

**ALGONQUIN HISTORIC COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

May 11, 2016

7:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER - ESTABLISH QUORUM

Present: Chairman Jolitz and Members Koeppel, Purn, Thompson, and Zange.

Absent: None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING APRIL 13th AND WORKSHOP
MINUTES OF APRIL 16th AND APRIL 23rd.**

Moved: Member Zange, Seconded: Member Thompson.

Voice Vote: All Ayes. Minutes Approved

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments concerning the Village's request for demolition of the historic home structure located at 103 W. Algonquin Road:

Former Commission Member Louise Nee expressed disappointment to see another demolition of a historic structure in the Village, and wondered what the Village is doing to preserve history, rather than destroy it. Ms. Nee also inquired as to why the Village's recent acquisition of various properties doesn't address the community's need for a community center, rather than property that is later demolished. Ms. Nee also noted the destruction and vandalism of the building after it was vacated, including the removal of various historically significant artifacts, pieces of trim, and other fixtures within the structure, and questioned why the Village did not prevent such "gutting" of the property, and did not even close up missing and broken out second floor windows that remained open to the elements for over 2 months. .

Nicholas Stratejczuk from Jefferson Street in the Historic District asked whether anyone had expressed a willingness to move the house. Norman Franke, Jr. said he hated to see "something like this home go" in addition to all the other buildings that have been torn down since the Village adopted a "Preservation Ordinance". Asking what & where is the preservation, stating that this building got an Award from the city (Algonquin) about ten years ago or so for adaptive business use and beatification and now they tear it down.

**PUBLIC HEARING FOR CONSIDERATION OF A MAJOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE
OLD TOWN DISTRICT**

Case No. PC16-01: 103 W. Algonquin Road, Demolition of Home; Petitioner: Village of Algonquin: Ben Mason, on behalf of the Village Staff, explained that the Village purchased the property located at 103 W. Algonquin Road last year and recently

demolished the garage building and ranch home on the property. When the Commission approved demolition of these outbuildings in January 2016, Staff explained that any proposed action for the primary structure would come back for further review by the Commission. The Village then put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) this winter for anyone interested in purchasing and relocating the main house to another location.

Over the past several months, Staff publicized the RFP through numerous outlets, including sending out a press release, posting information on the Village website and social media, and contacting area contractors. Multiple articles ran in the local newspapers, advertising the April 30 deadline for proposals, but no bids were received, so the Village intends to move forward with demolition of the house located on the property in question. The building is vacant, and there are no immediate plans for the site, other than to remove the structure and sod/seed the property.

Mr. Mason noted the historic four-square design of the building and 9 out of 10 ranking in the Village's Old Town Survey. Still, Mr. Mason stated the Staff's view that restoration of the building would be "very costly," and ultimately make for a difficult site to attract tenants. Village Staff therefore feels that demolition and subsequent development of that site, in combination with the adjoining lots, would be the most cost-effective measure. Mr. Mason also expressed the Village's commitment to assure that any new construction on the property will come back before the Historic Commission for review and be compatible with historic architectural designs in the Old Town District.

Ms. Nee observed that the undesirability of moving the property, and consequent lack of bids on the property, stemmed in large part from destruction of the property both before and after the building was vacated, which Ms. Nee characterized as "demolition by neglect." Mr. Mason responded that the owners of this property and the previously surrounding buildings had been cited repeatedly for code violations, but to no avail. He also expressed the Village's desire to remove blighted buildings to improve that area of town. Mr. Mason also noted the negative effect on such properties caused by the difficult pedestrian environment in which these buildings were located, due to heavy traffic along that path of Algonquin road. Mr. Mason explained that the Village's plan for redevelopment of this stretch of property is intended to address that difficulty and develop properties at these locations better suited to such a high-traffic area.

Mr. Franke responded to Mr. Mason's comments regarding the difficult ingress and egress from these properties by inquiring as to the types of properties planned for these locations. Mr. Mason explained that the Village plans for these lots to have egress on both Algonquin Road and Harrison Street, and be conceptually similar to the 2-3 story structures described in the Staff Report.

Member Zange questioned the Village's relative effort to enforce code violation measures against the owners of these properties compared to other owners in town against whom lesser code violations have been more vigorously pressed – especially owner occupied private residential homes seem to be subject to a higher standard or level of enforcement than business use or rental properties. . Mr. Mason responded that code violations were pressed against the owners of these properties, fines were levied,

and there were liens on the house in question, but these measures failed to remedy the longstanding code violations that persisted at these properties. Member Zange also expressed frustrations he has heard expressed and echoed from many residents that are growing increasingly frustrated over decisions made by village staff members that residents are stuck with having to live with, look at, and support through taxes, but that these important decisions, often with long term consequences are being made by staff that does not even reside or pay property taxes in our village but Algonquin residents are stuck with the outcome. He said many residents desire that Algonquin should establish a residency requirement for all village employees so that staff members would have to reside with, look at, and support through taxation, the long term consequences of the decisions and or recommendations such as this that they make that directly impact Algonquin's residents..

Member Purn noted the historical significance of the properties located on this block of Algonquin Road, and called for some Village plan to justify the loss of such important historic structures beyond merely seeding and planting. Member Purn also noted the relatively good condition of the property now sought to be demolished, especially compared to other properties in the area for which the Village has no current plans, and questioned the Village's particular interest in redeveloping this particular area of the Old Town District at the expense of important historic structures that could have been restored with reasonable effort and expense in comparison to the cost of a major construction and development project on the site. . Adding that in general the private home owners are doing a good job maintain and restoring their homes but rental properties both business and residential seem to be getting away with things to the point of the need for demolition of the buildings. Member Purn also inquired why the Village should spend such a considerable sum as the cost to demolish this structure, rather than investing perhaps a lesser sum to restore it and save its historical significance and rent it out for office space or something.

