

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EDINA HERITAGE PRESERVATION BOARD
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2009, AT 7:00 PM
EDINA CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
4801 WEST 50TH STREET**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Chris Rofidal, Arlene Forrest,
Bob Kojetin, Jean Rehkamp Larson, Joel Stegner,
Bob Schwartzbauer, Connie Fukuda, and Lou Blemaster

MEMBERS ABSENT: Elizabeth Montgomery

STAFF PRESENT: Joyce Repya, Associate Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: Robert Vogel, HPB Consultant

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: September 8, 2009

Member Forrest moved approval of the minutes from the September 8, 2009 HPB meeting. Member Schwartzbauer seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

II. 4505 ARDEN AVENUE: Prospective Owner Requesting HPB Opinion

Planner Repya explained that the home at 4505 Arden Avenue is for sale and a prospective buyer is interested in the property if the home can be torn down and rebuilt. The buyer would like to discuss the status of the property to determine whether the project is worth pursuing. Scott Busyn with Great Neighborhood homes representing the buyer has researched the condition of the property and will present the results of his research.

As background, Ms. Repya explained that the home, a Tudor style, was constructed in 1926, thus is considered an historic resource as defined by the District's Plan of Treatment. In 1938 a flat-roofed addition was built above the existing attached garage. Then in 1948, the attached garage was converted to living space and a new attached garage with a flat-roof was built abutting the original garage.

Ms. Repya reminded the Board that the Country Club District's Plan of Treatment stipulates that no historic resource (built between 1924 – 1944) will be approved for demolition unless it is shown that the subject property no longer contributes to the historical significance of the District because its historic integrity has been compromised by deterioration, damage or by inappropriate additions or alterations.

Ms. Repya pointed out that an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to change the historic resource status of the home has not been submitted. As established in the new Certificate of Appropriateness procedures, the prospective buyer and Mr. Busyn are requesting the opinion of board members.

Scott Busyn, Great Neighborhood Homes, 5018 Arden Avenue

Mr. Busyn explained that he was representing Tim and Michele Pronley, 4515 Arden Avenue who have entered into a purchase agreement for the subject home. The Pronleys have done a wonderful renovation of their current home – they love the neighborhood, yet find the need for a larger home for their family.

Regarding the subject home, Mr. Busyn explained that while the home was built in 1926 making it an historic resource, and at first glance has a Tudor façade that is representative of a Country Club home; in his opinion, everything behind the façade would warrant declassifying the home as an historic resource. Supporting this contention, Mr. Busyn explained that he has looked at the home with a professional builder and documented the numerous deficiencies they identified. In addition to the two inappropriate, flat-roofed additions to the rear of the home which appear as two cubes (visible from the front street), Mr. Busyn provided photographic evidence and explained the deficiencies in the following areas:

1. Structural damage and deterioration
2. Safety Issues/Non-compliance with City Building Code
3. Inappropriate Alterations and Additions
4. Inappropriate Landscaping/Lack of Impervious Surface and Drainage
5. Unsafe Living Conditions/Indoor Air Quality Issues
6. Energy Inefficiency

In closing, Mr. Busyn stated that as demonstrated by the evaluation of the home he provided, the home at 4505 Arden Avenue no longer contributes to the historic significance of the Country Club District because its historic integrity has been compromised by deterioration, damage and inappropriate additions and alterations.

Michele Pronley, 4515 Arden Avenue (prospective buyer)

Ms. Pronley explained that her family loves living on Arden Avenue, and while they find they need a larger home, they don't want to move away from the block. She pointed out that the state of the subject home has deteriorated to the point that they feel it is necessary to tear it down and start over. That being said, preserving the streetscape and neighborhood is very important. Ms. Pronley pointed out that their goal is to build a home that would fit into the neighborhood and would not stand out as a new home. She acknowledged that there is some neighborhood opposition, but wanted the Board to know that they approached Mr. Busyn with the best of intentions.

Addressing those opposed to the proposal, Ms. Pronley explained that it is not her

intention to upset the historic nature of the neighborhood; however she and her husband believe that the deterioration of 4505 Arden Avenue has reached a point that renovation is too expensive.

