

**ALGONQUIN HISTORIC COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 11, 2017
7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER - ESTABLISH QUORUM

Present: Chairman Jolitz and Members Himes, Lewis, Purn, and Zange.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 13, 2017 AND
WORKSHOP MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 16 AND 23, 2017**

Moved: Member Zange; Seconded: Member Himes.

Voice Vote: All Ayes. Minutes Approved.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

**PUBLIC HEARING FOR CONSIDERATION OF A MAJOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE
OLD TOWN DISTRICT – Case No. PC17-07, 101 S. Main St for Demolition of
building.**

Petitioner: Village of Algonquin.

VILLAGE STAFF PRESENTATION:

Ben Mason presented the case on behalf of the Village. The village has applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the property in question. The subject property is located on the east side of South Main Street, adjacent to Crystal Creek.

The improvement proposed on the property in question consists of demolishing the existing commercial structure. The building had been for sale on and off over the past decade, and has not been occupied on a consistent basis since 2009. Due to flooding events and to accommodate utility work associated with the downtown streetscape project, the building will be scheduled for demolition later this fall.

Recommendation

Staff feels a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the building in question is reasonable and meets the intent of the Preservation Code. A waiting period for a Demolition Permit would not be compulsory as Section 10.12.2 of the Preservation Code allows an exemption from the two-year waiting period when the structure itself has limited historical/architectural value and a delay in demolition would not further the purposes of the Preservation Code.

The Staff Report suggested that demolition of the building will not affect the aesthetic cohesiveness of the Old Town District as a whole. The building has limited historic architectural significance and retention would not have a substantial effect toward helping preserve and protect the general standards of the Old Town District Preservation Code. There are other examples of similar commercial buildings from the same 1910s era on Main Street that were constructed as automobile dealerships, notably the structures at 113 S. Main and 200 S. Main.

The building has low desirability as a commercial structure **at this time**, due to a significant extent to its location in the floodplain of Crystal Creek and history of flooding in the lower level. The Village Engineer has offered an assessment of the current conditions, including the limitations its continued presence would pose as part of the Village's downtown streetscape project. Attached is the memorandum from Christopher Burke Engineering (October 2, 2017), which documents the challenge of retaining the building given its immediate proximity to the bridge over Crystal Creek that needs to be reconstructed. Repairing or rebuilding the structure's foundation would not be in the public's best interest, as the building is in a vulnerable position adjacent to the creek and will be prone to continued flooding over time as the force of the creek has already demonstrated. The Village's goal will be to lay back the banks of the creek and naturalize the slope to make Crystal Creek into a complement to downtown, rather than the channelized and poorly functioning design it has been restricted into.

With regards to whether retention of the existing buildings would promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generate additional business in the Old Town District, create new employment opportunities, attract tourists, encourage study and interest in the village's history, or make the village a more attractive and desirable place to live, in fact, the opposite is true. The property is clearly not serving as a draw for area visitors or as an economic engine for Old Town. The building has been vacant for over a decade – despite being for sale at a reasonable price – and the Village Engineer's findings suggest that the most cost effective course of action for future use of the property is to remove the building and incorporate the property into the downtown streetscape project for public benefit.

Staff recommends that a Certificate of Appropriateness be approved for the demolition with the following condition:

1. The Historic Commission shall have an opportunity to walk through the building and salvage any pieces and/or take any photographs for its archives prior to demolition.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM PETITIONER:

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Member Zange inquired about the reconstruction of the creek and whether the creek will be reconstructed. Member Lewis inquired about whether the Creekside Tap and its parking would be affected by the reconstruction of the creek. Ben Mason was unsure of the plans in regard to the reconstruction of the creek. However it was noted by Member Zange and others that much of the space of the current parking area behind the failing retaining wall on the north side of the creek, was originally part of the creek bed. It was also asked if the widening of the creek bed would extend from Main Street all the way through Cornish Park to the river or it was only proposed for this one parcel, with the current demolition request.

