

**MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting of the**  
**Edina Heritage Preservation Board**  
**Edina City Hall – Community Room**  
**October 11, 2011**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Introduce Karen Kurt, Assistant City Manager**

The Board was introduced to Ms. Kurt who explained that some of her initial tasks as the new Assistant City Manager will be centering on the City's advisory boards and commissions (b&c). The focus of her work will include creating a core, consistent set of by-laws for all b&c's which each group will then personalize to fit their needs; and also establishing training for new members to assist them in understanding the responsibilities and basic functions of the b&c. She added that all current b&c members will receive a survey created to glean information regarding the opinions of their experiences with their respective board or commission.

Of interest to the HPB, Ms. Kurt also explained that she will oversee the City's research into the potential for the formation of neighborhood associations in the community. The Board agreed that would be a great project and they would be happy to provide assistance. The HPB welcomed Ms. Kurt and expressed their interest in working with her on the current projects.

**I. ROLL CALL 7:00 P.M.**

Answering roll call were Chairman Stegner, and Members Ahlstrom, Anger, Carr, Curran, Davis, Moore, Rehkamp Larson, Schwartzbauer, Copman and Ellingboe.

Staff present was Planner Joyce Repya; also present was Robert Vogel, Preservation Consultant.

**II. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA**

Member Curran stated that during the "Chair and Board Member Comments" section of the meeting she would like to report on the Human Services Task Force on which she served representing the HPB.

**III. MINUTES APPROVED Regular meeting of September 13, 2011**

Member Schwartzbauer moved approval of the minutes from the September 13, 2011 meeting of the board. Member Davis seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

**IV. COMMUNITY COMMENT None**

**V. REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

**A. Certificate of Appropriateness: H-11-7 for 4621 Edina Boulevard**

Planner Repya explained that the subject property is located on the northeast corner of Edina Boulevard and Country Club Road. The home, constructed in 1937 is an American Colonial Revival style with an attached 3-stall garage with living space above, accessed from Country Club Road to the south.

The proposed plans for the home include removing the existing 3-stall attached garage with living space above and replacing it with a 2-stall garage with increased living space on both the first and second floors. The garage

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will be accessed by the same driveway with no need for a new curb cut. The new construction will maintain virtually the same footprint as the existing structure; however the project will require a variance from the Zoning Ordinance to allow the continuation a non-conforming 9 foot rear yard setback where a 25 foot setback is required.

Ms. Repya pointed out that the new 2-stall garage and second story of the addition have been designed to improve the living spaces within the home. The 2-stall garage will be set back 3.6 feet from the living space to its west and will serve to break up the visual impact of the street facing façade along Country Club Road. The height of the new garage addition is shown to be 3.8 feet taller than the existing garage, yet still 3.6 feet shorter than the highest peak of the house. Two second story gables which match the roof pitch and style of the home are proposed to enhance the livability of the space above the garage.

The materials proposed for the addition will match those of the existing home to include:

- Cedar shake shingle siding to match the home.
- Two wood, single garage doors, and
- Cedar shake shingles.

As part of the design review process for COA's, Preservation Consultant Robert Vogel reviewed the plans and observed that the new garage will be compatible in scale, proportions, building materials, and texture with the house and other homes in the neighborhood. No historically significant or architectural character defining features will be destroyed or disturbed as a result of the proposed remodeling. Mr. Vogel also indicated that in his opinion, a COA should be issued for the subject project.

Ms. Repya concluded that she recommended approval of the COA request subject to the plans presented and approval of the variance request from the Planning Commission.

Findings supporting the approval recommendation include:

- No important historic architectural features or fabric of the home will be destroyed.
- The proposed alterations are compatible with the historic character of the house.
- The plans provided with the subject request clearly illustrate the scale and scope of the project.
- The information provided supporting the subject Certificate of Appropriateness meets the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and the Country Club District Plan of Treatment.

