

**ALGONQUIN HISTORIC COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING**

July 10, 2024

7:00 PM

Held at Historic Village Hall – 2 South Main Street – Algonquin

CALL TO ORDER – ESTABLISH QUORUM

Present: Chairman Lewis and Members Dombrowski, Donahue, Himes, Jolitz, Teuber, and Thompson.

APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING OF JUNE 12, 2024, AND WORKSHOP MEETINGS OF JUNE 15 AND 22, 2024

Moved Member Donahue; Seconded Member Teuber.

Voice Vote: All Ayes. Minutes Approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT – AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Patrick Knapp, Village Community Development Director, introduced Stephanie Barajas, the new Village Community Development Planner, who will be the new Village liaison with the Historic Commission.

PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearing for Consideration of a Major Improvement in the Old Town District; Case No. HC-04-24, 320 S. Harrison for modified porch landing, stairs, railing, and posts – Applicants: Robert and Judith Shea.

Staff Presentation: Patrick Knapp, Community Development Director, presented the case on behalf of Village Staff. Mr. Knapp reported that Robert Shea, the Applicant and owner of the Subject Property located at 320 S. Harrison Street, applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness to modify the front steps, add a landing, and add railings on one of the porches on the Subject Property. The proposed modifications would be in public view, are considered a “major improvement” under the Old Town District Preservation Code, and must be reviewed by the Historic Commission at a Public Hearing prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness and Building Permit.

Mr. Knapp further explained that the existing front steps are deteriorated, do not comply with minimal building code standards, and will be replaced with a 3’x5’ tongue and groove wood landing, two or three steps, and vertical railings. Mr. Knapp also relayed that Village Staff have been working with Petitioner to help him design a porch, landing, stairs, and railings that will bring the porch into building code compliance and also comply with the Preservation Code. Village Staff therefore supports the proposed modifications described in Petitioner’s current application and as Village Staff have discussed with him.

Staff Recommendation: Village Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted with the conditions that the Applicant comply with all applicable Building Code requirements and obtain all needed permits prior to construction.

Petitioner's Comments

Petitioner Robert Shea concurred with the Village Staff presentation.

Commission Discussion

Member Jolitz inquired whether Petitioner would be putting railings only on the stairs. Petitioner explained that he may put railings on the landing also, but is currently trying to determine whether his door and mailbox configuration and other dimensions will allow for railings on the landing. Commission Members noted that the additional railings would be allowed, provided traditional railings and turned posts and spindles are used. Member Jolitz also inquired if the floorboards would be tongue and groove, and Petitioner confirmed that they would, and they would likely be made of cedar or redwood.

Motion

Motion by Member Jolitz, seconded by Member Dombrowski, that the Building Commissioner issue the requested Certificate of Appropriateness for Case No. HC-04-24, 320 S. Harrison for modified porch landing, stairs, railing, and posts as presented. Chairman Lewis asked if there were any further questions or discussion needed on the project. There being none, a Roll Call Vote was taken. Roll Call Vote: All Ayes.

OLD BUSINESS

Members Donahue, Teuber, and Jolitz reported on the recent installation of the new exhibit for the Commission's display case at the Main Village Hall featuring "Wearable History." Member Jolitz added that the recently installed exhibit in the Commission's display case at the Main Library featuring Algonquin restaurants over past decades has received many favorable reviews.

Members continued discussion of preparations for the Commission's Open House event on September 7-8, 2024, during the Art on the Fox fair on Main Street in Old Town. Members will begin preparations the preceding Friday at noon, and do the teardown the following Monday. Members also discussed preparing a flyer for the Commission's Open House event to distribute around town. The flyer will be prepared and materials needed for the event will be ordered at upcoming workshops.

Chairman Lewis inquired whether the Village has any plans for any events/projects for the year of the USA's 250th anniversary (2026), and whether the Historic Commission should make any such plans. Suggestions were made to update the Commission's "Once Upon a Town" compilation, and also to display publicly enlarged versions of some of the Commission's historic images. Members will continue considering these and other possible projects/events at upcoming Meetings and Workshops.

Members continued discussion of a potential new order for historic identification signs for homes in Old Town, including seeking a new quote for their manufacture and possible means of notifying homeowners of the opportunity to order a new/replacement sign.

Members continued discussion of efforts to recruit new student and/or other Commission volunteers/members, including reaching out to local schools and organizations that require community volunteer hours/contributions.

APPROVAL OF BILLS FOR PAYMENT

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Lewis noted that the McHenry County Consortium of Historic Organizations is seeking a new leader, in coordination with its renewal efforts since Covid.

Members discussed recent inquiries regarding construction/renovation projects undertaken in Old Town without a required permit and/or Certificate of Appropriateness (e.g., installations of solar panels undertaken without a permit, removals of historic trim, replacement of historic doors and/or windows, and other modifications that would have been governed by the Old Town Preservation Code), and the appropriate response to such inquiries. Members explained that such unpermitted modifications make it difficult to persuade other homeowners who properly apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness to adhere to the hearing process. Mr. Knapp advised that anyone concerned about such unpermitted projects can reach out to him, and while such inquiries to Village Staff in the past may have sometimes received no public response, many such violations are under review by the Village and often receive fines and/or other enforcement consequences without public comment. Mr. Knapp also advised that anyone can report any such concerns on Algonquin's "See Click Fix" app, and the Village will review the issue.

Member Thompson reported on progress of restorative construction at Algonquin's historic Mineral Spring site, and grant progress reports soon due. The concrete restoration and drainage work are now complete, a stone cap has been installed, and the active spring now drains through a pipe in the stone cap down to a floor drain that will also help drain accumulated precipitation to the adjacent creek. Additionally, layers of old paint were removed from the concrete garden bench, and the restorers advised to avoid painting the bench in the future, as it locks in moisture and contributes to deterioration of the concrete. Landscaping and installation of new signage at the site still remain to be done after nearby paving and electrical lighting work on the adjacent pathway are completed.

Chairman Lewis relayed that the Commission has received several inquiries about the passing of former Commission Member Marie Coleman and where she is buried, and concerns that the grave has no marker or headstone. Because Ms. Coleman was such a valued Commission Member and local artist who contributed to Algonquin's local artistry (including the Historic Village Hall steeple now used for the Village logo), local citizens would like to see her remembered well.

CORRESPONDENCE, COMMENTS, AND OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Lewis relayed an inquiry from a member of St. John's Church looking to schedule an event with the Commission at Historic Village Hall, but scheduling difficulties and unavailability of the second floor of Historic Village Hall prevented it.

Mr. Knapp reported that the previous developer planned for renovating the Algonquin State Bank building has withdrawn from the project, and new proposals for renovation of the building will be made to the Village and brought before the Commission as needed. Mr. Knapp also reported that the former Creekside Tap building is planned for demolition, and the current intent is to bring the demolition before the Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness at the next Commission meeting, though demolition may happen sooner if safety requires it.

Members were reminded of the Commission Workshop on July 20, 2024, and that the July 27 Workshop is cancelled due to Founders' Days Celebrations.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Himes moved, and Member Dombrowski seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. Meeting adjourned at 8:44 pm.

Secretary

Date Approved