

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EDINA HERITAGE PRESERVATION BOARD
TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 2007, AT 7:00 P.M.
EDINA CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
4801 WEST 50TH STREET**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Bob Kojetin, Chris Rofidal, Laura Benson, Nancy Scherer, Lou Blemaster, Connie Fukuda, Jean Rehkamp Larson, and Sara Rubin

MEMBERS ABSENT: Karen Ferrara

STAFF PRESENT: Joyce Repya, Associate Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: Robert Vogel, Preservation Consultant
Kitty O’Dea, 4610 Bruce Avenue

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: March 13, 2007

Member Rofidal moved approval of the Minutes from the March 13, 2007 meeting. Member Scherer seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

II. COUNTRY CLUB DISTRICT – RE-SURVEY PROGRESS REPORT:

Consultant Vogel reported that during the month of March, information was compiled about the architectural history of garages in general, as well as data on the types of garages that were built in the Country Club district during its period of historical significance. He explained that some of the more interesting “tidbits” include:

- Purpose-built garages first appeared soon after the invention of the automobile (before 1910, most cars were stored in horse stables or sheds) – the word itself is French, from *garer*, which originally meant “to put something in a place where it will be protected” but by late 1800’s was commonly used to describe a covered place used to shelter railroad cars
- The first architect-designed automobile garage for a single family residence appears to have been built in 1912; the architect who designed it referred to the structure as “a new type of outbuilding” similar to the traditional carriage house
- The “up-and-over” folding garage door was invented in 1921 and the first electric garage door opener appeared on the market in 1926
- From old photographs, it appears that the first generation of detached garages in the Country Club District were anything but “carriage houses”—

- the great majority appear to have been quite basic and utilitarian, really little more than undecorated sheds designed to protect an automobile from the elements
- According to trade magazines, attached or semi-attached garages first appeared in home built during the 1920's but were still rarely seen in new construction until after World War II
 - The front-loading "tuck-under" attached garage was widely touted in home builder magazines published in the 1940's as a construction cost-saving innovation, as well as a modern convenience that also saved space in the backyard
 - Prefabricated garages and mail-order garage plans have been available since the early 1900's ("garage kits" began appearing in the Sears catalog around 1928), but they did not enjoy widespread popularity until the 1950's
 - Two-car garages were not the norm for new home construction in the Twin Cities until the late 1960's—judging from newspaper ads, some home builders continued to offer single-stall garages right up until the early 1970's
 - According to studies by urban anthropologists and the home remodeling industry, the typical suburban family usually cannot store all of its personal vehicles in their garage (particularly if it was built prior to 1960), while roughly 1/3 of all the *attached* garages built before 1970 have been converted to dens, game rooms, and other living space; sociological research also strongly supports the conventional notion that as the kitchen is the domain of women, garages are male strongholds with their own distinctive social life and etiquette

As the re-survey progresses, several historical and architectural themes have been discovered that were not recognized in the 1980 National Register registration document or subsequent local history publications. For example, it appears that the original development plan for the district placed more emphasis on landscape features and streetscape qualities than had been previously understood. It is also now apparent that the houses in the district are characterized by two major phases of development, the first in the late 1920's, with another pulse of building in the late 1930's and 1940's; each cycle of home building appears to be represented by distinctive kinds of houses in different parts of the district.

Mr. Vogel added that preparations are being made for members of the HPB to more actively participate in the survey by recording information about the physical development of individual homes based on property tax assessment data. Volunteers and city staff are also expected to play a critical role in the review and organization of survey data as the survey progresses.

Discussion ensued regarding the upcoming work of the Board. All agreed that a work session before the regular HPB meeting fits well with their schedules.

Planner Repya agreed to schedule time prior to the May 8th meeting when the Board can receive training on how to fill in the property information cards. No formal action was taken.

III. COUNTRY CLUB DISTRICT – Moratorium on Demolitions:

Planner Repya reported that the joint meeting with the City Council on Tuesday, April 3rd went very well. The Council was supportive of the work the HPB has outlined for the coming year. There was also consensus that the policy to restrict the teardown of a home in the Country Club District built prior to 1951 was a step in the right direction.

There was agreement that until the research of the Country Club District is complete, the Plan of Treatment should not be changed – the rationale being that once the re-survey is complete; in addition to the teardown issue, subjects such as driveways, grading, etc., should also be addressed. That being the case....the Council agreed it would be wise to put a moratorium in place for the teardown of homes in the District built prior to 1951.

Members Kojetin, Rofidal and Rehkamp-Larson, commented that they were pleased with the dialogue....the City Council members appeared very supportive and appreciative of the HPB initiatives.

Ms. Repya then presented the proposed ordinance addressing the moratorium for the Board to review; explaining that City Manager, Gordon Hughes is planning on presenting the proposed moratorium to the City Council at their next meeting, on April 17th. Discussion ensued regarding the proposed ordinance. The response of the Board was positive, however, there was confusion with the definition of the term “Demolition”:

Demolition means: (1) to tear down or remove any part of the front street façade of a dwelling, or (2) to remove and replace the roof structure that changes the pitch of the roof, or (3) to tear down more than 50% of the dwelling.

