

MINUTES
Meeting of the
Edina Heritage Preservation Board
Edina City Hall – Community Room
Tuesday, October 9, 2012
7:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER 7:00 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Answering roll call was Chair Carr, and Members Stegner, Davis, Curran, Anger, Moore, Mellom, Sussman, Johnson and Good. Absent was Member Christiaansen. Staff present was Planner Joyce Repya; Preservation Consultant Robert Vogel was also in attendance.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Member Stegner moved to approve the meeting agenda. Member Moore seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. September 11, 2012

Member Stegner moved for approval of the Minutes from the September 11, 2012 meeting. Member Moore seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

B. October 1, 2012

Member Davis moved approval of the minutes from the October 1, 2012 meeting. Member Stegner seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

V. COMMUNITY COMMENT

Kitty O’Dea, 4610 Bruce Avenue – Country Club District Photo Inventory

Kitty O’Dea provided the board with an explanation of her motivation to create a photo inventory of the historic homes in the Country Club District, stating that in her opinion, the HPB’s interpretation of the Plan of Treatment has been subjective, inconsistent, and out of alignment with the City Council. She believes the board has been reliant on generic definitions rather than concrete examples of what exists in the neighborhood; resulting in the HPB’s decisions on new homes being appealed by the City Council. She added that it is her intent to create a photo database that is objective and a useful tool for homeowners, contractors and the HPB - ultimately making the COA process more objective, consistent and predictable.

Ms. O’Dea explained that the online database would be tied to the 1980 survey descriptions of homes in the District, and would provide the following benefits:

- Quick access to relevant homes for comparison
- Information available to the HPB, builders and property owners
- More efficient and less subjective COA decisions

Member Curran commented that she has been a member of the HPB for three years during which time three new homes received COA's in the District, and did not recall any of those decisions being appealed to the City Council. She then asked for more details on the appeals received by the City Council.

Planner Repya explained that since 2003, the HPB has issued 12 COA's for new homes in the Country Club District. The City Council has received appeals on three of those decisions. The most recent appeal was the only one approved by the Council. The appeals received on the other two homes also on Bruce Avenue (4608 and 4602), resulted in the Council upholding the HPB's approval but encouraging the HPB to clarify the process. As a result, in 2008, the Plan of Treatment processes were revised to provide more clarity.

Board members shared the following comments about the proposed photo database:

Member Mellom – Stated that a photo database could be useful; adding that she would also like to see photos of the street as well to provide context.

Member Stegner – Pointed out that to understand how the neighborhood evolved the HPB should not be dependent solely on the current photos - adding that the District has experienced many evolutions over the years – what exists currently, may not be “appropriate”.

Member Anger – Stated that since the HPB has a responsibility to the Country Club District, a photo database could be a useful tool – such a tool could also be helpful as we evaluate other neighborhoods in the city. However, the photos should not take the place of visiting a property to gain the “on the ground” perspective.

Member Sussman – Explained that he can see value in providing an accessible photo database that portrays what exists in the District today. However, research should be done to document the changes the properties have experienced over time, with an understanding that what is depicted in the photos is often not the original home. He suggested that standards for interpreting the information provided should be established particularly with respect to the extent that immediate properties weigh into the decision making process.

Member Davis – Commended Ms. O'Dea for volunteering to undertake the project of creating a photo database of the homes in the Country Club District; and cautioned that the database should only be used as a reference tool, and not as a means of establishing guidelines.

Member Moore – Agreed with Members Sussman and Davis, adding that the board should be cautious in the use of the database.

Member Good – Stated that she liked the idea of a photo database. Noting that as a student member of the board, photos of the homes would be very helpful.

Member Johnson – Agreed with Member Good, adding that the photo database would be a good educational tool.

Chair Carr – Recognized Ms. O'Dea's passion for the preservation of the Country Club District, and stated that she thought a photo database was a good idea – providing a useful tool to understand what

currently exists in the District. She added that the photo database concept could also be beneficial as the board evaluates a disaster management plan for the City's heritage landmark properties and districts.

