

# ALGONQUIN HISTORIC COMMISSION

## MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING

June 12, 2019

7:00 P.M.

**Held at Historic Village Hall - 2 South Main St. — Algonquin**

### **Call to order – Establish Quorum**

Present: Chairman Jolitz and Members Dombrowski, Zange, Pawula, Purn, Himes, and Lewis

**Approval of Minutes of Regular Business Meeting on May 8, and Workshop Meetings on May 18 and May 25, 2019.** Moved: Member Zange; Seconded: Member Pawula

Voice Vote: All Ayes. Minutes Approved.

### **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

### **PUBLIC HEARING:**

Public Hearing for Consideration of a Major Improvement in the Old Town District; Case No. PC19-04, 107 South Main St, for some improvements to the building's front façade, the majority of which are in cooperation with the Village's desire to add a handicap accessible ramp and front stoop to serve the businesses' current storefront entrances. Petitioner: Greg Geigel

### **VILLAGE STAFF PRESENTATION**

The Village has prepared some conceptual drawings to depict the front stoop and accessible ramp that would be sited on the north side of the building. Long-term, the Village is seeking coordination from property owners on Main Street to consolidate parking at the rear of the buildings, at which time it is theoretically possible that rear entrances to a building such as 107 S. Main Street could become more practical and feasible (Note : Currently about 6 buildings on this side of the street in this block already have rear entrances). In the meantime, the fact is the entrances for the subject building's business storefronts are located on the front façade facing Main Street and so the Village has identified the proposed stoop and ramp as the optimal location for the accessibility improvements at this time. The ramp and stoop will have an ornamental railing similar to what is depicted on the renderings, and would potentially be installed later this summer.

The property owner, Greg Geigel, has been very cooperative working with Village Staff to commit to making corresponding changes to the building façade, that will be required by the addition of the front stoop. First, the middle door on the front of the building which is currently located at level grade with the sidewalk, will be raised approximately 2 1/2 feet up, to the current level of the storefront entrances that frame the two sides of the façade. Mr. Geigel will retain the existing door, and most importantly decorative lintel and wood carvings above the entrance (Note: However, there is not sufficient room in raising the door to retain the window above the door in its present size). The property owner is also proposing to remove the awnings to better showcase the building's prominent storefront windows. Mr. Geigel has agreed to retain (Note: not remove but almost entirely cover up with the new cement stoop) the existing black granite masonry base at the bottom of façade, so that it will remain present on the building should the front stoop ever be removed and he or a future owner desire to restore the foundation.

It is important to note the Terra Cotta decorative brick inserts located above the storefront windows will not be changed in any way and will remain untouched.

One item Village Staff requests assistance from the Historic Commission in determining is the style /appearance of the new smaller window opening above the middle doorway. The color renderings show the existing window with vertical panes and white trim, however the relocation of the arched lintel and wood carvings will reduce the size of that window opening by more than half. Staff's initial recommendation would be a rectangular transom window that fills the remaining space, to include vertical grid panels that provide a reference back to the existing window style. An example of this for the commission's consideration is the transom at 119 S. Main, above the Doerner Jewelers front entrance.

### **Recommendation**

The Village has attempted to balance several different goals and objectives for the subject property, the historic character of the building and current code requirements. Staff believes the proposed improvements retain the significant architectural elements of the building's façade, and are consistent with the Preservation Code. Staff recommends approval of the façade alterations subject to the following conditions:

1. The petitioner shall be required to obtain all necessary building permits from the Algonquin Community Development Department for relocation of the center doorway.

2. The petitioner shall be required to comply with the Historic Commission's recommendations for the design and appearance of the new window above the center doorway, and provide a rendering or spec sheet as part of the building permit application.

