

MINUTES
July 11, 2016
Historic Preservation Commission
City of Batavia

Please **NOTE:** These minutes are not a word-for-word transcription of the statements made at the meeting, nor intended to be a comprehensive review of all discussions. They are intended to make an official record of the actions taken by the Committee/City Council, and to include some description of discussion points as understood by the minute-taker. They may not reference some of the individual attendee's comments, nor the complete comments if referenced.

1. Meeting Called to Order

Chair Bus called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.

2. Roll Call

Members Present: Chair Bus; Vice-Chair Hagemann; Commissioners Sherer, Roller and Sullivan (entered at 5:43pm)

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Mayor Schielke; Laura Newman, City Administrator; Jeff Albertson, Building Commissioner; Scott Buening, Director of Community Development; Gary Holm, Director of Public Works; Chris Aiston, Economic Development Consultant; and Jennifer Austin-Smith, Recording Secretary

3. Items to be Removed, Added or Changed

There were no items to be removed, added or changed.

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes from June 13 and 27, 2016

Maker: Roller

Second: Sherer

Voice Vote: 4 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent
Motion carried.

5. Matters From the Public (for items not on the agenda)

Chair Bus asked if there were matters from the public for items not on the agenda. There were none.

**6. COA Review: 1 North Washington Avenue
Demolition (City of Batavia, applicant)**

Bus stated that at the last HPC meeting there was a motion to have the Director of Community Development attend a future HPC meeting to report on a feasibility study on saving the bell tower for the former church at 15 North Washington Avenue and was unanimously passed.

Albertson reported on the process for a demolition COA. The HPC is a recommending body to the full City Council. Two meetings are required to pass a COA for demolition on significant buildings. The first meeting is a fact-finding meeting for a full review and decision. We need to make sure the application is complete and all the documents are collected to make an informed decision. The second meeting would be scheduled to actually review and go through the formal process of reviewing and approving or denying the COA. There is an allowance to expedite the process if it is a non-contributing building but this is a significant building so there is no process to deviate from the two meeting review.

Chris Aiston, 714 James Street, Geneva, reported that there would be a walk through of the church building at 9:30am on July 12, 2016. Another walk through was scheduled with Commissioner Roller and open for other HPC members to attend. Aiston presented on the City's Application for Demolition Permits. The presentation included the following information:

- Proposed Mixed-Use, Multi-Story Building Program Study
- Proposed Mixed-Use, Multi Story Building Site Plan (Building site plan, retail, underground parking facility, floors 3-6 residential, 1-2 garage underground and above ground)
- Apartment Plan – Floors 1-3 (6,000 square feet of commercial, footprint of where the building goes up, parking. Floors 3,4,5 are residential. Wilson Street the first floor along the street is commercial but is the second floor of the building and the floor beneath is parking. 171 apartments proposed.)
- Apartment Plan – 4th Floor
- Lower Level Garage Plan
- Upper Level Garage Plan
- Building Massing

Aiston stated that they do want to pay homage to the former Baptist Church Building on that site in some way. Sherer asked if the view of Louise White School would be blocked. Aiston stated that he does not have that perspective and could not answer that tonight. He stated that it would be disingenuous to say that you would be able to have a clear uninterrupted view of the school if you were on Wilson Street but once you come Wilson Street eastbound you would be able to see it.

Bus stated that this significant building was built in 1888. Bus asked what happens to the stained glass windows. Aiston stated that the stained glass windows would be made available to the church. Buening stated that there have also been requests from family members for personal effects, such as plaques, and staff needs to determine how we would make those things available to the families and the church.

David Patzelt, representative of the developer (Shodeen), stated they have offered the stained glass windows to be incorporated into Mill Creek's First Baptist Church site. Shodeen will work with them to see what elements that they want for their church expansion. Hagemann asked how far are you from getting a detailed elevation plan. Patzelt stated that the plans would further develop as they get more into the redevelopment process. Bus asked if the footing foundation of

the church corner is resting on bedrock. Patzelt stated that the church and the steeple are not sitting on bedrock. They found this information through soil borings.

The Commission discussed the design of the proposed building. Sherer noted that she did not want the building to produce an alley feeling down the block. Aiston stated that the green space courtyards would open the space up and not produce an alley feeling. Patzelt stated that certain areas would have a green roof garage. He gave examples of other buildings that have four stories plus underground parking such as Dodson Place in Geneva and River North on Route 38.

Bus stated that included in the HPC packet was the June 2013 report from WJE. He asked if staff was prepared to go through that report and identify how just the bell tower portion of the 1889 building is an option for no demolition at our next meeting. Hagemann commented that he would like to see that the report updated for more up to date data than from three years ago. Roller stated that she would like more discussion on the building to be demolished versus the new construction project since this is a demolition COA.

