

**CITY OF MERRILL
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

Thursday, June 10, 2021 at 5:15 P.M.

**City Hall Council Chambers
1004 E. First Street**

AGENDA

Voting members of Committee: Alderperson Paul Russell, Chairman, Bea Lebal, Elizabeth McCrank, Michael Caylor, Jr. and Alderman Steve Sabatke.

To attend remotely, call 224-990-0391 and meeting PIN 811 433 920#

1. Call to order
2. Approval of May 13, 2021 Minutes
3. Consider changes to the Historic Preservation Ordinance
4. Public comment
5. Set date, time of next meeting.
6. Adjourn

Agenda prepared by Shari P. Wicke
Agenda reviewed by Chairman Paul Russell

The Merrill City Hall is accessible to the physically disadvantaged. If special accommodations are needed, please contact the Merrill City Hall at 536-5594.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING 5-13-2021

Present at the meeting: Alderman Paul Russell, City Administrator Dave Johnson, Heather O'Neil, Elizabeth McCrank, Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, Mike Caylor, Steve Sabatke, Bea Lebal, I/T Manager Dustin Brown, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Alderman Rick Blake. Merrill Productions to videotape.

Alderman Russell calls meeting to order at 5:19 pm.

Russell welcomed Mike Caylor to the committee. Motion McCrank/Sabatke to approve April 8th minutes, motion carried.

A discussion ensued regarding ordinance revisions. Russell introduced the ordinance revisions pointing out that the original ordinance required a Historian, Real Estate Agent and Architect to be on the committee. Bea Lebal and Elizabeth McCrank are the historians and he felt that the agent and architect are not necessary to the committee.

Sabatke stated that he had substantial experience in architecture and related matters.

Russell indicated he would propose that one of the four "civilian" members be a resident of Lincoln County. Much interest in the TB Scott situation was shown by Lincoln County residents. Sabatke stated that the committee should not be diluted with non-residents and he disagreed.

Darin Pagel pointed out that if the ordinance remains in its present form, the committee would be a highly regulatory one, and it may be difficult to ask a non-resident to enforce City regulations. Caylor expressed agreement. Bea Lebal stated that she feels there are non-residents that have expertise and she hopes the committee would be willing to listen to them. Caylor stated that the committee would grant citizens with expertise floor privileges. Dave Johnson stated that the ordinance should deal with parameters on preservation not necessarily destruction.

Caylor made a motion seconded by Sabatke to remove the non-resident limitation, keep the real estate broker, strike the three term language and leave the architect language in. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

Motion by Sabatke, seconded by Caylor to eliminate the revised ordinance. Carried.

Regarding nominations, designations, etc., for historic structures, Sabatke shared a spreadsheet with properties he would propose to use as a starting point. These properties were in the original 1993 survey.

A discussion ensued regarding the use of plaques, the historic building list, and the number of houses in Merrill's historic district. McCrank stated that if the City could help homeowners, buy-in from homeowners would increase. Many of the houses are run-

down. A discussion ensued regarding what the City could offer, the process for historic structure nomination, as well as the criteria. McCrank indicated that "shall" made her nervous and not everyone would be interested in participating. A short discussion ensued regarding the use of tax credits.

Lebal commented that having a list of contractors that have worked on historic homes would be an asset to the community. McCrank felt we should consider different types of criteria that would qualify a house as historic. Among these are: who lived there, architectural features, the definition of "historic". Another issue is whether the committee would be interested in commercial and industrial buildings. Russell felt that rules and standards should be different for commercial, than they are for residential.

There was a brief discussion regarding the ongoing work at the City Hall Loft Apartments and the relocation of the TB Scott Mansion tower.

Chairman Russell opened the meeting for public comment. The only public comment was provided by Heather O'Neil, who gave a report on the inventory of the historic properties in the city of Merrill.

Motion to adjourn Sabatke/Caylor at 6:36 pm. Motion carried. Next meeting will be Thursday, June 10th at 5:15pm in City Hall.



CITY OF MERRILL

Office of the City Attorney

Thomas N. Hayden, City Attorney

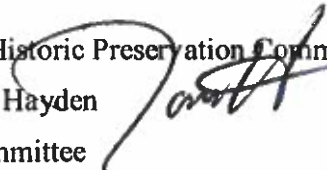
1004 East First Street • Merrill, Wisconsin • 54452

Phone (715) 539-3510 • FAX (715) 536-0514

e-mail: tom.hayden@ci.merrill.wi.us

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: May 27, 2021
TO: Paul Russell, Chairman, Historic Preservation Committee
FROM: City Attorney Thomas N. Hayden
RE: Historic Preservation Committee



Paul,

What follows is my personal opinion on the Historic Preservation Ordinance, its implementation and future application.

I believe the ordinance should be repealed. The Committee charged with enforcing the ordinance currently in effect has been unable to come up with mechanisms, criteria or philosophy for the application of the ordinance, its enforcement or a vision of its place in Merrill's future.

The Historic Preservation Committee itself is divided on the issue of residency requirements for Committee members, the makeup of the Committee, its regulatory authority, if any, and how we enforce the ordinance.

I will be forwarding in the next week, a draft ordinance as directed by the Committee at its last meeting. Personally, I think the ordinance as a vision is unenforceable given city staff limitations, and the burdens it places on property owners whose homes are "older". Perhaps we are attempting to solve a problem that does not exist. The upkeep of older and new homes is already addressed in other Ordinance sections.

It has been suggested that the Committee should focus on "street view" of structures, rather than dealing with the minute details of property restoration. That is an entirely different focus.

In short, I feel this is a question that must be addressed by the entire Common Council with appropriate citizen input.