

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
EDINA HERITAGE PRESERVATION BOARD  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2007, AT 7:00 P.M.  
EDINA CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM  
4801 WEST 50<sup>TH</sup> STREET**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Vice Chairman Marie Thorpe, Chris Rofidal, Arlene Forrest, Laura Benson, Karen Ferrara, Nancy Scherer, Lou Blemaster, Sara Rubin

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Bob Kojetin

**STAFF PRESENT:** Joyce Repya, Associate Planner

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Robert Vogel, Preservation Consultant  
Dan Dulas, 4609 Bruce Ave.  
Jean Rehkamp Larson, 4628 Arden Ave.  
Bright Dornblaser, 4630 Drexel Ave.

**New Member Introduction:** Vice Chairman Marie Thorpe welcomed the newest member to the Heritage Preservation Board, Sara Rubin. Sara, a Junior at Edina High School represents the student population on the Board. The Board members introduced themselves to Sara and shared how pleased they were to have her as their newest member.

**I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: January 9, 2007**

Member Scherer moved approval of the Minutes from the January 9, 2007 meeting. Member Rofidal seconded the motion. Member Forrest asked to clarify her comments when the minutes were approved last month, pointing out that they should convey that “Member Forrest questioned whether it was appropriate to conduct additional business, including approval of minutes, at the special meeting on December 7<sup>th</sup>.” Members Scherer and Rofidal agreed to amend the motion to reflect Member Forrest’s correction. All voted aye. The motion carried.

**I. COUNTRY CLUB DISTRICT – DESIGN REVIEW:**

Consultant Vogel reminded the Board that City Code §850.20 requires that the HPB include a “plan of treatment...with guidelines for design review and specific recommendations for preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction” as part of each Heritage Landmark nomination (Subd. 4-D). The ordinance also states that HPB design review decisions for Certificates of Appropriateness “shall

be based on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, the Comprehensive Heritage Preservation Plan, and the heritage landmark preservation study for each designated property” (Subd. 10-C). The Plan of Treatment that was approved by the City Council when the Country Club District was designated a Heritage Landmark District (City Council Resolution No. 2003-16) lays out the official protocol for dealing with “teardowns” and references a document titled, “Guidelines for New Home Construction in the Edina Country Club District,” which was adopted at the time of the landmark designation. Both the plan of treatment and the new home guidelines follow the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, which state (in part):

New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment [Standard No. 9]

Furthermore, Mr. Vogel added that the Secretary of the Interior’s standards state that:

New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired [Standard No. 10].

The Secretary of the Interior has also issued guidelines for applying the rehabilitation standards which pertain to historic districts as well as to individual buildings and sites that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Unlike the standards for rehabilitation, the Secretary of the Interior’s guidelines are not codified as National Register program requirements but are non-prescriptive and intended to provide general guidance for those involved in the design review process.

Mr. Vogel pointed out that recent events have illustrated three inherent conflicts between the city’s zoning code and the application of heritage preservation standards in the Country Club District:

- 1) The current zoning code allows significantly more building coverage per lot than was intended by the Country Club District’s original developer and homeowners. Several property owners have argued that allowing a new home (or an old home with additions) to cover 25-30% of its lot with building mass is not appropriate in the district because these large homes are incompatible with the massing, size, and scale of the older homes. The counter argument is that the bigger homes allow “an efficient contemporary use” of private property while preserving the historic integrity

- of the district as a planned residential community composed of houses of varying ages, sizes, and styles.
- 2) Driveway width is a persistent planning and zoning issue in the Country Club District, where most older homes were not designed to accommodate multiple vehicles with off-street parking. This may not be a preservation issue at all, per se, but it certainly has an impact on the appearance of the homes in the district. The original covenants and zoning regulations (pre-1950) do not address driveway width and the only relevant heritage preservation standard is the one dealing with architectural compatibility. The 1980 National Register nomination, on which the 2003 Heritage Landmark designation was based, does not mention driveways or other landscape features in either the description of the district or the statement of significance.
  - 3) The plan of treatment that was approved by the City Council in 2003 allows for the demolition of homes in the district (that are not individually designed as heritage landmarks) and provides direction for the design of replacement homes. (The HPB originally proposed that a COA would not be approved for demolition of any historic home—i.e., a residence built between 1922 and circa 1950—except in “extraordinary circumstances” involving public health or safety issues; this recommendation was watered down to: “The removal or alteration of any contributing historic building or feature should be avoided whenever possible” [No. 6])

Mr. Vogel clarified that if the conflicts are to be resolved, the City will need to amend its policies and procedures. The proposed re-survey of the Country Club District will provide important data relating to lot coverage and driveway configuration—until these data are in hand, the HPB should not recommend any changes in either the zoning code or the plan of treatment.

With respect to the demolition of historic homes, Mr. Vogel observed that the Board is currently in a position to advise the City Council to adopt a change in policy by amending the plan of treatment to explicitly prohibit tear-downs of historic homes that meet the ordinance definition for “heritage resource”. Using the original Country Club survey as the baseline of data on historic homes in the district, every property evaluated as contributing to the historic character of the neighborhood (i.e., those houses identified as “pivotal” and “complimentary” in the 1980 National Register nomination form) would be treated as a heritage resource worthy of preservation. Assuming that these houses represent a defining characteristic of the district, the Secretary of the Interior’s Standard for Rehabilitation (No. 2) would be applied whenever the Board reviewed a Certificate of Appropriateness application for demolition. The standard reads as follows:

The historic character of a property [in this case, the Country Club District] shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

In closing, Mr. Vogel explained that by adopting a policy with stronger language on tear-downs, the City would effectively eliminate the demolition of houses in the Country Club District that were built before 1950—in order to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of a heritage resource, an applicant would need to show that the subject property was in deteriorated condition, represented a public health/safety hazard, or had been so significantly altered from its historic appearance that it no longer qualified as a heritage resource. Tear-downs of houses that were not heritage resources would be allowed, subject to the Secretary of the Interior's standards and the plan of treatment.

