

Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting
January 7, 2016

- 1) The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.
- 2) Roll Call.
Present: Kathy Bruxvoort, Julie Heerema Mueller, Rhonda Kermode, Kent Oppenhuizen.
Absent: Jim Mansueto.
Others Present: Jerry Byers, Mike Nardini, George Wesselhoft.
- 3) Approval of Minutes – November 19, 2015 Meeting. The minutes were approved.
- 4) Follow Up to Policy & Planning Review of Draft Ordinance and Handbook Documents.

George Wesselhoft reviewed the draft historic overlay ordinance. He mentioned that staff looked at cities that the Commission has looked at before including Des Moines, Dubuque, Iowa City and Mount Vernon. He noted that City of Des Moines references tax parcel and each parcel is counted as a property, a single property counts as a single vote but a single ownership group may have more votes if they have different parcels. Iowa City looks at percentage of land area, if a protest petition is submitted they count 20% of the land area. Mr. Wesselhoft mentioned current Pella City Code which if a protest be presented duly signed by the owners of twenty percent (20%) or more of the area of the lots included in such proposed change, or by the owners of twenty percent (20%) or more of the property which is located within two hundred feet (200') of the exterior boundaries of the property for which the change is proposed, then it takes a supermajority of at least three-fourths (3/4) of all the members of the City Council to pass the rezoning.

There was discussion about the petition percentage versus the 20% protest approach under the current Code. The Commission direction was to remove the current 60% signature and use the current City Code.

Mr. Wesselhoft reviewed the draft ordinance and handbook documents as it pertains to alterations which do not trigger building permits; shutters, windows, doors, railings and repainting for example. He mentioned that at the last meeting it was discussed whether to remove those as requirements and leave them as voluntary guidelines.

Rhonda Kermode brought up the matter of demolitions. She stated you do need a permit but you do not need a very good reason to demo it. No one looks at it from a historic standpoint.

Julie Heerema Mueller stated the demolitions would be under something different.

Ms. Kermode mentioned three parts for historic preservation districts in most places 1) provisions for what you can demolish 2) provisions for what you can do to the exterior and 3) provisions for infill properties.

There was discussion about the alterations section under the draft ordinance. The Commission discussed specifically whether demolition should be added and leave alterations out which do not require a building permit.

Mike Nardini stated his impression was that if you start slowly and add stuff in over time that increases your chances and mentioned Council concern. He mentioned new building permit and addition to house were discussed, routine maintenance did not want to have authority, but they did not discuss demolition.

Ms. Mueller suggested that if they right away start imposing all kinds of regulations and people see this there might be some big objections to it. Use the guidelines to inform and educate. Then as the process goes forward you can start implementing more. The important thing is to get the historic overlay and have the handbook document.

Ms. Kermode mentioned the prior petition with property owner support and the reason it got started was when all the houses got demolished. Everyone wants to keep the historic look of the neighborhood.

Jerry Byers suggested that in time you can replace and fix a lot of the things that have not been done with what the Commission would be after and have options with the handbook and it is an education process.

Kathy Bruxvoort asked if the alterations under section 5 (b) iv of the draft ordinance would be deleted and leave the elements in the guidebook.

There was discussion about historic review applicability under the draft ordinance as it pertains to alterations also public education. The Commission direction was to exempt alterations not requiring a building permit for certificate of appropriateness but still have a voluntary review. The Commission also directed to add demolition permit to requirement for historic review.

- 5) Other Business. The next meeting was set for January 21. Staff would have the revised ordinance ready for Commission recommendation.
- 6) The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
George Wesselhoft
Planning and Zoning Director