

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.