

**MINUTES
CITY OF AMES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Date: March 11, 2019	Peter Hallock, Chairperson	2021
	Ted Grevstad-Nordbrock, Vice-Chair	2019
Call to Order: 6:00 PM	*Lisa Hovis	2021
Place: Ames City Hall Council Chambers	Edith Hunter	2020
	Barry Snell	2020
Adjournment: 7:12 PM	Susan Minks	2021
	[*Absent]	

CALL TO ORDER: Peter Hallock, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION: (Grevstad-Nordbrock/Minks) to approve the Agenda for the meeting of March 11, 2019.

MOTION PASSED: (5-0)

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JANUARY 14, 2018:

MOTION: (Minks/Snell) to approve the Minutes of the meeting of January 14, 2018.

MOTION PASSED: (5-0)

PUBLIC FORUM: There were no public comments.

SELECT AWARDEES FOR THE 2019 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS PROGRAM

Eloise Sahlstrom, Planner, gave a brief description of the two award submittals. The Commission received two nominations for the 2019 Historic Preservation Awards Program. One was a commercial property at 827 Northwestern Avenue. The second was the old Crawford School located at 415 Stanton Avenue.

The property at 827 Northwestern Avenue was nominated under the restoration category. Restoration is defined as restoring a property, or feature of a property, back to its original appearance. The building was built in approximately 1915. It was a local grocery store from 1924-1960. It was eventually purchased 'as-is' and required a variance in order to be used for commercial use. The property owner began restoration by replacing the front steps and replacing the front window back to its original size. It is unclear what other work has been done, but Ms. Sahlstrom stated there was a lot of structural work that was necessary to maintain the integrity of the property.

Ted Grevstad-Nordbrock, Vice-Chair, suggested that this property also be nominated for adaptive reuse since it is changing from a grocery store to a hair salon.

Edith Hunter, who nominated the property, stated that she reviewed each category and felt that this property could have been defined in more than one. She chose restoration, but it could be applicable in others.

Peter Hallock, Chair, added that he saw how it could be applied to the adaptive reuse category, but since their second nomination was also adaptive reuse he thought having it categorized as restoration was fine.

Mr. Hallock asked about the variance. Ms. Sahlstrom thought it was most likely for non-conforming use. When a property that would have been previously defined as non-conforming use is not utilized for a period of time it loses that capability. The variance was probably to reinstate that status.

The Crawford property was originally a one room schoolhouse built in 1930. The school expanded as demand increased and was in use as a school until 2001. The school district used it as office space but little maintenance was done. Preserve Iowa eventually listed it as one of seven most endangered historic properties in the state.

In 2017, it was purchased and adapted into age-restricted condominiums. The property has just received its certificate of occupancy. There was a lot of historical reclamation and restoration with the property, and the developers worked very closely with the community on suggestion and needs.

Ms. Sahlstrom noted that it was interesting that, although these properties may not meet the qualifications of the Historic District, these awards are open to the City and is not confined to just the Historic District.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock stated he has been to The Crawford and thinks it is a fantastic project. The building is applicable to multiple categories. The developer worked closely with the neighborhood to make sure issues were addressed and the it was repurposed in a manner that could potentially benefit the community. It may not be a conventional restoration but it is revitalizing the old school in a way that helps the community.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock believes that this project deserves highest accolades. Not only for the reuse, but the manner with the neighborhood, the City, and the developer worked productively together to make a great addition to the community.

Barry Snell asked Ms. Hunter her reason for nominating the 827 Northwestern Avenue property. Ms. Hunter explained the hard work and effort the property owner has put into its restoration and the positive reception the owner has had from the community. Mr. Hallock agreed that its restoration has had a positive impact on the neighborhood.

MOTION: (Snell/Minks) To award both properties in their respective categories.

MOTION PASSED: (4-0) Edith Hunter; abstain.

REVIEW OF CHAPTER 31, HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Ms. Sahlstrom explained that the current bylaws state that Chapter 31 must be reviewed every 4 years. This rule was adopted in 2015. She suggested that the Commission start by reviewing the procedural-oriented items first and then work on the design guidelines and criteria at a separate meeting.

Ms. Sahlstrom addressed some amendments that were adopted in 2015 and their comparison to what was written previously. A list of all certificates of appropriateness applied for from 2005-2018 shows that only 2 were initiated due to violations. Ms. Sahlstrom noted that the City receives about 7 applications for certificates of appropriateness a year.

