

VILLAGE OF GRAFTON

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 21, 2010

The Historic Preservation Commission meeting was called to order at 5:10 p.m. by Chair David Liss.

Members present: Trustee David Liss, Sue Hass, Bill Hass, Sheldon Sepstead, Norbert Studelska, Sr., and Trustee Jim Grant

Absent: Matt Zipter, Angelica Chalmers and Ted Warwick

Staff/Officials present: Michael A. Rambousek, Director of Planning and Development, and Deborah A. Brown, Administrative Secretary II

Others present: Meagan Limberg and Larry Witzling representing Graef

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Trustee Grant, seconded by Commissioner Sue Hass, to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2010, Historic Preservation Commission meeting as presented. Approved unanimously.

HEAR PERSONS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD

None.

REVIEW OF GRAFTON HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOALS AND WORK PLAN OBJECTIVES

Director of Planning and Development Michael A. Rambousek gave a brief background on the Commission's current goals and objectives. He also stated that Commissioner Sue Hass had submitted a draft copy of revised 2010-2011 HPC Objectives at the last meeting as a means to suggest a friendlier format and more action oriented goals.

Director Rambousek further stated that he took the current Historic Preservation Commission's goals and objectives along with the draft from Commissioner Sue Hass and combined the two into a new format. He added that he used the help of Meagan Limberg to come up with a new action plan and new format for the Historic Preservation Commission to review.

Director Rambousek introduced Meagan Limberg of Graef to review with the members the draft copy of the new Historic Preservation Commission Action Plan and Objectives.

Ms. Limberg stated that, with the help of the Planning and Development Department, she split the draft plan into four groupings; Online Museum, Research, Committee, and

Goodwill and Promotion. Ms. Limberg also reviewed the Mission statement with the Commission.

Commissioner Sue Hass asked if the Mission wording at the top of the document could be modified. She would like to use the words like safeguarding and promoting Village's Historic and Cultural Heritage. She would like to see a more simplified statement for the actual mission statement showing action and intent.

Director Rambousek replied that the current mission comes from the Village of Grafton Zoning Code and is really more of a purpose statement. If the Commission would like to develop a mission statement that would be fine, but it would need to comply with the purpose of the Commission as outlined in the Zoning Code. He added that if the Commission also felt it needed to change its purpose it would require a public hearing and Village Board approval because it would be an ordinance amendment.

Ms. Limberg suggested that the purpose should be stated, but a new mission statement could be placed directly under it on the Action Plan and Objectives document.

Trustee Grant stated that as the Commission talked about at the previous meeting, he was glad to see special attention was being given to these goal and objectives because the Commission now has some momentum and energy and that should not go to waste. He thanked Director Rambousek and Ms. Limberg for their efforts.

Director Rambousek mentioned that he had one concern he wanted to bring to the attention of the Commission. He stated that he is neutral on the Bridge Street Dam issue and sees the benefits to both sides of the preservation or removal argument. However, he feels that on the draft Action Plan and Objectives document under the Research section the goal "Present possible historic recognition opportunities for Bridge Street Dam to the Village Board" should be removed because the Commission should consider all historic properties or sites in the Village of Grafton, not just one. If the Commission wishes to pursue opportunities for the Bridge Street Dam they should do so under the Committee Section of the draft Action Plan and Objectives document with the goal that states, "Recommend new structures/sites for historic site designation".

After a brief discussion, the Commission members agreed with Director Rambousek.

Commissioner Sue Hass suggested that the Historic Preservation Commission establish benchmarks as other committees are doing in the Village.

Director Rambousek stated that he is working on those benchmarks right now at staff level and expects that the Historic Preservation Commission will have its own benchmarks in 2011. He added that it remains to be seen if those benchmarks will be included with the Plan Commission packet since it meets monthly or with the HPC, which is a typical from most other committees, in that it meets quarterly. Regardless, his ambition is to have better performance measurements that better reflect the goals and objects of the Historic Preservation Commission.

Trustee Grant further suggested establishing a presentation or outreach at the Multi-purpose Senior Center to coordinate and obtain oral and written historical information and to coordinate with the local high school and colleges in establishing a standard format for interviews, questions and applications. The thought would be to gather information from historical events, homes and artifacts and to get additional ideas from the older community still living in the community.

The Commission then held a discussion on the designation requirements for historic sites within the Village of Grafton.

Many of the Commission members agreed that in the past many property owners did not consent to receiving a historic designation because they feared it would make it too burdensome if they wanted to improve the exterior of their homes.

Trustee Grant stated that the requirement for property owner's consent needs to remain. But, he added there could be two approaches to solving this past dilemma regarding the lack of consent. First, the Commission could work to remove any onerous requirements or second, if the Commission decides the requirements need to remain, some sort of financial incentive program code be developed to help home owners.

