said I'm good with that. I move that we approve the new garage at 216 Lawndale.*

*Chairman Miller said Al, could you clarify your motion that that includes demolishing the current garage and approval of the plan?*

*Mr. Signorelli said I move that we approve the demolition of the current garage at 316 Lawndale and also approve the proposed new garage as well.*

*MOTION OF APPROVAL WAS MADE BY: Al Signorelli*

*MOTION SECONDED BY: Jen Del Debbio*

*AYES: Justyn Arnold, Fernando Castrejon, Jen Del Debbio, 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 Mrs. Del Debbio, that this agenda item be approved. The motion carried.**

## **PENDING**

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **A) Grants**

*No Report.*

### **B) Near Eastside Historic District**

*No Report.*

### **C) Riddle Highlands Historic District**

*No Report.*

### **D) Public Awareness**

*No Report.*

### **E) Landmarks**

*No Report.*

### **F) FoxWalk Design Review**

*No Report.*

## **G) Tanner/Palace Historic District Committee**

*No Report.*

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Chairman Miller said earlier this year, I proposed adding a couple of committees, One was the continuation of Public Awareness and another could be like follow up on like violations and things like that. Since we don't have a lot in the city budget for communication, it is limited what a Public Awareness Committee could do. I'd like to see us do whatever we can to communicate.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said do we need much budget for that though? I'm wondering if we were to do some networking, for example, with like Marissa Amoni. There is a very active social media out there for First Fridays, Aurora Downtown. You've got the Aurora Then and Now page. You certainly have a lot of folks. I don't know if you mean it more from a regulatory standpoint, like make sure you follow the rules standpoint.*

*Chairman Miller said that's part of it.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said or what you are trying to do with it, but I'm thinking there's a lot of gorilla marketing activities you can do that are free if we leverage other entities. If you don't mean advertising, you mean spread the word, maybe there are free channels that are more viral in virtual nature that don't cost money.*

*Chairman Miller said okay. Then would the Public Awareness Committee like to meet this coming month and discuss what we can do?*

*Mr. Signorelli said yes, we can meet. We could do that.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said do we have list somewhere of what committees we agreed to join? I don't remember what I'm on or if there is a general source for that maybe that we could get a refresher? Can that be sent out or something?*

*Mr. Signorelli said I can talk to some of things that we've done in the past. Some things possibly could work and some things not because of everything and budget and stuff. I can address some of those things.*

*Chairman Miller said I know Jill has sent out our Committee assignments before. I've been searching through my files right now. I can't find it right at the moment, so I can't remember who I've asked to serve on that or who I asked to Chair it.*

*Mrs. Morgan said that committee is Mike Walker as Chair and then Dan Miller, Al Signorelli and Scott Pettit.*

*Chairman Miller said I should ask, who would like to be on Public Awareness?*

*Mrs. Ludwig said I'd be happy to, but I don't remember what else I'm on.*

*Chairman Miller said I think I asked you to serve on Grants, but we don't have any further business with Grant Committee right now.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said I don't feel like I'm really doing any stuff outside of these monthly meetings. I would be happy to participate in whatever committee you'd see fit. If there is a gap and you need somebody on one, I'd be happy to be part of an additional committee.*

*Chairman Miller said staff, could you refresh me on how many Commissioners we could stack on a committee?*

*Mrs. Morgan said I believe we just can't have a quorum. I'll have to double check. Actually I think we can't have a majority of a quorum. So a quorum would be 6. We might not be able to have more than 3. I'll have to double check that.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said I don't have a particular desire to be on this one in particular, I just mean I'm available if something else needs to be done outside of the monthly gig.*

*Chairman Miller said okay, that would be good. So we have Mike and was it AI?*

*Mr. Signorelli said yes.*

*Mr. Walker said and Scott Pettit.*

*Chairman Miller said he's not on the Commission, so he's good to add. He is very knowledgeable in communication too. I also want to make sure we reach the Hispanic community, so if there is a way for me to slip Simon in there as well.*