Member Scherer asked if the proposed change to the plan of treatment would also address the issue of additions in the district. Mr. Vogel responded that additions should also be addressed, however until the re-survey of the district is complete, the Board does not have the baseline information relative to what currently exists from which to base a decision.

Member Rofidal asked how the proposed amendment would affect the teardown and new construction of detached garages which has been the bulk of the work the Board has addressed thus far. Mr. Vogel clarified that the change would only address the homes, not detached garages.

Member Forrest observed that the proposed change to the plan of treatment could be opening the door to more extensive remodeling projects in lieu of a teardown. The Board agreed and stressed the importance of addressing additions once the survey data was available.

Member Forrest then moved to adopt a policy to clarify the plan of treatment for the Country Club District to determine if the tear down of homes built prior to 1951 should be considered ineligible for a Certificate of Appropriateness. Member Scherer seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

### **III. COUNTRY CLUB DISTRICT – RE-SURVEY PROGRESS REPORT:**

Consultant Vogel reported on the progress his firm had made on the re-survey of the Country Club District since the work commenced at the first of the year. Thus far, the following work has been completed:

- Compiling background information on the district;
- Review of 1980 survey and National register documents;
- Classification of homes in the district; and
- Winnowing the inventory – historic vs. not historic

Addressing the “winnowing of the inventory”, the Board agreed that by using the historic window for the Country Club District of 1920 – 1950 (as identified in the Historic Context Study for the City), that provides good justification to support the amendment they previously voted to recommend to the plan of treatment regarding tear downs in the district.

Regarding the survey work to be undertaken in February, Mr. Vogel explained that he will begin a detailed inspection of each property identified as “pivotal” in the 1980 inventory database to determine whether any of those properties meet the eligibility criteria for individual designation as Edina Heritage Landmarks. He added that he hopes to start the volunteers working on assembling and organizing the existing inventory files.

Mr. Vogel further suggested that as a preliminary step, to conduct at least a cursory check of current aerial photographs and recent building permit files to improve the understanding of the extent of large additions to older homes in the district. Board members agreed that they would be happy to participate in the research and organization

Member Rofidal asked how the neighborhood would be notified about the resurvey work taking place in the district. All agreed that a notice should be placed in the Sun Current as well as a letter from the board to all property owners in the district. Planner Repya stated that she would work with Jennifer Bennerotte, the City’s Communications Director to make sure that a notice is published in the Sun Current as well as mailed to the residents. No formal action was taken.

#### **IV. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ’s):**

The revised and updated list of FAQ’s from January’s meeting was presented to the Board for their final review. All agreed that they met their expectations. Member Scherer moved to adopt the Frequently Asked Questions and post them on the Heritage Preservation section of the City’s web site. Member Blemaster seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

#### **V. OTHER BUSINESS:**

##### **1. Joint Meeting with Eden Prairie HPB**

Consultant Vogel explained that the Eden Prairie Heritage Preservation Board has expressed an interest in a joint meeting with the Edina HPB at the end of 2007. He pointed out that both cities share common interests and concerns relative to heritage preservation and a joint meeting would be beneficial for all.

Board members agreed with Mr. Vogel and expressed their interest in scheduling a meeting later in the year. No formal action was taken.

## **2. HPB Board Members Identified on the City's Web Site**

Member Forrest recalled that at the last meeting Board members agreed to post their email addresses as well as their names on the City's web site. However, she noticed that the addresses had not been posted. Planner Repya explained that it is City policy to post only the names of all board and commission members on the web site.

## **3. Browndale Bridge and Edina Mill Site**

Planner Repya explained that she received a letter from the Minnesota State Historical Society in which they endorsed the proposed Edina Heritage Landmark designation of the Browndale Bridge and Edina Mill Site. Both designations are now ready to proceed to the Planning Commission for their input and then on to the City Council for their final consideration.

Consultant Vogel suggested presenting the proposed designations to the Planning Commission at their April 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, with the final stop at the City Council on May 15<sup>th</sup>, which would be perfect timing since May is Preservation Month. The Board agreed that the April 25<sup>th</sup> and May 15<sup>th</sup> meetings would be a good idea. No formal action was taken.

## **4. Marie Thorpe's Last Meeting**

Marie Thorpe shared with the Board that this would be her last meeting with the Heritage Preservation Board. She explained that it is a City regulation that residents may only serve on one board or commission. Currently, she serves on both the Heritage Preservation Board and the Transportation Commission. Moving forward, she will remain on the Transportation Commission and a new member will be appointed to the Heritage Preservation Board. Board members expressed their disappointment that they would be losing Ms. Thorpe from their ranks and they wished her the best in the future.

## **VI. CONCERN OF RESIDENTS:**

### **Bright Dornblaser – 4630 Drexel Avenue**

Mr. Dornblaser stated that he had listened to all the business transacted by the Board during the meeting, and he liked what he heard. He then asked if his neighbor's kitchen addition on the rear of their home should have been reviewed by the Heritage Preservation Board. Board members explained that a certificate of appropriateness and review by the Heritage Preservation Board is not required

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for an addition to a home. They also thanked him for taking an interest in the preservation of the Country Club District.

**Jean Rehkamp Larson – 4628 Arden Avenue**

Ms. Rehkamp Larson introduced herself to the Board - explained that she had submitted an application to serve on the HPB, and expressed her interest in becoming a board member.

**VII. NEXT MEETING DATE: March 13, 2007**

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT 9:25 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

*Joyce Repya*