Hagemann read the WJE report and stated that the estimate for demolition is 1.75-2 million and to reuse the church it would cost 3.1 to 7 million. Gary Holm, Director of Public Works, stated that the consultant's report was brought to a public meeting, then an open house, and finally a meeting with the City Council. The City Council then decided that to put that much money in to stabilize the structure wasn't in the City's best interest. We have then put no money into the church for the past three years. The condition of the facility has since deteriorated even more and we have not been maintaining it. Everyone walked away with the understanding that the structure was eventually going to be demolished. That is the direction from City Council that staff has been working under. Holm stated that an analysis of the bell tower in two weeks time is not realistic. Holm estimated that it would be a two-month process.

Bus asked for the Commission's opinions on this matter. Roller stated that it shouldn't take that long for an overview of the bell tower to know that it is feasible. Because this is a significant building she feels that it is important to at least look at it. She agrees that the rest of the building is structurally unsound and would not make sense to preserve. Sherer stated that she would love to keep the old portion of the building and the bell tower but realistically it is not feasible. She does hope that they do find that it is feasible to keep the bell tower. Hagemann stated that this is one of the significant structures but the building has gone downhill. As much as he would love to keep the entire structure, he does see that there is potential to develop a new structure here that could be fantastic. He likes the idea of preserving some sense of the structure if the bell tower itself cannot be saved. He would like to have some part of the bell tower incorporated into the new structure but he is not sure how heavily that would weigh on his decision in the end. Sullivan stated that this building would eventually see the end of its life. The report and the public hearing gave all parties the sense that the time is now. He does not know how much sense it makes to save only one portion of this building. He does not know how that would look or if it would have any value if there is no church. If there is a way to do it that looks nice that sounds fine to him. He is willing to proceed with the City's recommendation here. Bus stated that the church with the bell tower has been there since 1888 and it is a significant historic structure and part of the streetscape of the City. We have six churches with steeples in the historic district. We should preserve elements from our past and the tower still has value.

Mayor Schielke shared controversial demolitions in Batavia's history. He discussed how the demolition of the buildings along the river allowed for the construction of the river walk, Peg Bond Center, and River Rain Retirement Center. The next one was the old Batavia High School on Batavia Avenue and Wilson Street. The building was replaced with the Batavia Public Library, which attracts 850-1,000 patrons a day. The Bellevue Sanitarium property on South Jefferson Street was also controversial. Due to the relationship with the Mary Todd Lincoln story we were able to save the building but had to agree to the demolition of three other buildings on Bellevue and allow the construction of new townhomes.

The Commission was unable to approve the COA for demolition on the Service Master building due to an error on the application. Roller suggested that at the next meeting the COA include all buildings to be demolished in the historic district. Bus agreed and said it would make it easier. Patzelt stated that he would prefer to not have all the buildings come to the HPC at once because there are some buildings that are still in the process to be acquired. Roller stated that it would be interesting to know what your ideas might be for incorporating some elements of the tower into the new building.

The COA could not be accepted because additional information was needed and the preliminary meeting was continued to the next HPC meeting.

Motion: To ask the applicant to amend the application to include the correct address on all the buildings to be demolished, to have further explanation of the feasibility of retaining the bell tower in some form or fashion. That the developer/applicant identify what other things could be done in terms of site design to reflect the significance of the structure that would not include the preservation of the bell tower.

Maker: Sullivan

Second: Hagemann

Discussion was made on the motion. Roller noted that the buildings to be demolished should refer to the buildings currently owned by the City.

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Absent
Motion carried.

7. Updates:

1. 7 East Wilson Street – Historic Inspection
2. Anderson Block Building – Masonry Maintenance
3. Significant Historic Building Inspection Program
4. 10/12 North River Street – Historic Inspection
5. 227 West Wilson Street – Historic Inspection
6. 109 South Batavia Avenue – Historic Inspection
7. 8 North River Street – Historic Inspection
8. 16 East Wilson Street – Historic Inspection

Albertson stated that there were no updates at this time.

8. Other Business

Hagemann announced that he spoke to Cyril Matter about the Driehaus award his thoughts were to wait one more year to submit the application. Sherer stated that the requirements would be the same so this could be continued to next year and the application could currently be worked on.

Buening reported that the second meeting of August would be utilized for the presentation on Certified Local Government.

9. Adjournment

There being no other business to discuss, Chair Bus asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:03pm; Made by Hagemann; Seconded by Sherer. Motion carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer Austin-Smith