Consultant Vogel explained that since the District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980, the HPB has evaluated and reevaluated how to classify the homes in the neighborhood – with the most recent reclassification taking place in 2003 when the local heritage landmark designation took place. Vogel appreciated the point made that current photos of the District's homes would not provide the context to the evolution of the neighborhood, and could be a useful tool to serve as a guide.

Mr. Vogel pointed out that the city does have historic photos of the District's homes from the old Assessor's record, dating back to about 1960. However, those photos are not currently available to the public, and it would be an enormous task to convert the paper files to a digital format. Mr. Vogel added that the board may want to refer to the National Park Service's Preservation Bulletin #17 entitled "Architectural Character – Identifying the Visual Aspects to Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving their Character" as another tool to use when evaluating projects in the future. However, Mr. Vogel reminded the Board that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards which provide the basis for the District's Plan of Treatment specifies that in-fill construction in a historic district (the new homes) shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment. The Standards discourage constructing replicas of historic homes.

A brief discussion ensued, after which Member Stegner moved to authorize Ms. O'Dea to undertake a photo database of homes in the Country Club District ultimately to be added to the resources available to HPB and the public. Member Mellom seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

VI. REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

A. COA Review Process Evaluation

Member Curran explained that since the last meeting she reviewed the current process for evaluating Certificate of Appropriateness applications and created a guide to aid discussing applications in the future. The guide, using the District's Plan of Treatment as an outline, included a summary of key discussion points calling out the following "Basics":

- Primary objective is the "preservation of the existing historic house facades and streetscapes."
- We follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties
- COAs are required for demolition and new construction of a home or detached garage
- Demolition is defined as altering
 - "50% or more of the surface area of all exterior walls...are removed", or
 - "50% or more of the principal roof structure is removed, changing it shape, pitch, or height", or
 - "a front porch, side porch, vestibule, dormer, chimney, attached garage, or porte-cochere is removed or destroyed"
- Demolition "does not include removal of existing siding, roofing, trim, fascia, soffit, eave, moldings, windows, and doors"

Ms. Curran went on to address the design review guidelines, suggesting the following pertinent comments by subject matter:

Size, Scale & Massing

- The design is "compatible in size, scale, massing, orientation, setback, color, and texture with historic Country Club homes
- The facade/design elements seem to be "architecturally similar to existing" Country Club homes and "visually relate to the historic facades of nearby homes"
- This entrance/porch "respects the rhythm and continuity" of similar features on nearby homes
- The roof pitch is consistent with existing homes
- The height of the home is "within 10% of the average height of existing homes on adjacent lots" or the "average of the block "

Exterior Finishes

- The home uses traditional materials - "horizontal lap siding, stucco, brick, false half-timbering, wood shakes or stone", as recommended by the Guidelines
- Hardi-Plank siding is appropriate in this case because there are similar houses on this street and because it appears in this case it "duplicates the size, shape, color, and texture" of traditional materials
- It is inappropriate to use aluminum/vinyl siding on the street side.

Mechanical Equipment

The solar equipment/air conditioner is concealed or in an inconspicuous location.

The equipment does not "detract from the historic facade and streetscapes".

Decks

The deck is fine even though it is contemporary because it is "not visible from the street"

Landscaping

- The planters/flower beds/fences are "visually compatible with the historic character of the district in size, scale, material, texture and color"
- The retaining wall is fine because it blends in with the historic street scape.

Impervious Surfaces

The homeowner is using a "permeable pavement system".

Garages (detached)

- This garage matches "the architectural style of the house" . . ." as well as the neighborhood"
- The design does a good job of "minimizing the visual impact" of the garage.
- It looks like the roofline of the a garage does not exceed the maximum height allowed (which is "10% of the average height of the existing garages on the adjacent lots, or the average of the block"

Driveways

This driveway is "compatible in width and material with the historic driveways"

There is no new curb cut.

Inappropriate Comments:

- I don't like the proposed design.
- In my view, the design is busy
- We approved Hardi-Plank on another street, so it should be ok here.
- The brick driveway is beautiful
- I'm ok with the front facing garage
- It's ok if the garage wall facing the street is longer than 16 feet.