Another change that was adopted in 2015 was to loosen some of the material requirements for restoration. There was also a redefinition between new construction and restoration.

Mr. Hallock suggested a process of reporting of Staff-approved submissions. It would keep the Commission and the public informed on work being done within the district. Additionally, there should be some tracking to see if these applicants are being acted upon their certificates of appropriateness. He surveyed a few properties that were approved over the year and no work had been done. Certificates of appropriateness expire after one year.

Ms. Hunter suggested expanding the expiration date to 2 years. Mr. Hallock added that it would be beneficial to have a notification process and reach out to those close to expiring and receive some explanation as to why the work had not been completed.

Ms. Sahlstrom stated she spoke with Ray Anderson, Planner, if he has dealt with extensions previously. He could not recall. Ms. Sahlstrom did reach out to those applicants of the past year in regards to their progress.

Mr. Hallock stated he had gone through previous years. He listed some properties he has viewed personally that were still not complete. There should be some tracking and extension process adopted into the ordinance.

Ms. Sahlstrom asked if the Commission would prefer an annual report on work being done opposed to one monthly. Mr. Hallock said it would be more beneficial for the public to have a monthly report. He also stated it should be a formal agenda item.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock asked if there was way to get feedback from applicants about design guidelines. Ms. Sahlstrom stated they could do a follow-up via phone or email based on the contact information on the application. Another option would be a survey.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock addressed revitalization to their Historic District website and the additional information that it could provide. Mr. Snell agreed that clearer and more accessible information would benefit those who need guidance.

Mr. Hallock gave some examples of properties that had done work, but were not fully informed on the standards of the ordinance.

Ms. Sahlstrom stated they could review the sections outside of the meeting and address concerns they found at future meetings. Staff utilizes Chapter 31 for guidance and code implementation.

Mr. Hallock stated he did not believe it would be fully necessary to go through the entire ordinance section-by-section or tweak specific language. It is his opinion that it would work best to review what is working and not working in the process then move forward with issues as they're noticed.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock added he had read through the ordinance and it was standard to what other city's provide. He explained the distinction between Old Town and Downtown's historic designation. Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock asked if Staff could give a presentation on how to utilize the ordinance to the best of its ability. He referenced reviewing the City of Dubuque's website.

Ms. Sahlstrom said that could be suggested as long it allotted Staff enough time.

Mr. Hallock noted that the City of Dubuque has a very similar ordinance but also a very user-friendly interface in presenting their guidelines.

Ms. Sahlstrom suggested reviewing the certificate of appropriateness application itself. Mr. Hallock agreed and added some feedback about the application from Staff may also be helpful.

MOTION: (Snell/Minks) to table the Chapter 31 review until next month.

MOTION PASSED: (5-0)

COMMISSION COMMENTS: Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock updated the Commission on his communications with the State in regards to having someone come down to present on State and Federal tax credits for those within the Historic District.

Ms. Sahlstrom asked about a timeline and if they wanted to do it at a scheduled meeting. Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock suggested April.

Mr. Hallock discussed the lack of historic interest in the Downtown Façade Grant Program. He asked if someone from the Commission could be involved in the reviewing process of those grants. He asked if Staff could inform the Commission on how the review committee is formed and if someone from the Commission could be involved in that process. Ms. Sahlstrom stated she would follow-up with more information on this matter.

STAFF COMMENTS: Ms. Sahlstrom discussed the CLG submittal. City Council would like to meet with the Commission and discuss their goals and objectives for the coming year. She suggested to plan to join a May meeting. This would be enough time for the Commission to prepare some of their thoughts on their agenda for the year.

Mr. Hallock noted that he asked during a neighborhood Ames 2040 public outreach event if Staff would be addressing the Commission. Staff plans to at some point in the future and would like to know if they plan to make that an agenda item.

Ms. Sahlstrom encouraged the Commission to fill out the survey in regards to Ames 2040 through the City of Ames website.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

MOTION: (Grevstad-Nordbrock/Hunter) to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION PASSED: (5-0)

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM.

Peter Hallock, Chairperson
Historic Preservation Commission

Ben Lievens, Recording Secretary
Department of Planning & Housing