Mr. Mason responded by again explaining that the heavily congested intersection of Algonquin Road and Main Street took a heavy toll on the properties located on this stretch of Algonquin Road, causing greater deterioration to the historic structures located there, and the Village's hope to replace those structures with some better suited to such a high-traffic area better able to attract tenants.

Mr. Franke inquired as to whether the recession probably contributed to the lack of bids, and questioned whether more time for bids therefore might be prudent. Ms. Nee also inquired why the Village itself does not move the house to a different location.

Chairman Jolitz questioned why new developments in this area (Riverside Plaza) have not retained the architectural style in design or even façade of the historic buildings they replaced – which is expressly required in the Village's own Preservation Ordinance, and expressed hope that any redevelopment for this block does actually reflect the architecture of the original structures on this block as required and outlined in the Preservation Code with designs more faithfully to original architecture, perhaps with a variety of design styles and several different facades to break up the overall look of any new building to appear as several smaller buildings than one huge oversized structure

and in a more appropriate mass and scale to actually blend with the streetscape of the Old Town District , as the Village has again indicated is committed to do. Chairman Jolitz also noted that, since the adoption of the Preservation Code, in 1998 the Village has not actually preserved (as opposed to demolish) a single structure. Noting that nearly all of the preservation and restoration projects have been from the private sector. Hopefully when considering proposals and options for the re-development of this site the village will work closely with the developer and lead-by example with a development this time that actually blends with the historic structures in the Historic Old Town area. .

Member Thompson expressed understanding of the Village's effort to remove blighted properties from this stretch of Algonquin Road and improve that area for the benefit of the community, but stated her concern that the house in question, because of its comparatively strong structure, did not present the same compelling need for demolition as others in this area that had been demolished previously. She thus concluded that the Preservation Code did not appear to allow for demolition of the building, and she therefore could not support a vote to do so. Member Koeppel echoed the same concern stating the destruction of this home seemed rushed, since there are no current plans or proposals for the site. .

Motion by Member Zange, seconded by Member Purn, that the Building Commissioner not issue the requested Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of the building at 103 W. Algonquin Road, due to the historic nature of the structure: Voice Vote: All Ayes.

OLD BUSINESS

Interview Project - Status Report: The most recent interview of Phyllis Koeppel has been completed. Next on the list is Carol Rattray Bruhn, who recently donated a historic photo of the Rattray Farm. In the event of difficulty scheduling that interview, Ellen Green and/or Warren Dahn, both of whom will be in town this summer, are also possibilities.

Budget for Fiscal Year May 2016 to April 2017: Chairman Jolitz reported his understanding that the Commission's proposed budget, including its expenditure for the acquisition of a new laptop computer, has been approved by the Village.

APPROVAL OF BILLS FOR PAYMENT

Member Purn presented a \$53.98 bill from Office Depot for labeling supplies and hanging file folders. Member Thompson moved to reimburse Member Purn; Member Zange seconded. Voice Vote: All Ayes.

Member Purn also discussed the need to reproduce certain historic taped footage and the possible need of materials to do so.

NEW BUSINESS

Participation in Founders Days 2016: Member Purn reported on a car show proposed for

the Sunday of Founders Day weekend (7/31/16), on Main Street. The Village would allow closing down Main Street and require permits for tents on Main Street during that event. The Commission discussed the possibility of a table/tent on Main Street during this event, if it occurs. Member Purn will pursue a permit for such a booth.

2016 Algonquin Historic Achievement Award: Chairman Jolitz explained the Commission's past practice of honoring individuals who have fostered preservation in the community, and its decision to resurrect this practice in 2016. To do so, the Commission bestowed its Historic Achievement Award for 2016 on Louise Nee, a longtime Commission Member until her last term ended last month, who has made countless contributions and efforts in fostering and the promotion and public education of our local history and in all endeavors to support of the work of the Commission and the preservation of our history over the last nine years..

CORRESPONDENCE, COMMENTS OR OTHER BUSINESS

Member Purn reported that the Commission was contacted by Mary Riley of Art Environments, Inc. regarding a request for historic photos for a potential interior design project at the new Clarendale Senior Assisted Living Center.

Chairman Jolitz read a thank you card received from Member Nee.

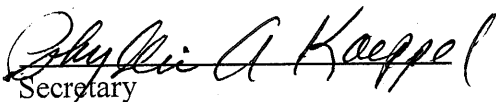
Chairman Jolitz also reported that the Algonquin Public Arts Open House is scheduled for Thursday, May 19, at 6:00-8:00 p.m., and that on Friday, May 20, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Village Staff and consultants will hold a Downtown Algonquin Open House at Historic Village Hall to show the concept plans for "beautifying Main Street and upgrading the overall road and utility infrastructure in downtown."

Member Purn reported on an email received from Ryan Seick regarding a Wine Tasting on Saturday, May 14, as a fundraiser for Founders Days. Member Purn was requested to make a presentation at this Wine Tasting and discussed his plans to participate in that event, including a slide show, which some Commission Members reviewed.

Member Purn also reported on a local artifact cookbook of St. Margaret Mary donated by Pat Dennehey, and discussed the need to update the Commission's Old Town Survey with additional sites within the confines of the Old Town District.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Thompson moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Member Koeppel. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.


Secretary

6-8-18
Date Approved