Chair Rofidal announced that the Board received an amicus brief opinion from Joyce Mellom, 4506 Arden Avenue that addressed this issue. He then provided an opportunity for public comment.

Neighborhood Comments:

Joyce Mellom, 4506 Arden Avenue - Ms. Mellom stated that she is opposed to a tear down of 4505 Arden Avenue which she believes to be a beautiful home, representative of the historic Country Club District. She added that just because the home is in need of extensive repairs, that isn't unusual for an 80 year old home – which she knows first-hand, having made extensive repairs to her own home.

Ms. Mellom stressed that the Country Club District was zoned historic to protect the homes from exactly what Mr. Busyn is proposing. She then asked the Board to protect the historic integrity of 4505 Arden Avenue by not allowing it to be torn down.

Ed Hancock, 4503 Arden Avenue - Mr. Hancock explained that he has lived next door to the subject home for 20 years and has been distressed with living next door for 20 years due to the condition of the property. He opined that the home does not have potential to contribute to the historic neighborhood and added that he endorsed the construction of a new home on the site.

Lisa Fittipaldi, 4502 Arden Avenue - Ms. Fittipaldi observed that there is no doubt that 4505 Arden Avenue needs work. When she moved into her home, it too needed a lot of work, as do most 80 year old home. She pointed out that there is nothing historic about the back of the house due to the additions that were made, however, she asked the HPB to preserve the original home by not allowing it to be torn down.

Carol Hancock, 4503 Arden Avenue - Ms. Hancock voiced concern that a tear down and construction of a new home at 4505 Arden Avenue would cause wear and tear on her home that is directly to the north. She also inquired as to what would be considered a tear down – pointing out that the two additions to the rear of the home don't appear appropriate and it would seem reasonable to remove them since they aren't part of the historic home.

Steve Lundberg, 4517 Arden Avenue - Mr. Lundberg opined that he is not philosophically opposed to removing the home at 4505 Arden Avenue. He is opposed to being slavish to preserving homes just because they are old if they prove to be sub-standard. He added that Mr. Busyn has proven that he can build quality homes; and added that he has come to enjoy the new homes recently built in the District.

Consultant Vogel's Opinion:

Consultant Vogel observed that the home at 4505 Arden Avenue is an historic resource in the Country Club District because it was built during the period of significance (1924 – 1944). Having toured the home with Chair Rofidal and Planner

Repya, Vogel pointed out that the major problems with the home appear to be caused by the extensive additions to the rear. Mr. Vogel pointed out that even with a plan to only remove the additions, because they may make up more than 50% of the exterior wall surfaces, a Certificate of Appropriateness could be required.

Addressing the impact of economic feasibility on decisions of the Board, Mr. Vogel explained that while decisions are not based on the economics of a project, common sense should prevail in evaluating whether such an impact is creating an unnecessary or undue hardship.

Mr. Vogel continued by suggesting that the Board require Mr. Busyn has a registered architect or structural engineer certify his assertion that the whole house is uninhabitable and suffers from diminished historic integrity.

Board Member Opinions:

Member Rehkamp Larson - Ms. Rehkamp Larson explained that in her experience as an architect, code deficiencies found in historic homes are not required to be brought into compliance. She added that the Plan of Treatment would allow for a significant transformation of the interior of the home, while maintaining the historic exterior. Ms. Rehkamp Larson then advised Mr. Busyn that in her opinion, if he chose to pursue a tear down of 4505 Arden Avenue, the burden of proof that the home should no longer be classified an historic resource must be very high.

Member Forrest - Ms. Forrest agreed with Member Rehkamp Larson stating that the District's Plan of Treatment sets out an arduous process and requires that an incredibly heavy burden of proof must be provided to declassify a heritage resource. She pointed out that the District's plan does provide for a shell of a home to remain without tearing the house down – adding that the greenest building is an existing building.

Ms. Forrest stated that she lives in a home that was built in 1886, and knows that the maintenance entailed is a matter of priorities, and simply the reality of owning an older home. Ms Forrest added that economics should not enter into the decision as to whether a historic resource in the District should be declassified.

Member Stegner - Mr. Stegner observed that he would like to see an evaluation of the deterioration of the home with respect to its health and safety - pointing out that in his mind, health and safety should supersede preservation.