### COMMISSION DISCUSSION

The petitioner says the ramp is important for his tenant, Santi from the Black Bear Restaurant. Currently, he has no wheel chair access. The petitioner sees no other way at the present time to provide access, and says that the ramp could be removed if an alternate access is later possible. He stated he would be more than happy to jack hammer it away if alternate access can be found. (Note: however, if the center door is raised at this time, the new stoop would need to be retained going forward indefinitely). Member Purn asked the petitioner why he couldn't put the ramp on the side like Doerner Jewelers. The petitioner replied that it would be impractical, there would have to be two ramps (along North Side & South side of building). Member Purn asked why there couldn't be two. Is it feasible? Member Dombrowski inquired why there couldn't be 2 ramps so that the historic facade would not be negatively affected, and the center door left in place at street level as it is now. Ben Mason said there could be two ramps. Member Dombrowski stated that the addition of the proposed ramp and moving the center door, etc could ruin the buildings potential chance of being placed on the National Historic Register at some point. The petitioner said that he bought the building as it was and that waiting for the village to come up with an alternate solution or providing alternate access through the apartment in the back would be onerous at this time, stating that the rear apartments represent an important part of his revenue from the building. Member Dombrowski asked the petitioner why there couldn't be a side door. The petitioner stated that it would cost his tenant in the south side unit - Santi 20% of his tables (2 tables). The fire code requires that there be a certain amount of space by doors. He sees no other way to provide more access currently. He wishes there were. Member Himes stated that there has to be a way, we just aren't seeing it. Ben Mason stated that a ramp entrance is not mandated by law but is consistent with some other buildings. Members disagreed and stated it was not, as this building was actually built at street level, whereas the ones with ramps added were all built above grade and had 3 to 6 stairs to the entrance when they were built. Ben said the Village would like the ramp entrance but does not demand it. It has to be viewed on its merits. The petitioner said that it is not just the stairs but the doors as well. Santi would currently need 3 employees to bring someone in a wheelchair into the restaurant and then it could be a tight fit thru the door. Member Himes asked about the size of the door and whether that would require a wider door. The petitioner said no, he didn't think so at this time. Member Lewis asked who will be paying for the

ramp. Ben Mason stated that the village will pay for ramp except for the part on the north side of the building. Ben Mason stated that there were other buildings in the village that could be on the register and that the economic needs of the business property owner need to be taken into account. Chairman Jolitz stated that the building may be our only remaining Commercial Business Building in the village that might qualify to be on the National Historic Register. It is the ONLY example of vintage terra cotta remaining in the village. It was designed by Ralph Abell, a prominent and well known architect – with some of his other works currently listed on the National Register. Members stated that his tenant knew what they were getting as far as the building configuration when they chose to rent the location. They knew they were moving into an historic building rather than new construction. Chairman Jolitz read from the Village Mission Statement: “The mission of the people of Algonquin is foster a harmonious, distinctive community with a strong sense of place, preserving its ecological and historical richness....to this end, we will provide to the needs of today, prepare for the demands of tomorrow and *remain mindful and respectful of the past.*” “He then cited various sections of the code including Section 10.04: “GENERAL STANDARDS AND CRITERIA APPLICABLE TO ALL USES WITH THE OLD TOWN DISTRICT: ...all property within the Old Town District shall retain the exterior appearance of the period in which it was built or constructed..”. Members feel the Village staff all too often seem to forget we have an Historic Preservation code. It is not a code that the Commission wrote, but is a Village Code written and adopted by the Village in 1998 and should be followed just as much as any and all other Village Codes and requirements. Members expressed frustration that they have often heard from residents, comments such as residents have expressed that they often feel that there are TWO sets of standards in the village, one for Village projects, and another one for everyone else to have to follow. Members expressed it is fundamentally unfair to the many village residents and property owners who HAVE spent thousands of dollars and taken the extra time and care to remain compliant to the Preservation Code, when the Village seems to choose where and when it decides to comply with this and its own Codes in general. Ben Mason said that the village understands that it is a historically significant building and that is why staff took great care with this project. They had the renderings prepared and provided for a level of preservation of the building. Member Dombrowski asked whether there was an expense for these renderings and what effect will that expense have on final approval of the project as presented. She asked , What will happen if the Commission votes against this proposal? Ben Mason said the cost spent on the current renderings will not have an effect on the approval. Chairman Jolitz informed member Dombrowski that the process allows that the petitioner can appeal to the Village Board to overturn any opinion/ recommendation by the Commission, even if our Recommendation is based on the requirements and