*Mr. Signorelli said well we have to check on...*

*Mrs. Morgan said I'll have to check the numbers.*

*Chairman Miller said I want to make sure to don't overlook any free publicity, or free communication we can get through like if there are any things that Juany Garza plans or through like communications that go about in the Hispanic community. That's important as well.*

*Mr. Hanson said along those lines, free is a great price, but it may not always be available. I think our respective Alderman may be willing to spend a small portion of Ward funds if we could clearly define what it is being used for, if it benefits the ward.*

*Chairman Miller said that's a good idea too.*

*Mr. Signorelli said that is a good idea.*

*Chairman Miller said they might come up with something for that. You are right. If we could look into holding that committee together. The other one I had brought up was the follow up on the violations, which would be a different committee that's not on our list or it would be repurposing one of the committees that is on our list, just for a different purpose. I didn't mention, I'm willing to back off the Public Awareness. I don't know if I mentioned that, just to allow someone else to serve on that. I think Kristin, Al, Mike and Simon would all be great for that.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said I'm fine with whatever. I'd be fine with following up on violations. It doesn't matter to me. I'm okay with whatever.*

*Chairman Miller said you have some good ideas for communication though and how to get the word out there. I'll leave it up to you.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said I'm happy to serve on whatever. Is your violation one about organizing and sorting through and just creating a process for that?*

*Chairman Miller said it could be part of understanding what our process is. A few months ago, I think John Curley met with us and he indicated, I think, there would be some changes. I'd like to follow up on that as well. We do have a lot of outstanding violations. They just seem to sit out there for a long period of time, so part of that could be understanding what can be done with those and how are they resolved or if they are.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said that might be nice to have some people on it that have more the engineering experience to know like what can be resolved and what can't be resolved. I don't know if that's in my wheelhouse. I'm happy to serve, but I could help organize or help do something in some way with that. There might be other people in the same boat as me, so I don't mean to hog that conversation. I think probably me, Amber and Matt are probably the most recent people coming in that maybe haven't served on a committee at all or don't really know what that looks like. That's why I'm kind of fuzzy on what you want me to do.*

*Mrs. Foster said wherever you need me to go, I'm good.*

*Chairman Miller said I appreciate that Amber. Thank you very much. If we are able to put together the violation follow up committee, it can be understanding the processes and then kind of guiding and supporting staff if there is any way to move forward with any of them. If anybody has a legal background, that could be helpful too. Part of this is a legal process and legal processes move kind of slowly.*

*Mr. Signorelli said or maybe that committee could go through these before the full Commission meets to discuss any of them if there are any issues with them or to discuss neighborhood complaints.*

*Mr. Hanson said the question I have for this possible committee or reinvigorating it is if there was no committee within this Commission right now, what's the process for a complaint? I think I know some of it, but I don't know all the nuts and bolts. I realize there is a (inaudible) method for this, but what would the city do if we weren't here to enforce these violations or complaints and where do we fit into that so we are not stepping on what they would be doing otherwise and also trying to assist them in getting things resolved the right way?*

*Mrs. Morgan said if you are talking about like current complaints in the system, it is a long process. Mostly the complaints come in from our people in the neighborhood, whether it is the Commissioners or other people notice something. We have a website. They will call our Customer Service and say they've seen work being done without permits or they don't think meets the guidelines. From there, I will look at it and see did they get a COA for it. If not, I turn it over to, we have, so in the past, and this is where the transition that Dan was talking about, in the past, we had 2 Zoning Inspectors that would go out and they did all zoning and all preservation violations. If it was a violation, they would send a letter saying this needs to be resolved and then from there multiple letters go out. Hopefully a person contacts us. If they don't, it goes to an Aurora Board for violations. There are usually multiple letters of that, multiple times of that. If nothing still happens, we issue a fine on it and then we close*