Commissioner Bill Haas suggested the facade grant program at the Community Development Authority (CDA) as a possible solution.

Director Rambousek replied by stating that if that program was utilized, funds would be limited to homes in the Downtown Tax Incremental District, which is commonly referred to as TID No. 3, or the South Commercial Tax Incremental District, commonly referred to as TID No, 4. Having said that, maybe even more relevant to Commission Hass' suggestion is the fact that this very subject was brought up at a CDA meeting several years ago when the owner of a residential home in the Downtown applied for a facade grant. Director Rambousek continued to state that at that meeting, the CDA made the decision that it would not fund residential facade improvements. The primary reason given by the CDA not to fund these requests was the fact that most of the improvements would be maintenance driven and the CDA felt it was the complete responsibility of the home owner to maintain their structures. In addition, the facade grant program was created not only as an aesthetic improvement tool but also a business retention tool and the CDA did not want those limited amount of funds used to support different objectives.

Trustee Grant agreed with Director Rambousek and added that this particular home that tested the water regarding the facade grant program even tried to claim they were a business or would be willing to convert the basement level into commercial space to meet the criteria of the CDA. However, the CDA felt this was simply a disingenuous attempt to receive the funds and denied the request.

Director Rambousek thanked Commissioner Bill Hass and told him that it was a good suggestion, but one that was already examined.

It was the consensus of the Commission members to have Director Rambousek draft an amended ordinance regarding historic designation at the next meeting. They affirmed that any draft ordinance would still need to include the requirement for property owner consent. In addition, they requested that he further investigate any grant opportunities offered by other communities for historic residential properties and provide that information at the next meeting.

The Commission also asked Director Rambousek to return to the next meeting with a finalized Action Plan and Objectives document giving him permission to complete the responsible party, resources and timeline sections for the Commission.

UPDATES ON THE 2010 PARAMOUNT WALK-OF-FAME CEREMONY

Director Rambousek submitted to the Commission members a paper copy of the Paramount Plaza Walk-of-Fame 2010 Inductees Poster Board. He stated that the poster board was used at the ceremony and now remains on display at the library. He also mentioned that about 4 weeks ago he came up with an idea to also display an actual poster in the Paramount Plaza kiosk. So he had a one created, similar to a concert poster, and it is on display right now in the kiosk. He stated that from this point forward a poster will be created annually as a marketing piece and placed in the kiosk a month prior to the ceremony. A full poster board will also continue to be made for the ceremony and then remain on display at the Paramount Blues Festival before being sent to the library for continued public display.

He then turned over the floor to Chair Liss to update the Commission members on the presentation ceremony that was held at the Paramount Blues Festival on Saturday, September 18, 2010.

Chair Liss gave a brief update on how the presentation went and stated that the attendance was much better having the ceremony included in the program of the Paramount Blues Festival.

Administrative Secretary Deborah A. Brown also commented that she and Village President Jim Brunnuell had attended the ceremony and it went very well. She added that recently President Brunnuell made a suggestion to her to find out from the festival organizers if the ceremony could be held on the Friday of opening day. This way the attendees would have more of an opportunity to visit the Paramount Plaza Walk-of-Fame on the following day. She added that with the poster in the kiosk, this would work out very well.

Director Rambousek and Chair Liss suggested that they talk further with the festival organizers and see what could be done for next year.

OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Sue Hass read a portion of a response letter she received from the State of Wisconsin Historical Society on a questionnaire she filled out seeking a historical designation for the dam. She stated that the Bridge Street Dam is referred to as the

Grafton Milling Company Dam. She summarized the letter stating that because the raceway is no longer part of the dam and because the dam itself does not represent any technological or engineering advancement it holds little historical significance to the State of Wisconsin Historical Society. Basically, they indicate, there are dams just like this one found throughout the State of Wisconsin.

Director Rambousek thanked Commission Sue Hass for providing this information to the Commission and taking the time contact the State of Wisconsin Historical Society.

The letter will be made part of the official Historic Preservation Commission packet for this meeting.

Director Rambousek then stated to the Commission members as a kind reminder that if they act on a similar matter and represent themselves as a citizen of the Village of Grafton they can absolutely take up matters like this on their own. He stated that he applauds that type of initiative. However, he wanted to make certain that each Commission member was aware that if they want or need to represent themselves as a member of this Commission, that is fine, but they first need to seek approval from the Historic Preservation Commission on the particular issue.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

SET DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT MEETING

The next Historic Preservation Commission meeting was scheduled for Thursday, November 18, 2010, at 5:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Sepstead, seconded by Commissioner Bill Hass, to adjourn at 6:25 p.m. Approved unanimously.