Mr. Andy Porter, President of Refined Remodeling Inc., representing the property owners explained that the property had been on the market for two years due to an antiquated, chopped-up floor plan. The proposed project is designed to maintain the rhythm of the street while correcting deficiencies with the interior living spaces. Mr. Porter displayed exterior elevations of the existing home compared to the proposed work. Addressing the need for the rear yard setback variance, Mr. Porter pointed out that a design that would meet the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance would create an "L" shaped attached garage – providing the required 25 foot rear yard, and constructing the attached garage in the side yard, 20 feet from the side lot line. That alternative was not considered because it not only disrespects the streetscape along Country Club Road, but also because such a design would most certainly not receive a COA approval from the Heritage Preservation Board.

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The following residents posed questions of Mr. Porter:

Alex Ware, 4403 Country Club Road inquired about the duration of the project and the plans for parking the construction vehicles. He pointed out that he lives across the street from the proposed new garage and Country Club Road is narrow at that point – if the construction vehicles park in front of his home, that would be problematic. Mr. Ware added that the new home Mr. Porter is constructing at Country Club Road and Moorland Avenue has caused some parking issues on Country Club Road. Mr. Porter responded that because this project is a remodel and not a new home, the number of construction vehicles will be much less than those at the new home at Moorland and Country Club Road. That being said, Mr. Porter stated that the contractors will be given instructions as to where they should park to provide minimal impact on the neighborhood, however if there is ever a problem, he welcomed the neighbors to call him directly.

Christine Wheeler, 4619 Edina Boulevard explained that she lives in the home abutting the subject property to the north and was wondering if the height of the addition over the garage would cast more shadows on her property than the existing structure. Mr. Porter responded that because the gable end of the structure is not facing the north, the slight increase in the height of the structure should not create larger shadows than currently exist.

Board Member comments:

Member Rehkamp Larson commented that the plans presented depict appropriateness of form, size and height, however the resolution of the form is awkward and disappointing.

Consultant Vogel reminded the Board that when reviewing a Certificate of Appropriateness application associated with a variance, the primary responsibility of the HPB is to certify that the new construction will do no harm to the historic integrity of the district.

Member Schwartzbauer commented that he believed that the proposed plan does a whole lot less harm to the district than the plan with the “L” shaped garage that Mr. Porter explained would not require a variance.

Member Carr asked if the attached garage that is being replaced was part of the original 1937 construction. Mr. Porter responded that while there are not building permits to verify when the garage was added, it does not appear to be original. Ms. Carr also asked why the two dormers above the garage were not the same size. Mr. Porter explained that the different sized gables reflect the living space above the garage. He added that when one looks at the plan in 3-dimension you can see that the two dormers are not on the same plane – one is recessed from the other.

Member Anger commented that as the HPB reviews Certificates of Appropriateness applications in the district it is important that the revival architecture in the neighborhood is viewed from a point in time. As more changes

take place, the Board needs to think about when the revival homes revert to millennial homes, thus changing the make-up of the district.

Following a brief discussion, Member Schwartzbauer moved approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness request subject to the plans presented and the approval of the rear yard variance request from the Planning Commission. Member Davis seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

Following the vote, the Board expressed their discomfort in reviewing a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to the hearing of a variance request by the Planning Commission. Planner Repya agreed to convey the Board's opinion to the Planning Staff.

**B. Conservation District's – Hopkin's Downtown Overlay District**

Planner Repya reported that responding the Board's request for information on the City of Hopkins' Downtown Overlay District, she found that Hopkins adopted the Downtown Overlay District in 2003 with the intention of preserving the small-town, unique character of Mainstreet Hopkins. The overlay district's design guidelines are broken down by architectural elements (i.e. awnings, signs, setback, roofs, etc.) with objectives, guidelines and standards provided for each. The guidelines convey desirable elements and are considered recommendations, not requirements unless public funding is involved. On the other hand, the standards identified are requirements and enforced by the City's Planning staff. There is not a separate design review committee overseeing proposed work, plan review is carried out by city staff, and/or the Planning Commission and City Council, depending upon the project.