Member Fukuda - Ms. Fukuda stated that she agreed with Members Rehkamp Larson and Forrest that the burden of proof supporting the necessity to declassify the historic resource status of the home at 4505 Arden Avenue remains very high.

Member Kojetin - Mr. Kojetin stated that he believes 4505 Arden Avenue fits well into the neighborhood, and that neglect is not a reason to justify the tear down of the home. He pointed out that the exterior façade of the home is very important, and if the owner wants to gut the house, remove the additions on the rear and totally renovate the interior of the home, there is a process in place to allow that.

Member Schwartzbauer - Mr. Schwartzbauer stated that he believes that the economic feasibility of a project should enter into the decision making process, stressing that economic realities are part of the balancing act of heritage preservation. He added that it appears that the additions to the rear of the home are inappropriate and should be removed and rebuilt, yet it is not fair to have a different standard for the front of the house.

Member Blemaster - Ms. Blemaster explained that she can see both sides of the issue, however believes that restoration would be preferable. She added that it is the responsibility of the Heritage Preservation Board to preserve the historic neighborhood. Furthermore, it is simply a fact that historic homes cost more money.

Chairman Rofidal - Mr. Rofidal thanked the Board for offering their opinions on Mr. Busyn's proposal to tear down the home. He explained that the Board has worked diligently to establish the processes one must go through when proposing to tear down a home that is classified an historic resource, and the presentation this evening was the first step. He added that if the owner wishes to proceed with the project, a fair and public forum is in place.

Mr. Rofidal added that he toured the home with Consultant Vogel and Planner Repya and found seeing the home first hand to be very helpful. He added that if an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness is submitted, it might be beneficial for the Board to tour the home to get a first hand view. Planner Repya interjected that if such a tour by the Board was scheduled, the procedures for calling a special meeting of the Board would need to be followed.

In closing, Chair Rofidal thanked Mr. Busyn, Ms. Pronley and the neighbors for explaining the project and expressing their opinions. He explained that if an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness is submitted, as is policy, a notice will be sent to neighboring property owners. No formal action was taken.

III. MORNINGSIDE BUNGALOW STUDY: CLG Grant Update

Consultant Vogel explained that October 1st was the starting date for the Morningside Bungalow Study that is being funded by a matching CLG grant from

the Minnesota Historical Society. Currently, the study is in the “gathering information” mode where previous reports and studies that included Morningside are evaluated. The information unearthed thus far has been very interesting. Unlike the Country Club District that is comprised of two plats; the Morningside neighborhood is made up of many plats created over a thirty year period by developers who were also builders, often husband and wife teams. The homes were more often than not, built on speculation for the working class.

Mr. Vogel explained that the Twin Cities Bungalow Club became aware of the Morningside Bungalow Study and has offered their assistance which will be very helpful, since its members are people who own bungalow style homes. Mr. Vogel added that he has been asked to speak to their club, and will report back to the HPB about that experience.

Mr. Vogel explained the time line for the study pointing out that a meeting with the neighborhood will take place in January or February to convey the information gathered thus far, explain the study in more detail, gather information residents may have on their homes, as well as to answer questions they may have.

Planner Repya added that she spoke at the Morningside Women’s Club October luncheon giving a brief overview of the study. At that time, the January/February neighborhood meeting was mentioned. Ms. Repya added that she was invited to be the guest speaker at the May luncheon of the club, which would be great timing, because by then there should be plenty of information to share.

HPB members thanked Consultant Vogel and Planner Repya for the update. All agreed that they were pleased that the study was underway and looked forward to becoming more involved in the project. No formal action was taken.

IV. TRAINING: Evaluation

Consultant Vogel explained that evaluation is the process of determining whether identified properties meet defined criteria of historical, architectural, archeological, or cultural significance. Edina’s heritage preservation section of the Zoning Ordinance clearly establishes the process for evaluation which follows the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for historic properties.

Mr. Vogel pointed out that the evaluation of historic resources should be made with reference to the historic contexts established for the subject area. Fortunately, Edina’s Historic Context Study is a handy reference for the Board when making evaluation decisions. Mr. Vogel added that it is important to identify and control resources that are rare and cannot be replaced.