*it. From there it can go to our Legal Department who takes some of them into the court system, but we don't have the manpower and we don't necessarily want to take every violation into the court system. They kind of go through them and see the ones they think are a little more major and worth taking into the court or ones that just really haven't had any contact with the homeowners and they'll take it into the court system. We've had one just recently where that's happened. It is multiple hearings in front of a judge with the courts saying you have to actually do all the official notices to appear and all of that. If it doesn't go to the court system, our only option is to go back and start the process all over again and send another violation. That's what staff is doing. Some of it is manpower on how much time we have to do things. At some point, and this is probably, I think, with where we probably are with some of them is like what do we do. If the homeowners just don't have the funds, sometimes we'll put something on it, marking it in the system and it won't be resolved until the home is sold. That's kind of like a last option that we try not to go, but depending on the situation with the homeowner, not just for preservation violations, but just violations in general, sometimes that is when it is ultimately resolved, especially with like more elderly people.*

*Chairman Miller said part of what this committee would look into is how could a committee from the Commission support you in the process or any other staff efforts, I guess. Part of it could also be to report back something to full Commission just saying this is where we're at.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said Dan, I think it is such an interesting thing. I don't mean to like take it down another path, but we are similar to some cities and we are very dissimilar to certain other cities. When you think of a given city, small city, whatever, you can have very affluent cities. In the east coast, their historic districts are made up of these \$10 million dollar a piece properties that they have the money to keep it up to par or whatever and then you have these beautiful, beautiful homes in historic communities where they just aren't affluent or aren't as affluent as you wanted to say that. We don't have those \$10 million dollar properties. We don't have blocks and blocks or \$10 million dollar properties in our historic district, so we face different challenges. We're all trying to hit historic preservation standards, but quite frankly, the communities like ours may have a tougher battle when we're trying to work with people. There are certain things, like if I was in the historic preservation district, there are certain things that would hit me. I know I personally couldn't afford it. There is just a different nuance that we have and I just wonder, and I don't know if a committee has ever done this before, but to seek out exploration of how do other people handle it or could you almost have a thinking group across some other like communities, wherever there, to try to figure out those solutions because we all have the same problem. There's lots of us that have that same problem. There are lots of places you could think of around the country that would have the same problem that we have that we all have to figure out a way to still preserve stuff, even when the homeowners, for no fault of their own, don't have the money.*

*Mr. Signorelli said well Kristin, one of the things I've always advocated for Public Awareness is for us to get together with other preservationists and discussing what issues they face and how they're meeting their goals and so on and so forth. I think that could be really valuable.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said and maybe if you want to make more bandwidth out of more people on the committee, you could have Public Awareness handling within Aurora and maybe you could have outreach or exploration or innovation to work across other communities or something like that if you were trying to make more use of more people within the*

committee without hitting taps.

*Mr. Signorelli said really what I would like to see is, again, I know that this would require money, but I would like to see a conference located here in Aurora, somewhat like the big huge nationwide conferences that I've been to, but obviously inviting more local communities around Aurora, bring that all together and have meetings and classes and model it after the big preservation conference.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said and maybe have it specifically targeted with focused sessions, whether that's virtual or in person, depending on what people can do, but to have focused sessions on how you get to solving some of these situations that we don't have to necessarily come up with it by ourselves, but bringing other minds together.*

*Mr. Signorelli said in previous conferences, there were all sorts of wonderful talks on a multitude of subjects that you could sign up for and you could choose what you were interested in and so on and so forth.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said maybe you could grow toward something like that. I have to do a lot of that stuff in my day job. I'm in charge of innovation and development, so that's what we do. We are always kind of looking at ways to solve problems and the networking and brainstorming in order to solve problems, so I would be happy to help in that kind of area. I'd be fine on a public awareness thing too, but if there is a way that you want to divide those so that more things get done internally and externally, I don't know if that's of interest or consideration, but I'd be happy to help in either of those camps.*