Board members thanked Ms. Curran for her work on evaluating the COA process, agreeing that the Plan of Treatment should guide all decisions.

Planner Repya also provided some Plan of Treatment checklists that could potentially be used when evaluating applications for a COA. She wondered if a checklist would be helpful to the board by ensuring that they consider the important elements from the Plan of Treatment. Member Curran stated she was not a fan of checklists, and while they might be useful for staff when determining whether an application is complete, she would prefer Planner Repya call out the important elements in the staff report. Member Stegner commented that he would like to use a checklist as a fact sheet rather than having to wade through the text of a report; adding that ultimately the goal is to ensure that the best construction possible is provided.

Member Anger cautioned that as the COA process is evaluated it not become more complicated. Since the review standards established in the Plan of Treatment are not qualitative, open discussions are necessary and perhaps some re-training should be considered.

Consultant Vogel observed that over time the Country Club District has evolved into a very different place from its early days. Although planned as a distinctive, upscale neighborhood, by the 1960's many of the properties were 40 years old and had not been well maintained as evidenced by results from a survey conducted by the City's Assessing department. Mr. Vogel added that decisions being made today are changing the evolution of the area – and while the properties are being reshaped, with the guidance of the Plan of Treatment, the area will continue to be distinctive and maintain its historic integrity.

Chair Carr thanked Member Curran for her work on evaluating the COA process and added that the discussion had been very helpful toward raising the bar and improving the process for evaluating COA requests. Member Curran suggested that it might be helpful for the board to have the District's Plan of Treatment on a laminated sheet (much like the Code of Ethics) which could be used for easy reference during meetings. Board members agreed that would be a helpful tool. No formal action was taken.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Heritage Education

Chair Carr reported that she, Members Sussman, Stegner and Planner Repya met with Jennifer Bennerotte, the City's Communication's Director and Scott Denfeld, the City's Cable Coordinator to discuss producing a video highlighting Edina's heritage preservation program which was a topic that was brought up with the City Council at the joint work session last June. At the meeting, Ms. Bennerotte explained that she and her team had been discussing how to best highlight the heritage preservation program in a video format and suggested rather than producing one 25 minute video, perhaps a series of 2 - 5 minute clips each highlighting a different aspect of the preservation program would be preferable. Ms. Carr pointed out that she liked Ms. Bennerotte's suggestion, noting that a longer video might not be as well received as the shorter clips which could have a monthly run and provide new and pertinent information relative to the work of the HPB. The project as proposed would include a host whom Ms. Bennerotte's team would find, who would present the information. The cost of production would be about \$500 per clip, and could potentially be funded through sponsorships.

Board members briefly discussed the concept of a series of short video clips, agreeing that they liked the concept which would be preferable to one longer video.

Chair Carr added that in addition to the proposed video clips, an HPB presence on the City's Facebook page was discussed. Ms. Carr explained that she experimented with posting a photo of The Baird House and the Browndale Bridge with brief explanations and a link to the HPB pages of the City's web site on her Facebook page. Ms. Carr also provided a schedule that would provide for the posting of one historic property per month. The Facebook concept was well received by Ms. Bennerotte who stated that it could be easily implemented and would not be limited to once a month. Ms. Bennerotte also suggested that to generate interest in Heritage Preservation through Facebook, the Board could ask questions that would be answered, thus engaging the public.

Member Stegner pointed out that providing information on buildings in Edina that are no longer standing could generate interest with the public; showing a building and asking "Do you know where this lost building stood, and what took its place?" Board members agreed with Mr. Stegner.

Ms. Carr concluded that in addition to the video clip concept and an active presence on the City's Facebook page, there was also mention of potentially implementing a "Waymarking" program which operates somewhat like "Geocaching" where locations within the community can be located on one's phone through GPS. However, the biggest difference is with Geocaching, at each site the participants are looking for an object that is either buried or hidden, whereas with the Waymarking program information on the locations identified is provided. Ms. Carr added that the Waymarking program could potentially be coordinated with the Historical Society and the City's Parks program.