In 1975, the City of Edina created a Design Framework for the 50<sup>th</sup> and France commercial district. The plan, while not an overlay district, served a similar purpose of guiding new construction and renovation in the area. The 50<sup>th</sup> & France we see today is a result of the guidelines provided in the 1975 plan. Infact, many cities have used Edina's Design Framework as a model when crafting plans for their downtown areas; and one can see similarities between the Hopkins Overlay District and the 50<sup>th</sup> and France Design Framework.

Ms. Repya concluded that the HPB's interest in overlay districts has centered on residential neighborhoods, such as White Oaks, and it appears that the Hopkins model, while possessing some similar goals of protecting the ambiance of the area, is not one that would readily apply to Edina's neighborhoods.

The Board briefly discussed the Hopkin's Downtown Overlay District, agreeing that it had some elements that could be replicated in a residential district. The point was made that there are communities such as Lake Forest, Illinois that have successfully implemented the historic overlay district approach to manage their historic resources.

The question was raised as to whether an overlay district could guide and protect the White Oaks neighborhood. Consultant Vogel commented that he did not think White Oaks would meet the eligibility criteria for an heritage preservation overlay district because it is not connected to one of the historic contexts identified for the

community. Mr. Vogel added that an historic district designation is the least efficient and most expensive tool for heritage preservation. Although it works well for the Country Club District, to replicate that process for other neighborhoods in the community would not be prudent on several counts – first, no other neighborhood has the history of planning and design that is found in the Country Club District; and secondly, unlike the Country Club District, the design review would be impossible since there is not a set of historic resource standards to use as a reference.

Member Anger observed that it appears that the loss of the urban charm is the biggest issue for White Oaks. Consultant Vogel agreed pointing out that the neighborhood is a distinctive part of the community; however it has changed too much over time to qualify for landmark designation.

### **White Oaks Neighborhood**

Planner Repya observed that last spring, the White Oaks Neighborhood Association approached the HPB asking for ideas to help them preserve and protect the ambiance of their neighborhood. At that time, they indicated that they weren't necessarily looking for a district landmark designation. Since then, the HPB has been looking into the potential of conservation district as a means of providing protection; however has discovered that such an undertaking does not happen overnight. Surveys of the area are required, and such work must queue into line with the work plan already identified for the HPB; and after the survey is complete, a recommendation for some type of designation is not a given. In the meantime, time is passing and the White Oaks Neighborhood Association's concerns remain unmet.

Ms. Repya advised the Board that prior to the Country Club District receiving historic landmark designation, there was not a means of protecting the neighborhood from changes incompatible with the historic ambiance of the area. To address the neighborhood's concerns, the HPB in collaboration with some Edina realtors created a brochure that explained the history of the neighborhood – including the fact that while most of the homes in the neighborhood had undergone changes over time, care had been taken to ensure that the historic integrity of the homes was true to what was originally built. The closing paragraph of the brochure asked the residents that if they were considering a change to their home, the plans ensure that the original architectural style of the home be maintained. Ms. Repya pointed out that the brochure was very successful in educating the residents to the history of their neighborhood, which in essence also served to provide a sense of belonging.

Ms. Repya explained that the White Oaks Neighborhood Association could implement a similar approach of educating existing and new residents regarding the history of their neighborhood – pointing out the elements that they fear are in jeopardy (ex. loss of trees, changes to the terrain, oversized construction, etc.); and asking that when plans for changes to their properties are underway, that consideration of those elements they feel are important be included in the plans.

Ms. Repya pointed out that if a new resident is not aware of the neighborhood's history and the association's desires to maintain certain elements which have been determined to be important to the ambiance of the area, one should not be surprised when those new residents make changes which don't take those important

elements into consideration. Ms. Repya added that by empowering the neighborhood association to present this information, they would be taking the lead in preserving the elements of their neighborhood that are important to them. She concluded that such a program could also be replicated in other areas of the city.