*Mr. Signorelli said now the other thing I can tell you with past conferences is bringing some of the booklets that we've done in our historic resources, putting those out and watching people pick them up and look through them. This is even true of the people who live here. I've seen people absolutely blown away by the resources, the historic resources, that we have here and some of which are people who even live here who don't realize how much and how important some of the things that we have here are. I'm a big proponent of house walks. I've worked on many of them. We had meeting before COVID for a new house walk hosted by the Historical Society. I'm hoping that's going to happen again one day, but that's another thing that promotes our old neighborhoods, our historic homes and neighborhoods. Also touring some of the resources. One year, back several years ago, just to give you an idea, one of the things which came from the Art Institute was coming on busses to Aurora to check out the stone houses in Kane County, which I think is interesting. We could do something even a little more specific like that possibly. Anyway, it is something to think about.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said you know what's interesting Al, is like to spin off of that. But to say if eventually we were to grow to a point where you could do something like that where there is a tour or a house walk or whatever, contributions of that could go to some kind of a fund to help more of these folks that can't afford to do some of these things that they are trying to do on their properties. But more about like ruminating on if the problem helping Jill and staff reduce the backlog of how many of these properties exist, because the more violations you have, ultimately, I'm assuming, it's depreciating the value of the community. So if the goal is to reduce the backlog, how do other people reduce the backlog when money is the stumbling block for the homeowner. I'm just interested in the problem. I don't know what the solution is, but I'm interested in the problem. Whether that emanates in a conference or not, but to Al's point, I think Amber and I really learned a lot when we were working with those artists in the downtown. We did the research for them on what those buildings were and what they really meant and went what, are you kidding me, we're the only example of bla, bla,*

*bla. We don't promote that, really, so that's why I was interested in that. That's what I thought you meant by the public interest, public communication. Be aware of us because we're going to help you through these things, and like the happy homeowners that just left us, we're not bad to work with. So there is the side of don't be afraid of us, you can work with us. There's that kind of promotion. There is the promotion of be aware that you do have to follow these regulations. It is a real thing. There's that kind of awareness. But then there is the awareness to Al's point of we have really cool things in Aurora that are very unique to Aurora in this area that other people in surrounding communities and within the community might want to know about. So there is kind of multiple channels, I think, to what you guys are talking about when it comes to public awareness and then you've got this backlog issue. I don't know. It just seems like a lot of cool stuff. It seems like you've got several segmentations for various issues.*

*Mr. Signorelli said well we can talk about things that we can do in conjunction, something we've done in the past that we could do with both the Arts Commission and the Historical Society that are architecturally related and preservation related. That's something to talk about.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said it almost feels like you need a strategic plan for the type of committees you need before you start creating committees.*

*Mr. Signorelli said well I'm thinking this is all under the umbrella of public awareness, but imagine you could have subcommittees of that too, I guess.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said because if you could only have 3 to 5 people on that committee though, does that 3 to 5 person want to take on that big a chunk? That's a lot. So I don't know, just looking from a unique vantage point of not really being involved in the committees, but it's interesting stuff.*

*Mr. Signorelli said are there sub subcommittees?*

*Chairman Miller said I think the committees could have children.*

*Mr. Signorelli said that could be talked about.*

*Chairman Miller said so I'm hearing good discussion and hearing good ideas. We are nearing a point where Commissions are allowed to meet. Jill, would it be premature for committees to become active again?*

*Mrs. Morgan said I think we are getting close to that. I would say probably not this month because we are still working out even how the Commissions are going to be actually meeting in person. I think once maybe we get into more like the end of July, I think maybe we can start looking at the committees meeting.*

*Chairman Miller said also for review of violations, how difficult is it to have a list. The last I knew, there was some manual effort on your end to actually even know what all the violations are. It wasn't an automatic report that you could get.*

*Mrs. Morgan said I'm still working on trying to figure out how to create those. I have my own little list, database, so I have some idea. I think it is somewhat up to date. I feel like I've worked on it some to try to see if I can get everything in there and try to figure out how to do all the stuff in the new system. I kind of pushed everything off until the grants. Inspections, everything, was pushed off with the hope that maybe*