Member Purn questioned the timing of the demolition of the building, asking is any building with a rating of 5 out of 10 or lower (as rated at the time of the 1995 Survey – 22 years ago) automatically a target worthy of tearing down? Stating a building can be restored and improved as many property owners have done and are doing on their own. He asked, who is responsible for the decision to tear it down? Ben Mason responded that he wrote the Staff Report. Chairman Jolitz stated that Ben was just offering the findings of the engineer. Member Zange expressed concerns about other work on the creek and the effect or impact on other historic structures or properties. Ben Mason reiterated that the Village Engineer called for the structure to be demolished.

Member Himes voiced concerns about the effects of the tear down on other/adjacent buildings, most notably the former bakery building that is attached to the subject building. Member Purn also expressed concerns. Ben Mason responded that the Village has had environmental and engineering studies done. Member Jolitz remarked that adjacent property owners were not present at the Hearing.

Member Zange stated that since he has been on the Commission he has only seen the destruction of historic structures that the village acquires and was against the Village's request for this demolition. Member Purn stated he agreed. Chairman Jolitz stated that "cost effectiveness" is not everything that should foster demolition requests. Stating anyone in the private sector who has purchased or owns an historic structure understands this and steps up to that responsibility when they purchase it. He advised he understands both the Village's and Member Zange's positions. Jolitz questioned whether the Village would have decided to acquire and demolish the building had it been occupied by a viable business. Jolitz stated that the Village has failed to preserve any building except Historic Village Hall. Member Himes asked whether the Village would consider redoing the building. Chairman Jolitz stated that Cucina Bella, Doerner Jewelers, the and former Billiards parlor buildings all had ca 1970 mansard roofs and owners did a great job removing these fronts, doing restoration & remodeling of the building's facade & interiors. It would be nice if the Village demonstrated such a caring for our vintage structures and Historic sites as well. Commissioners indicated the village has not even committed to the restoration and long term Preservation of the Historic Mineral Spring s site in Towne park. Member Purn asked why some of the TIF money is not used for something besides infrastructure, like helping foster restoration/preservation of facades on historic structures. Chairman Jolitz advised members, that such matters are outside of the scope and purpose of this Hearing and asked if there were any further questions specifically about the current request for demolition of this building. There were no additional comments.

MOTION:

Motion by Member Zange, that the Building Commissioner not issue the requested Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of the building at 101 S. Main St for Demolition, case No. PC17-07. Seconded by member Purn. Chairman Jolitz repeated the motion and asked if there were any further comments or questions, being none he called for a roll call vote. Roll Call Vote was taken – All Ayes.

OLD BUSINESS:

Historic/Vintage Structure Identification Signs Mailing: Chairman Jolitz reported on the mailing of applications to purchase the new vintage structure Identification signs being offered for sale to Old Town District residents prepared by Commission Members at the last Commission workshop in August. Chairman Jolitz and Member Purn also reported on residents of the Old Town District who have responded to this mailing and applied to purchase signs for their vintage properties, and noted that many of these applicants are purchasing such signs for the first time. The Commission will work on finalizing the sign orders and researching information where needed .

Scout Troop visits to HVH in October: These visits will take place during the Commission workshops on 10/28/2017 during 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 time slots. It presently appears that one troop is signed up for each time slot on 10/28.

APPROVAL OF BILLS FOR PAYMENT:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Commission Exhibits in Library and Village Hall Display Cases: Possible exhibit on Naylor toys for Christmas. The Commission needs to work on completing this project.

CORRESPONDENCE, COMMENTS, AND OTHER BUSINESS:

Chairman Jolitz discussed the fall meeting of the Joint Council of Historic Groups on Wednesday September 20, 2017, at the Former Orchard Beach Hotel, 1812 Riverside Drive, McHenry. Chairman Jolitz attended and reported that all McHenry historic groups and most service organization in general, are suffering from lack of volunteers. The Lake in the Hills Historic Soc. is having an Open House at the Ford School 10/15. They advised the Village of Lake in the Hills is building a restroom facility there for school groups.

ADJOURNMENT:

Member Himes moved, and Member Purn seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. Voice Vote: All Ayes. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.


Secretary

11/08/17
Date Approved