

MINUTES
March 22, 2021
Historic Preservation Commission - Virtual
City of Batavia

Please **NOTE:** These minutes are not a word-for-word transcription of the statements made at the meeting, nor intended to be a comprehensive review of all discussions. They are intended to make an official record of the actions taken by the Commission/Committee/City Council, and to include some description of discussion points as understood by the minute-taker. They may not reference some of the individual attendee's comments, nor the complete comments if referenced.

1. Meeting Called to Order

Vice-Chair Bus called the virtual meeting to order at 5:30pm.

2. Roll Call

Members Present: Vice-Chair Bus; Commissioners Hagemann, Faivre and Saam

Members Absent: Chair Hohmann

Also Present: Mayor Schielke; Jeff Albertson, Building Commissioner; Scott Buening, Director of Community Development; and Jennifer Austin-Smith, Recording Secretary

Jeff Albertson announced that Doris Sherer has resigned from the Commission.

3. Approval of Minutes: February 8, 2021

Motion: To approve the minutes from February 8, 2021

Maker: Hagemann

Second: Saam

Roll Call Vote: **Aye:** Hagemann, Bus, Saam, Faivre

Nay:

4-0 Vote, 1 Absent. Motion carried.

4. Items to be Removed, Added or Changed

There were no items to be removed, added or changed.

5. Matters From the Public (for items not on the agenda)

There were no matters from the public.

**6. COA Review: 29 South River Street – Wall Sign
(Tiffani Johannsen, applicant)**

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) reviewed the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) with the applicant utilizing the shared screen option of Zoom. Tiffani Johannsen, applicant, shared that the sign is 32x96 with vinyl lettering. The sign would be a wood board sign, black lettering, white background and copper boarder. Vice-Chair Bus suggested a protective covering be placed over the vinyl lettering of the sign for longevity.

Motion: To approve the COA as presented
Maker: Hagemann
Second: Sherer
Roll Call Vote: **Aye:** Hagemann, Bus, Saam, Faivre
Nay:
4-0 Vote, 1 Absent. Motion carried.

**7. COA Review: 14 North Washington Avenue
Demolition (Barco Products, applicant)**

Albertson reported that demolition is a multi-step process for this Contributing building. The intention of this first meeting is to look at the information submitted and make sure that there is enough information for deliberation. The applicant could be requested to provide more information to the HPC if needed. The HPC cannot make a decision at the first meeting, it has to go to the second meeting and then a decision could be made at that time. This does require a two-part meeting. Albertson discussed the four primary factors with the Commission and noted that at least one of those has to be met in order to recommend approval for the demolition. Albertson noted that there are eight secondary factors in this application that you can consider if you choose to do so. The Commission viewed pictures of the structure via the shared screen feature of Zoom.

Morgan Mosely, representative of Barco and the applicant, addressed the Commission. He shared that he has worked with the property owner for years. The house right now has sat for fifteen to twenty years with no one in it. The exterior is completely rotted. The limestone foundation is crumbling on the exterior. There is an existing chimney that is ready to fall. The porch is rotted. The house needs to be completely redone. The roof is fairly new, ten to fifteen years old, because it was starting to leak on the inside. There is some structural damage on the floor joist from being wet. The basement has had six inches of water in it. The foundation needs a lot of work. To completely redo the building would cost quite a bit.

Mosely reported what the owner is proposing to do is to tear down the building, completely clean the side off and propose a landscape design. If the City wanted to get rid of the entrance off of Route 25, which is somewhat dangerous, he would fence right across it and get rid of that approach. The property owner wants to beautify the area as opposed to spending over \$150-200,000 trying to update this old structure. Mosely noted that at one point of time the owner had sixty people parking in the parking lot but due to COVID the need for parking has changed dramatically. He currently has only ten people parking in that area, which is why there is no parking lot expansion in the proposed site plan.

Vice-Chair Bus stated that the building has been falling apart for a long time. Bus asked when the building was built and who the previous owners were. Albertson answered that the home was built in 1885. Mayor Schielke stated that it was known as the Hoover house. Faivre asked how long the property owner owned this house. Moseley answered that he believes it was five to six years ago. Faivre asked what the intentions were for this house with the property owner. Albertson answered that the property owner removed the garage to make room for a drive through. Moseley answered that, initially, the idea of purchasing the house was to add more parking. Another thought was putting money into it to lease out the house. However, the return of investment was very low to cover the renovation costs with rent. It did not make sense to spend a lot of money on the house.

Buening asked if the owner would consider allowing the house to be moved to another location. Moseley answered that if someone wanted to buy the house and move it he's sure he would be fine with that.

The HPC reviewed the proposed site plan including landscaping and fencing with entrance from Route 25 removed. Hagemann stated that this is something that we knew would be coming to us and that the only reason for the Contributing classification on this building is because of the fact that it is on the same property of the Louise White School. He continued that this building does not hold a major historical significance to the town. The Commission reviewed the primary and secondary criteria. Faivre stated that it is shame to lose a home that was built in 1885. Hagemann asked the applicant to provide within which of the four primary criteria does this demolition fall. Moseley answered the monetary cost and he does not want to rent out the house or sell it and lose that portion of his property.

Motion: To accept the application as submitted and put it on the agenda of our next meeting
Maker: Hagemann
Second: Faivre
Roll Call Vote: **Aye:** Hagemann, Bus, Saam, Faivre
Nay:
4-0 Vote, 1 Absent. Motion carried.

The next HPC meeting is Monday, April 12th. Moseley stated to let him know of any information that is needed and he would have it ready for the next meeting. Bus asked for an itemized list of the foundation, structural integrity, electrical, plumbing and costs of bringing this building up to code so the HPC gets a feel for addressing the deficiencies of an old house like this.

8. Updates:

- 1. 7 East Wilson Street – Historic Inspection**
- 2. Anderson Block Building – Masonry Maintenance**
- 3. Significant Historic Building Inspection Program**
- 4. 227 West Wilson Street – Historic Inspection**
- 5. 16 East Wilson Street – Historic Inspection**

Albertson stated that there are no updates at this point.

9. Other Business

Bus asked for an update on One Washington Place. Buening stated that the City and developer are working on the access agreement with the bank. The redevelopment agreement allows the City to access the property if the developer should go under and we could use bond funds in place to complete the building. We are working out the language on that between the City, bank and Shodeen. We are still on track with the schedule of the project itself. Mid-April we are supposed to provide bid documents and the next milestone after that is mid-July.

10. Adjournment

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There being no other business to discuss, Chair Hohmann asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:32pm; Made by Hagemann; Seconded by Faivre. Roll call was made and all were in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer Austin-Smith, Recording Secretary, on March 30, 2021.