*some of them would come in for grants and then it's going back now that that's really over and what's the next step with some of these old ones.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said Dan, do we ever do strategic planning as a committee of like where we as this group hope to take this to like within the next 3 years or something like that? That could also help drive which committees are the most urgent and which ones aren't. If we ever have bandwidth or time either during an agenda or off-line, whether we do that, like we whiteboard it, a virtual whiteboard or whatever, it doesn't matter, but it would be interesting if we had that kind of goal of like we want to get to here. Then we would be able to align that with the committees we need and be able to Matt's point to say what are our resource needs, like what kind of budget would it take us to go from here to here so we know exactly what we're asking for. Maybe that strategic alignment could help us really like drive what we think the key initiatives are, like drive those forward.*

*Mr. Signorelli said we did do some of that Kristin.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said that's what I was wondering, like is that an annual thing? Do you do that on a certain schedule or how does that work?*

*Mr. Signorelli said we talked about it. We talked about getting more money, a Director, and there were several good points that we were trying to make and Dan submitted this letter to the city at the start of COVID. So I believe Dan said it was the worst possible time to talk about this stuff and introduce this letter, so this is stuff that's been discussed.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said I figured it probably had. I was curious what the cadence was or how that works.*

*Mr. Signorelli said one of the things for sure is that we need to lobby for more grant money because after we went through this last round, I think we all pretty much agree that 3 times more money would be much nicer.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said can we show a return on that investment? If we had this much more in grant money, what percent of home sales would that drive in the City of Aurora or what would that do? So maybe make it more like a business case where it's not that it's nice, it's that this is what you would get back in return if we had that back into our numbers.*

*Mr. Signorelli said but that's always what preservation is. That's always the bottom line of historic preservation, particularly in the case when you are addressing politicians. We don't talk about it because it's pretty. We talk about the economic benefits. Some of that stuff in my mind is ongoing, like I said, more grant money for starters and some other things. I think that's sort of ongoing. I'm not sure Dan where we're going now after what we did in the past or if it is time to try something else. I think we need to talk about that.*

*Chairman Miller said that is worth talking about. Again, thank you for all these good ideas. We are approaching 8:00 o'clock. I'd like to, if we can, keep our Commission meetings to an hour. We did back in the old days and it seems like over the past year we've had meetings where we had like 3 difficult COA's and it tended to go longer. Thanks for the feedback. We have some ideas, even though it could be on public relations, we talked about the violations also and Amber and Kristen are kind enough to volunteer wherever I need to put them, so thank you. Then also talking about what*

*is our overall goal, like behind my suggestion of public relations and the violations was trying to work down our list of violations and also prevent new ones. We've got way too many. Prevention is awesome. You do that through like communication, public awareness, getting people aware of the rules and also excited about the great things we have to offer. People aren't always aware that the house they are living in has amazing architectural features that would be very costly to reproduce in this day and age.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said and I think Seth and Mike, and in particular for Fernando often and Simon often, or Justyn too will frequently chime in with well actually if you did it like this it is actually going to be more cost effective or it's going to fit in with your home better. You can get improved suggestions on what you are trying to do, more economic solutions by working with us than trying to sneak it under the radar. We might be able to help you do it even cheaper than you were thinking of in the first place and better.*

*Chairman Miller said that's a good idea and I would like more people when they are submitting COA's to have access to some of those people you just mentioned.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said I want one of them to be in my own house like all the time for these suggestions. If I had a Seth right here or a Mike, I would get all kinds of things done. But I think there is value there that I don't think they know that unless they talk with us that we can actually make things go even better than they think.*

*Chairman Miller said right, there are more things you could save and reuse perhaps. So that's another one. That one may not be a committee, it would just be a different way of operating in that if someone comes in with a complicated COA that whoever is available could come out and help Jill look at that. When there are more sets of eyes, the more ideas.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said and maybe that word of mouth helps more people comply.*

*Chairman Miller said right. It is really a value to the homeowner. Perhaps at our next meeting, if we have time on our agenda, we could talk about what our aims are. As I said, behind my request on the committees was I want to work down the list of violations and prevent new ones. That's probably the things we want to do.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said that's actually perfect. That's what I was kind of getting at is like what's the driver. Just knowing that those are the two to laser focus.*