Interestingly, Mr. Vogel added that the Edina HPB probably deals with evaluation more than most preservation commissions in the state due to the large number of

Certificates of Appropriateness applications evaluated every year.

Mr. Vogel announced that the next training topic would be "Designation".

V. COMMUNITY COMMENT: None

VI. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. MN Preservation Conference Report – Members Kojetin & Forrest

Member Kojetin explained that he and Member Forrest attended the 2009 Minnesota Preservation Conference at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, September 17th and 18th. The topic of the conference was "Preserving History, Conserving Energy" and it featured lectures and working sessions on sustainability and preservation.

Member Forrest noted that she found the keynote speaker, Carl Elefante's presentation to be very interesting. Mr. Elefante, an architect practicing in Washington D.C., is the Director of Sustainable Design for his firm with over 30 years experience in the field of heritage preservation, urban design and sustainable development. The most memorable quote Ms. Forrest recalled from the session was, "The greenest building is one that is already built." She added that she found that sentiment to be particularly poignant to the earlier tear down discussion. Mr. Elefante also noted that the carbon cost of tearing down a building, disposing of it, and rebuilding a new structure is substantially more than that of rehabilitation. Ms. Forrest pointed out that the importance of sustainability for preservationists is very important. Taking into account the current economy, preservation requires craftsmen to do the work which provides for more jobs, which is a good thing.

Members Kojetin and Forrest agreed that attending the annual conference is very worthwhile, providing attendees an opportunity to share ideas and better understand aspects of heritage preservation that can be applied in their board activities. Mr. Kojetin then encouraged all members of the HPB to attend future conferences. No formal action was taken.

B. Tour – 4615 Wooddale Avenue - Reflections

Board members briefly shared their opinions of the new home approved through the COA process at 4615 Wooddale Avenue. All agreed that the home is beautiful and more in scale with the surrounding homes. Member Rehkamp Larson stated that although she thinks the home is nice, it definitely appears as a new home. Member Rofidal observed that he did not think a novice would be able to differentiate the new home from its historic neighbors.

Discussion ensued regarding the necessity for change for some historic properties. Member Stegner cautioned that if it is exceedingly difficult to make improvements in the historic district, it could have a detrimental effect.

C. Legacy Grant Program

Consultant Vogel explained that there is a new source of grant money available through the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grants Program. The purpose of the grant is to preserve and enhance access to Minnesota's cultural and historical resources and to support projects of enduring value for the cause of history and historic preservation throughout Minnesota.

Primary recipients are nonprofit organizations, units of government, tribes and educational organizations. Private property owners and for-profit organizations may not apply directly, but may receive funds by collaborating with a sponsoring, eligible applicant on an eligible project.

Projects that would qualify for the grant fall within the category of "history" and/or "heritage preservation"; and funds are awarded through a competitive process using an established set of criteria.

Mr. Vogel explained that there are several funding levels for applicants to consider, each with a different time frame.

If requesting a grant of \$7,000 or less the deadline is the final Friday of each month with a decision made shortly thereafter. This loan is referred to as a "Fast Track"

For a "Mid-Size" (\$7,001 - \$49,999) and "Large" (\$50,000+) loan, final applications are due November 23, 2009 with the review committee meeting January 11, 2010.

Mr. Vogel pointed out that for Winter 2010, \$4,500,000 will be available with pre-applications due March 8, 2010, final applications due April 12, 2010, and the review committee meeting scheduled for May 24, 2010. He further explained that the type of projects that would qualify should be sustainable in nature and impossible to complete without the grant. Mr. Vogel added that the beauty of this program is that it does not require a match.

Mr. Vogel then suggested some projects the Board could consider, such as:

- A reconstruction of the Edina Mill Site in collaboration with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District;
- A correction of the handicapped accessible ramp way at the Cahill School and Grange Hall buildings; or
- Continuing education courses for key players in construction and rehab of historic properties.

Board members appreciated Mr. Vogel's suggestions and agreed they would bring their ideas for grant projects to the December meeting for a brainstorming session. No formal action was taken.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE:

- **Three Rivers Park District – Response to their request for historic resource information**

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE: December 8, 2009

IX. ADJOURNMENT: 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Joyce Repya