

**City of Merrill
Historic Preservation Committee
Wednesday, August 4th, 2021 at 5:30 P.M.
City Hall Common Council Chambers, 1004 East First Street**

Voting Members Present (4 of 5): Alderman Paul Russell (Chairperson), Alderman Steve Sabatke, Elizabeth McCrank (arr. 6:08) and Bea Lebal. Michael Caylor was excused.

Others meeting attendees (either in-person or remotely) included: City Administrator Dave Johnson, Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Alderman Steve Hass, Al Wix, Jon Malm, Mark Bares and City Clerk Bill Heideman. Merrill Productions was present to videotape the meeting.

Call to order

Alderman Russell called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

Minutes of previous meeting(s)

The minutes were in the meeting packet.

Motion (Sabatke/Lebal) to approve the July 7th, 2021 minutes. Carried.

Changes to Historic Preservation Ordinance made by City Plan (8/3/21)

At a meeting on July 7th, the Historic Preservation Committee referred the ordinance to the City Plan Commission, so that a public hearing could be held. At a meeting on August 3rd, following a public hearing, the City Plan Commission made amendments to the ordinance, as follows:

1. Consent of the property owner would not be required to submit historic nomination requests.
2. A \$150 fee would be required when submitting historic nomination requests. Property owners nominating their own property and Common Council members would be exempt from the nomination fee.

The ordinance, as amended, will be considered at the August 10th Common Council meeting. There was discussion that the ordinance could be subjected to further amendments at that meeting.

Consider changes to the Historic Preservation Repair Guidelines

Information was in the meeting packet.

Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Pagel reported that, if the committee wants to make the guidelines advisory rather than regulatory, the word “shall” could be changed to “may” in several places. Sabatke suggested the word “should”.

There seemed to be agreement to change the word “shall” to “may” in several places, to make the guidelines advisory. Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Pagel will make those changes and submit the document to the next meeting for consideration.

A request was made to grant floor privileges to Mark Bares. Without objection, it was so ordered.

Mark Bares urged the committee to “reach out” to people who are buying and/or renovating historic homes.

Update on former American Legion building (Livingston Center)

Alderman Sabatke stated that he favors designating the building as a historic structure. City Attorney replied that doing so now would be premature, and should be considered only after a potential new Historic Preservation ordinance is adopted by the Common Council.

It was noted the City is currently waiting for a legal opinion on ownership of the property.

A request was made to grant floor privileges to Jon Malm. Without objection, it was so ordered.

Jon Malm explained his plans for the building, in the event he purchases it. He is currently waiting for a response from the City on his proposal.

Public Comment Period

City Administrator Johnson provided a verbal update on the T.B. Scott Tower relocation. Landscaping in the area of the tower is pending.

Alderman Sabatke reported that a comprehensive document (from 1992) related to local historic preservation and structures has now been scanned and is available for viewing.

The Committee then made comments and discussed several items that were not on the agenda.

Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Pagel provided a clarification related to the City being a Certified Local Government.

Elizabeth McCrank stated that she supports the sale of the former American Legion building and the proposal to make it an art center.

Establish date, time and location of next meeting

Wednesday, September 8th, 2021 at 6:00 P.M. in the City Hall Common Council Chambers.

Adjournment

Motion (Sabatke/McCrank) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:18 P.M.

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

William N. Heideman CMC, WCMC
City Clerk