intent of the Preservation Code. Member Himes asked whether the entrance could be put on the side (and the front door just locked – with sign “Use Side Entrance” ). The petitioner said that it might negatively affect seating in the restaurant. Member Lewis asked who owns the alley on the south side of the building . The petitioner said that he did. The petitioner said he would really like to see another way of doing things and not have a ramp across the front of the building at all, but currently he sees this as the only way. He said there was a reason why down town had vacant buildings for a number of years, allowing buildings to get run down was part of it, and traffic congestion and Parking are always major issues for attracting business. He thinks the plan for the large Harrison Street parking lot will go a long way to further make downtown much more viable and likely would make it possible for rear entrances to more buildings, but in the meantime he is trying to make it work out for his current tenant in one of his units. Ben Mason said the current proposal for changing the front of the building and adding the ramps was the most cost effective approach, and maybe even more so than changes or adding ramps or new entrances to the rear of the building at some point in the future to provide better access to the building, and asked the commission for guidance in making it viable that this was the most economic approach. Chairman Jolitz stated that the pursuit of the “most cost effective and economic approach” to a project is NOT a part of the Preservation Code and to even consider “cost” as an argument for approval for this or any proposed project is an insult to all of the others in the Old Town District that HAVE followed the Code regardless of additional cost, time, or work. The owners of homes and buildings in the District know what it means when taking on ownership of a vintage structure. It was pointed out that the petitioners current building has had a ramp that been closed off to use for whatever reason, for some 10 to 15 years with a sign that indicates “Ramp Closed - Enter from the other side”. Members indicated that the petitioner already has owned another building in the District for some time, and was aware of the responsibility, limitations, and often rewards one gets when they buy an old home or building.

Members said that they appreciate what the petitioner has done the side of his other building and keeping the front looking original while operating his business. Chairman Jolitz reminded and informed the petitioner that our opinions and comments on the proposal as presented, are not intended as any reflection on him, but based on reference to the standards and requirements outlined in the Preservation Code and to the intent of the code when it was established, to Foster Preservation of our small inventory of vintage structures for future generations to enjoy. And also in respect to all those property owners that have followed the Code over the last 21 years.

**MOTION:**

Motion by Member Himes, seconded by Member Purn, that the Building Commissioner not issue the requested Certificate of Appropriateness for front façade alterations at 107 South Main Street, due to incompatibility with the historic character of the building. Chariman Jolitz repeated the Motion and asked if here was any further discussion or questions, being none a Roll cal vote was taken. Vote: All Ayes.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

Public Hearing for Consideration of a Major Improvement in the Old Town District; Case No. PC19-05, 620 S. Main Street, to Replace the Front Columns on the Building's Front Façade. Petitioner: Dr. Michael O'Donnell.

**VILLAGE STAFF PRESENTATION**

The building's front façade includes four wood columns, one of which has cracked and the property owner is proposing to replace with a fiberglass column to match the existing appearance. All four columns would be replaced at this time, as the property owner would prefer a more maintenance free material in general, rather than continue to replace one by one in the future. The fiberglass columns would be the same size as existing and have a round shaft with square fluted top. At right is a photo of the existing columns, and enclosed is a spec sheet provided by the petitioner for the new fiberglass columns that are proposed.

**Recommendation**

Staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed improvement, subject to the following condition:

1. The petitioner shall be required to obtain all necessary building permits from the Algonquin Community Development Department.
2. The fiberglass columns shall have a round shaft and square fluted top, consistent with the current wood columns.