Board members agreed that taking a non-regulatory approach, and educating the residents made sense. Chair Stegner stated that he liked the idea of empowering the neighborhoods to be pro-active regarding protecting and preserving the ambiance of their properties.

Ms. Repya agreed to approach the White Oaks Neighborhood Association with the proposed education brochure and report back to the Board.

### **C. Thematic Study for Heritage Resources Associated with Edina Women**

Consultant Vogel provided the Board with an Executive Summary of the Thematic Study for Heritage Resources associated with Edina Women. He explained that the study, initially proposed by the HPB in 2004, will serve the same purpose as the city's Historic Context Study by providing supporting information to the HPB when protecting historic resources. Mr. Vogel pointed out that the complete Study, currently at the State Historical Society will be available to the Board prior to the November meeting.

Mr. Vogel observed that he found the results of his research to be somewhat disappointing with little written documentation relative to Edina women and their association with historic resources (i.e. buildings). The one exception he found was regarding Sarah Baird who not only served as State Master of the Edina Grange, but also served as the editor of the Grange newspaper "The Minnehaha Spray". Mr. Vogel added that Sarah Baird often referred to simply as George Baird's wife also left volumes of daily dairies depicting farm life in Edina from 1882 - 1918.

Vogel also pointed out that his research of the Village records from 1888 did not mention a woman until 1926, when a woman approached the Council regarding the need for a park in the Country Club District. After that, there was no mention of women until the 1950's - results of which most likely reflect a sign of the times. Interestingly, by 1990 less than 5% of buildings on the National Register of Historic Places had association with women.

Member Moore observed that the Edina Women's Club has had a big impact on the history of Edina, as has the Edina League of Women Voters. Consultant Vogel agreed, pointing out that while the impact of these groups on the cultural history of the city cannot be denied, information is not available identifying them with historic resources in the community.

Member Carr suggested that at the November meeting, after the Board has had an opportunity to review the Study, a discussion of the recommendations within the document take place. Board members agreed with Ms. Carr. Chair Stegner asked Ms. Repya to include the Women's Study on the November agenda. No formal action was taken.

**D. State Preservation Conference: Faribault, MN September 22 & 23 – Attendee’s Report**

Members Carr, Anger and Stegner represented the HPB at the State Preservation Conference in Faribault.

Members Stegner, Anger and Carr all agreed that they enjoyed the conference and found it very worthwhile. Ms. Carr explained that the welcome address was presented by Stephen Elliott, the new Minnesota Historical Society Director. He provided a very good message centering around the goal of preserving places matters – with an emphasis on education. The keynote speaker, Bob Yapp, from Hannibal, MO, and well known for his PBS program, provided a very good message that heritage preservation pays and is economical. Mr. Yapp emphasized that preservation practices such as rehabilitating, not replacing windows is the best practice when maintaining an historic home. There was also a very interesting session highlighting rambler style homes that was very applicable to many Edina homes.

The Board thanked Members Carr, Anger and Stegner for representing them at the conference – always a worthwhile event.

VI. **CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITIONS** None

VII. **CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**  
**Human Services Task Force – Member Curran**

Member Curran reported that she had represented the HPB on a newly formed Human Services Task Force. This group consisted of five volunteers from some of the City’s boards and commissions who were charged with distributing the City’s \$82,000 Human Service funds to human services providers who had submitted requests for funding. Roughly 8 to 10 requesting agencies providing assistance within the community for needs ranging from senior services, pre-schools and domestic abuse were considered. The task force interviewed each requesting agency and also met on several occasions prior to making the final financial determination. Ms. Curran concluded that she found the experience to be very interesting, and would welcome serving on the task force in the future. The Board thanked Ms. Curran for volunteering to represent them on the task force.

VIII. **STAFF COMMENTS** None

IX. **NEXT MEETING DATE** November 7, 2011 (MONDAY)

X. **ADJOURNMENT** 9:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joyce Repya