

CITY OF CARMEL
CARMEL HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 13, 2019, 6:00 P.M.
CAUCUS ROOM, CARMEL CITY HALL

In attendance:

Members Present: Nick Davis, Fred Swift, Curtis Butcher, Rosemary Dunkle, Sue Maki (arrived at 6:45 PM)

Members Not Present: Bill S., Ron C.

HPC Administrator: Sam Burgess

Guests: Bill Ranek

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Nick D. at 6:00 PM.

2. Roll Call (Nick D., Fred S., Ron C., Curtis B., Bill S., Rosemary D., Bill S. (arrived at 6:13 PM), Sue M. (arrived at 6:45))

3. Approval of Minutes (5-09-2019) Fred moved to approve; Rosemary seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

4. Hearing of Visitors

Bill Ranek, President of Plum Creek Farms HOA thanked CHPC for supporting the designation of the Plum Creek Corn Crib Conservation District. Bill mentioned that the HOA had missed the deadline for a façade grant to help with Phase II of the corn crib restoration project. HOA had proceeded with Phase II with the expectation that designation would be finished before Phase II began. Bill asked if it would be possible to be considered in arrears for funding for Phase II of the project. Nick asked if the project was entirely complete. Bill indicated that the structural portion was finished, but that Phase III – a cosmetic phase costing \$30,000 – was still ahead. Mark expressed concern that the award of a retroactive grant would be inconsistent with the requirements of the grant program and would establish a precedent that the CHPC should be cautious about setting. Commissioners and staff encouraged Bill and the HOA to apply for a grant for Phase III before the work begins. Bill stated that he understood the Commission's reasons for refraining from awarding retroactive grants. Mark noted that if the CHPC were to award another grant to the HOA in the future, it might be a good idea to publicize the grant program and its positive effects by having a small ceremony at the site. Bill expressed interest in the idea and also mentioned that the HOA is seeking to install interpretive signage.

5. Certificates of Appropriateness

None

6. Financial Report

a. Sam summarized expenses and balances to date.

7. New Business

a. Façade Improvement Grant Program

i. Potential revisions to qualifications for eligibility

Sam stated that the Department of Law had indicated that there are no specific legal requirements for maintaining the owner-occupancy requirement. Fred asked whether there should be any concern about a City entity granting funds to owners of commercial property who have other tenants. Fred also expressed concerns that a renter-occupied building might have more rapid turnover and that new occupants might want to change improvements that had been made through the façade grant program. Rosemary noted that the same risk obtains for owner-occupied properties as well. Nick added that non-owner-occupied properties still generate tax revenues for the City, just as an owner-occupied property does. Curtis noted that the “owner-occupied” term originated with HUD and Fannie Mae loans and that the reason for the requirement in the case of those loans was to ensure that occupants would be making mortgage payments on their own primary residents. By contrast, the value of the façade grants is relatively small and does not need to be repaid. The reasons for the owner-occupancy requirement under HUD and Fannie Mae programs are duly not necessarily applicable to the façade grant program. Bill added that the purpose of the preservation commission is to promote the preservation of every building that has merit, and that the ownership and occupancy statuses are irrelevant to the Commission’s purpose of preserving historic buildings. Bill also noted that tenants and owner-occupants alike are capable of taking pride in the structures they occupy. Nick commented that the grant program gives the Commission an opportunity to influence the quality of improvements to historic properties, regardless of who owns or occupies the property. (Sue arrived at 6:45 PM.) Sue concurred with others that the ultimate concern is to support the stewardship of historic properties. Curtis asked if owner should still have to be the applicant. Commissioners agreed that even if non-owner-occupied properties are made eligible for grants, the owner should still have to be the applicant. Curtis made a motion to remove the requirement that properties be owner-occupied in order to be eligible for improvements supported by façade grants but maintain the requirement that the applicant be the owner of the property in question. Bill seconded. Motion carried 5-1 (Fred voted nay.).

ii. Dates for second round of 2019 grants

Bill S. left at 7:03 PM. Staff recommended announcing the second round of façade grants in late July and making September 3 the deadline for applications. Mark also mentioned that there should be two informational sessions for eligible property owners. He suggested one meeting on August 1 and another on August 8 at 5:30. Fred noted that a quorum would be important in September. Nick noted that a special meeting could be held on another date if necessary. Rosemary made a motion to allocate \$25,000 for the second round of façade grants in 2019. Sue seconded. Nick added that of the \$25,000 allocated for previous round, only about \$6,000 was actually awarded. Motion carried 5-0.

b. Funding for relocation of house at 241 1st Ave. SE

Staff reported that the house will be moved to 5501 E. Main Street if funding is allocated for the relocation of the house and if cooperation of utility companies can be secured. Mark indicated that it would be important to determine whether the owner has the capacity to rehabilitate the house. Fred asked if CHPC could require that exterior improvements be completed by a specific date. Nick also suggested that any funds given to Joe Bishop be placed in an escrow fund. Mark asked whether the Commission would prefer 1) to make a grant directly to Joe Bishop for the relocation of the house in full; 2) to make a grant directly to Joe Bishop in multiple installments; 3) allocate money for the move of the house and pay the house and building mover directly. Curtis noted that it would be possible to take a security interest to the primary house in the event that the rehabilitation is not completed. Fred made a motion to allocate funding in an amount up to \$40,000 for the fees of a building mover to relocate the house at 241 1st Ave. SE to 5501 E. Main Street, to be paid directly from

the CHPC to the moving company, with the caveat that Joe Bishop demonstrate adequate financial capacity and skill in the building trades to complete the rehabilitation of the house according to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, within a timetable specified by the Commission, with the further stipulation that Joe Bishop's available cash on hand for the project be placed in an escrow account, and with the additional requirement that the house be designated as a single-site local historic district following its relocation. Rosemary seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

8. Old Business

a. Local Historic and Conservation Districts

i. Plum Creek Corn Crib Conservation District designation

Designation was approved by City Council and Mayor in May.

ii. Wilkinson-Hull House

Staff will request from Old Town an update on the anticipated timing of acquisition.

iii. Potential N. Rangeline Road Local Historic District

Mark noted that there are numerous significant properties on N. Rangeline north of Main St. and suggested that it would be wise to begin pursuing a designation by seeking internal support from DOCS and then hosting a public meeting to discuss the prospect of designation with stakeholders in a potential district. Fred suggested expanding the proposed boundaries to include surrounding residential streets. Mark noted that much integrity had already been lost on those streets. Nick stated that he felt the need for information on the effects of the Old Town Zoning Overlay (and possibly a more specific North Rangeline Road zoning overlay that already exists).

iv. Other potential multi-resource local historic districts

Staff recommended a renewed effort to designate Johnson Addition and/or Thornhurst.

b. Contract for update to Carmel and Clay Twp. Historic Architecture Survey

Staff reported that contract is ready, but it will still be necessary to submit for review by the City's Department of Law and also determine who all signatories should be.

9. Other Business

None

10. Announcements

Rosemary and Nick noted that they would not be present at the July meeting.

11. Adjournment

Nick adjourned the meeting at 8:12 PM.

Nick Davis, Carmel Historic Preservation
Commission Chairperson

Recording Secretary Sam Burgess