**COMMISSION DISCUSSION**

Members thought that it would okay to replace the rotted columns with fiberglass columns. The wooden columns would be more susceptible to rot especially with the changing street scape and nearness of the road. Member Purn asked whether they were load bearing columns, the petitioner said yes.

**MOTION:**

Motion by Member Purn, seconded by Member Himes, that the Building Commissioner issue the requested Certificate of Appropriateness for replacement of the building's front columns at 620 S. Main Street, consistent with the petitioner's submittal and the conditions listed in the June 12, 2019 Village Staff memorandum. Motion was repeated , being no further discussion a Roll Call vote was taken. Vote: All Ayes.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

Public Hearing for Consideration of a Major Improvement in the Old Town District; Case No. PC19-06, 901 Cary Road, to Add a Stone Veneer Material at the Base of the Building's Front Façade. Petitioner: Mr. Igor Gantea.

**VILLAGE STAFF PRESENTATION**

The owner is proposing to add a stone veneer to the north and west sides of the building, similar to the masonry application that exists on a small portion of the current façade. Staff requested from the petitioner and the petitioner provided a sketch as well as a sample of the proposed material. Petitioner is looking to refurbish the building and open a restaurant. The stone material will be installed under the windows.

**Recommendation**

The commission shall review the sketch and material spec sheet the petitioner brought prior to making a recommendation.

**COMMISSION DISCUSSION**

Member Pawula asked how this case is different from the first case, shouldn't the front of this building stay original? Chairman Jolitz and Members Zange and Purn stated that this building has been remodeled and altered many times and has lost almost all historic character. The present structure has no resemblance to the original restaurant once on the site – The Log Cabin. Pawula said he is all for approval of this project, since the cut stone looked like some of the remaining original stone around one door, would look nice if placed around the lower part of front walls and below the window and make building sections look together. He did not realize the extent of alterations over the years. Member Purn said it is difficult to even try to recognize what the original structure was.

**MOTION:**

Motion by Member Dombrowski, seconded by Member Zange, that the Building

Commissioner issue the requested Certificate of Appropriateness for front facade alterations at 901 Cary Road, consistent with recommendations made by the Historic Commission at the June 12, 2019 Public Meeting. Motion was repeated, being no further discussion, a roll call vote was taken. Vote: All Ayes.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- a. Continuing Main Street work and work around HVH. Work continues on the bridge, but the plaza and sidewalk to HVH is done.

**APPROVAL OF BILLS FOR PAYMENT:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. Commission is working on new display for the library, Hats off to History, a collection of clothing – T Shirts and Hats that were from assorted community organizations and events from 1970 – 2019. Member Purn is printing signs.

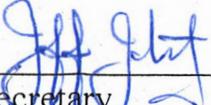
**CORRESPONDENCE, COMMENTS, AND OTHER BUSINESS:**

- a. Art on the Fox is in Town Park this weekend. 30 artists and other vendors. Saturday there will be an art battle. Sunday: An artist will make a sculpture out of watermelon. Ben Mason asked for a donation of a Hill Climb Book for a giveaway. Voice Vote to Approve: All Ayes.
- b. Free admission to the McHenry County Historical Society for Village Residents is August 13 -17.
- c. Geister family genealogist is visiting historic commission in August.
- d. Member Purn would like to take money donated as Memorials to Lorraine Ritt and find an appropriate use for it, to honor her. Ideas to be explored further.
- e. Member Purn purchased a document from an Algonquin veteran of the civil war.
- f. Village Hall has working doorbell. For security, door should be closed if there is no one downstairs.
- g. Next Wednesday from 8:30 to noon, Recreation will be using second floor during Commission's usual time slot. Member Purn to re-schedule for Friday.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Member Dombrowski moved and Zange seconded, that the meeting be adjourned.

Voice Vote: All Ayes. Meeting adjourned at 8:37pm.

  
Secretary

7-10-2019  
Date Approved