Some felt that item #1 addressing the front street facade was not clear and may be difficult to administer. Some questions that were raised include: What is controlled? How will the review be administered? What if a building permit is not required – who will oversee this? Member Benson suggested that language be added to identify those changes that would require a building or demolition permit.

Member Scherer observed that the language in this ordinance is only for the period of the moratorium. After the survey is complete, the Plan of Treatment will be revised to reflect both the results of the survey as well as the activity in the District over the moratorium period.

Planner Repya stated that she will share the Board's concerns and comments with the City Attorney and Planning Staff as they work on fine tuning the proposed ordinance prior to presenting it to the City Council.

IV. PRESERVATION MONTH – 2007 Preservation Award:

Planner Repya explained that thus far one nomination for the 2007 Heritage Award has been received for the Ralph Rapson house at 4729 Annaway Drive. The deadline for nominations is Friday, April 13th. Robert Vogel added that a second nomination is forthcoming for the Sly House at 6128 Brookview Avenue.

Member Blemaster stated that she understands that the current owner of the Rapson property, while very flattered, currently does not have the time to address the award. However, Ms. Blemaster has spoken with Jodi Peterson, the former owner of the home, who was responsible for the renovation project. Ms. Peterson has offered to arrange a tour of the home for the HPB with the current owner. All agreed that would be important. Planner Repya cautioned that the timing for the presentation of the award on May 15th is very short, and since it is important that the owner of the property be part of the process perhaps that should be taken into consideration with this nomination.

General discussion ensued. Chairman Kojetin offered to contact the owners of the Sly House to further discuss the Heritage Award. No formal action was taken.

V. RECENT LEGISLATIVE ACTION: - Historic Preservation Tax Credit

Consultant Vogel provided an update on the status of the Historic Preservation Tax Credit bill (SF 385), explaining that the bill was left out of the Omnibus Tax Bill passed by the Senate Tax Committee last week, but may be included in the House's Omnibus Tax Bill (see HF 1240). Edina's Ron Erhardt is NOT one of the bill's cosponsors, but is a member of the House Tax Committee – his stance on the tax credit legislation is not clear.

Vogel pointed out that the proposed state tax credit would provide a 25% state income tax credit for qualified historic rehabilitation projects involving historic commercial and residential properties.

He added that the Federal investment tax credit (ITC) that has been on the books since the 1970s provides a 20% income tax credit for rehabilitation of income-producing properties. The projects must be certified by the state historic preservation officers and, of course, most also meet the requirements of the IRS. The Historic Homeowners Assistance Act has been introduced in Congress but never had a vote -- it would extend the commercial property ITC to residential properties.

Generally, properties qualify for the preservation tax incentives (state and federal) if they are listed in the National Register or are located in a locally designated historic district. Vogel further stated that as he understands the proposal, Minnesota tax credit legislation would apply to individually designated heritage landmarks in cities that are Certified Local Governments.

Board members thanked Mr. Vogel for the information and expressed a desire to be kept up to date on the legislation. They added that if a letter of support from the Board would be advisable, they would be in favor providing that. Vogel stated that he would keep the Board posted. No formal action was taken.

VI. NATIONAL TRUST CONFERENCE – Field Session Planning:

Consultant Vogel explained that on May 15th he will take the staff of the National Trust on a dry run of the Edina tour which will be offered as part of their National Conference on October 4th. The tour should take approximately 3 hours, and once he receives feedback from the Trust, he will bring their reactions back to the HPB. Chairman Kojetin expressed an interest in joining the dry run on May 15th. The Board agreed that they looked forward to showcasing historic Edina to the National Trust conference. No formal action was taken.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS:

Comprehensive Plan Update – Member Rofidal advised the Board that the City is in the midst of updating the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, and as part of the process, providing workshop opportunities for Edina residents to add their input. Rofidal stated that he has attended two workshops thus far and was surprised at the low attendance. He encouraged his fellow Board members to be part of the planning process by attending the remaining workshops.

Planner Repya thanked Member Rofidal for his announcement, and explained that the date for the next workshop had not been set; however, when that information is available, she offered to keep the HPB advised. Board members thanked Member Rofidal for the information and expressed an interest in being kept in the loop.

VIII. CONCERN OF RESIDENTS:

Kitty O’Dea – 4610 Bruce Avenue provided the following comments:

- She thanked the Board for taking a stance on the tear down of homes in the Country Club District by proposing the moratorium on demolitions.
- She offered assistance from the Country Club neighborhood on work involved with the survey of the neighborhood.
- She expressed frustration with the construction of the home to her north (4608 Bruce Avenue); explaining that the materials being used, while

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consistent with what was on the plans, look different than what was expected. She asked the Board to consider “expectation management”, addressing a better explanation of building terminology to the lay person.

Chairman Kojetin thanked Ms. O’Dea for her comments and explained that the Board would take them under advisement.

IX. CORRESPONDENCE: None

X. NEXT MEETING DATE: May 8, 2007 (5:00 p.m. for survey work session)

XI. ADJOURNMENT 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Repya