*Chairman Miller said and another one would be gaining more funding, which would help to make our historic areas the place to be in Aurora.*

*Mr. Signorelli said I know I've asked you this question before, Jill, how many times are we getting the postcards out explaining the historic guidelines and COA's? Is that 4 times a year?*

*Mrs. Morgan said it is usually twice. I think for next year I tried to up our postage and mailing budget. We usually get it out twice a year.*

*Mr. Signorelli said well maybe our goal should be 4 times a year because that's pretty important if we can prevent people doing inappropriate things before they go through the trouble of cost and then we have to go through getting them to do it. Maybe we can go to 4 times a year.*

*Chairman Miller said the mailings are important. I'm also really intrigued by Kristin's ideas of using social media more. I also think I really would like to know how we reach, what like social media venue is our Hispanic population in the older historic areas using and how we reach them as well. It is just an important group that we just can't leave out.*

*Mr. Munoz said were you able to work something out? Let's put me as an example here. My Alderman is Juany Garza. You would be able to work with your Alderman because I think they have more knowledge of really what's going on. We are able to get in touch with them and know more about their neighborhood.*

*Chairman Miller said Juany could have some ideas too. I would love to work with Juany. She's done a great job.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said and maybe it's not the timing. It's not necessarily the frequency of how many times the reminders go out, but it is hitting it at the time of year when they are starting to think about what they are going to work on their house. The beauty of being in this area is we have this thing called winter and we're really talking about external things, not internal things, so when do they start thinking, planning, getting their bids for getting the work done on their house? How do we get them before they start getting those bids? That's the time, right? It could be 2 times, it could be 4 times, it could be whatever, but it's the moment, not just randomly oh if we do it every 3 months, well there are going to be months you are going to hit that you could be hitting all the wrong months.*

*Chairman said I think you are right, the beginning of the year.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said so it is January people get up and running. Is there another wave or not? Maybe once or twice does it, but it is hitting them in the moment.*

*Mr. Munoz said I would say in like in March and then another one in August.*

*Chairman Miller said that might work.*

*Mr. Munoz said because in the winter nobody is going to do anything. At the end of winter, you still cannot do much, but you are going to start planning to do something.*

*Chairman Miller said start planning and then maybe August it's the oh gee summer is about over. I never got around to putting those windows in and I think I'll get these vinyl windows and stick them in real fast.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said when do those last minute roofing guys start coming around, October or November? They are trying to get you right in the beginning and right at the end of the year. So if we start thinking like they think, and I don't think like they think, but a lot of you guys know what they do, if we start thinking like them, if we can circumvent that process too and think about when do they make their sales pitches to them and we come out just before that, then they are going to know when they come in I've got to go to my historic folks on that.*

*Chairman Miller said all good ideas. Why don't we for our next meeting, I'm thinking of how I want to handle that since you mentioned what are our goals. I may write something as I did with the letter we did right before COVID. As I said, the worst timing of letters in the entire history of letters. I handed it into the Mayor and the*

*Alderman right as COVID was hitting asking for help. Why don't I write something describing what is it we want, what are we trying to achieve and then we can review that next time. I guess it would be easier if I start with something and bring it so we can all react to it rather than trying to start from scratch, which could take us multiple meetings and hours.*

*Mrs. Ludwig said and Dan if you want, I have a lot of visualizations, I can use lucid charts, whatever, and if there is anything you ever want me to like share and describe for the group to capture all those brainstorming things in way that we can collect and sort, let me know because I'd be happy to use one of those tools. I don't know if it's part of a public meeting or something else, but anytime you want any of those, I have access to so many cool tools that we can use for organizing stuff.*

*Chairman Miller said okay, cool software. That's awesome. Thank you all for your participation and all these thoughts. I'm going to try to absorb this and bring something back. It's past 8:00. Thankfully, our COA request this month was a very easy one, so that made our meeting go a lot smoother.*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

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