B. Grant Programs Available

Chair Carr explained that during the State Preservation Conference there was an interesting session provided which outlined the various grant programs available to cities which are facilitated by the State Preservation Office. Planner Repya provided board members with a print out from the session which identified the types of grants available and the projects that could be funded. Edina's HPB has found that the CLG Grants funded through the National Park Service have been best vehicle for funding both inventory and research projects over the past decade. Now also available are Minnesota Historical & Cultural Heritage Grants (also known as Legacy or Fast Track Grants). These grants fund smaller projects up to \$7,000, do not require the city to provide a cash match, and have rolling deadlines for a more streamlined review process. The HPB has recently applied for a Legacy Grant to supplement the Mid-Century Modern Historic Context Study CLG grant, but has yet to receive a decision on the request.

Ms. Carr asked if a historic marker program to identify Edina's heritage landmark properties could qualify for grant funds. Consultant Vogel opined that rather than employing a historic marker program, he believed a virtual interpretation program would reach more people and provide more information on

the historic sites. He added that cities that have utilized a historic marker program have had problems with additional signs cluttering the right of way, becoming more of a distraction.

C. Preservation Conference Sessions

1. Sustainability/Kirkbride State Hospital

2. Preservation Marketing

Chair Carr explained that the Preservation Conference sessions were discussed at the October 1st meeting of the HPB. At the Board's request, Ms. Repya provided information in this meeting packet on both the Sustainability session as well as the Preservation Marketing session. Board members thanked Ms. Repya for the information, adding that it will be helpful to them in future efforts to expand the scope of Edina's preservation program.

D. Mid-Century Modern Historic Context Study – Progress Report

Consultant Vogel shared the current status of the project pointing out that since the study's time period was the era when the City grew the most, there are copious amounts of records and materials to evaluate; and what is most important is to determine what properties in that context are threatened, and focus on those. He pointed out that he and his staff are looking forward to doing the bulk of the property survey work during the winter months which are most conducive for that type of activity. The initial commercial focus will be in the 494/Hwy. 100 portion to include the industrial properties on the west side of Hwy. 100, and Pentagon Office Park on the east side of Hwy. 100. The City benefited greatly from the development of those properties due to the resulting 1954 tax revenue stream, which up until then, had been a non-existent form of revenue for Edina.

Mr. Vogel concluded that in January a preliminary property inventory reflecting the context will be available. Board members thanked Mr. Vogel for his report and stated that they looked forward to learning more about Mid-Century Edina.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE & PETITIONS - None

CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Chair Carr

- 1. Joint Meeting with the Planning Commission** - Ms. Carr reported that she had a discussion with Floyd Grabel, the Chair of the Planning Commission and they both agreed that the City's heritage preservation program is governed by the Zoning Ordinance, and the mission of both groups coincide. Mr. Grabel and she agreed that a joint meeting with the HPB and Planning Commission sometime after the first of the year would be beneficial to both groups. Board members agreed with Ms. Carr, and stated that they look forward to an upcoming meeting.
- 2. State National Register Archaeologist, David Mather to attend December HPB meeting** – Ms. Carr reported that while at the State Preservation Conference, she struck up a

conversation with David Mather, one of the State's Archaeologists. She asked Mr. Mather if he would be interested in attending one of the HPB meetings to provide the board with more detailed information on how archaeology fits in with the overall mission of Edina's preservation plan. Fortunately, Mr. Mather has found that the December 11th meeting will work well with his schedule. Board members stated that they looked forward to hearing from Mr. Mather.

Member Mellom

- I. **125th Quasquicentennial House Tour** – Ms. Mellom was pleased to announce that her home at 4505 Arden Avenue will represent the Country Club District as one of the three private homes to be open to the public for the 125th Anniversary Home Tour on September 15, 2013. She added that the other two homes will be the George Baird House on W. 50th Street and a Morningside Bungalow. Board members shared their interest in the upcoming tour and commended Ms. Mellom for opening her home to the event.

VI. STAFF COMMENTS - None

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE November 13, 2012

IX. ADJOURNMENT 8:40 p.m.

Member Curran moved the meeting be adjourned at 8:40 p.m. Member Davis seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

**Respectfully submitted,
Joyce Repya**