

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

May 29th, 2025

A meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held on May 29th, 2025, in the 1st Floor Community Room of the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue.

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Commissioners Saeger, Graham-White, Muhr, Forehand

Absent: Chairman Franek and Commissioner Raino-Ogden

Also Present: Management Analyst/Deputy Clerk Luke Masella

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – April 24th & May 22nd, 2025

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Saeger and SECONDED by Commissioner Graham-White to approve the meeting minutes for the April 24th & May 22nd, 2025 meetings.

AYES: Commissioners Saeger, Graham-White, Muhr, Forehand

NAYS: None

Motion Passes.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING – REVIEW OF APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS – 147 THATCHER – GARAGE DEMOLITION

The applicant, Kim Smith, gave background information on the proposed application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Commissioner Saeger noted that the garage is in poor condition and expressed understanding of the residents' concerns regarding its removal.

Commissioner Forehand agreed that the garage is in poor condition and referenced a recently completed garage in town that received a zoning variance for increased height and was later recognized with a Commission award.

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes
May 29th, 2025

Ms. Smith shared her experience seeking a variance in River Forest and stated that, while she feels the garage design is not well suited to the main structure, it complies with code requirements and therefore must be followed.

Commissioner Forehand suggested the HPC reach out to the Village's zoning department to explore allowing variances for historical projects like the one under review.

Ms. Smith commented on garage usage practices in Oak Park.

Commissioner Forehand asked if a paint color had been selected for the garage and noted the plans did not indicate insulation between the floors.

Ms. Smith provided details on insulation and heating plans for the garage.

The homeowner provided comments on the historical background of the residence and discussed the historical significance of the property with the Commission.

Deputy Clerk Masella reported receiving a letter from a resident in support of demolishing the garage. He also noted that he received an email and a phone call from two residents expressing support for the proposed application for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 601 Bonnie Brae.

Commissioner Saeger asked if there was anything in the Village's architectural survey regarding the garage.

Deputy Clerk Masella provided information on the property from the survey.

Commissioner Forehand stated that the garage is not an original structure.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Muhr and SECONDED by Commissioner Saeger to grant the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 147 Thatcher.

AYES: Commissioners Saeger, Graham-White, Muhr, Forehand

NAYS: None

Motion Passes.

V. PUBLIC HEARING – REVIEW OF APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS – 601 BONNIE BRAE – GARAGE DEMOLITION

The applicant, Frank Heitzman of Heitzman Architects, provided background information on this agenda item.

Commissioner Forehand observed that the proposed garage is consistent with the house and expressed support for the application.

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes
May 29th, 2025

Commissioner Saeger also voiced support for the application, noting that the presence of the fence may have limited the information available to the architectural survey.

Deputy Clerk Masella then read aloud the survey's findings on the garage.

Commissioner Forehand asked if there was any indication of what was there prior to the garage.

Mr. Heitzman stated no.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Forehand and SECONDED by Commissioner Graham-White to grant the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 601 Bonnie Brae.

AYES: Commissioners Saeger, Graham-White, Muhr, Forehand

NAYS: None

Motion Passes.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING – REVIEW OF APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS – 715 CLINTON – GARAGE DEMOLITION

Commissioner Forehand noted being in support of the application and noted that the proposed garage appears to be in line with the character of the home.

Commissioner Muhr agreed.

Commissioner Saeger asked if there was anything in the architectural survey about the structure.

Deputy Clerk Masella read the aloud the information in the survey.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Saeger and SECONDED by Commissioner Graham-White to grant the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 715 Clinton.

AYES: Commissioners Saeger, Graham-White, Muhr, Forehand

NAYS: None

VII. DISCUSSION REGARDING PROMOTION OF RIVER FOREST ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORY

Commissioner Muhr asked whether click rates for items on the Village webpage could be tracked.

Deputy Clerk Masella confirmed that they could, but noted the tracking is not as detailed as one might expect.

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes
May 29th, 2025

Commissioner Saeger suggested that staff highlight additional historic resources and information on the Village's webpage. She also mentioned seeing content on the Explore Oak Park page about historic homes in River Forest and stated she would share it with staff.

Commissioner Forehand asked whether there was any historical reasoning behind new garages not being subject to the Commission's review.

Deputy Clerk Masella responded that he would need to look into it.

Commissioner Forehand further noted the prominence of the garage reviewed on Thatcher that evening and suggested that such structures, particularly on corner lots, when located on the same property as a significant building, might warrant Commission review.

Commissioner Saeger noted that the review of larger garages may be something to consider for the upcoming ordinance revisions.

Commissioner Forehand reiterated his support for having the Commission review garages.

Commissioner Saeger highlighted past variances granted by the Village for historic garages and noted one instance in which a former HPC Commissioner advocated for a proposed garage before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

She also agreed with Commissioner Forehand that the Village might consider creating a credit or waiver for variances involving significant properties.

VIII. DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL WAYS TO PROTECT SIGNIFICANT PROPERTIES

None.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

X. ADJOURNEMENT

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Graham-White and SECONDED by Commissioner Forehand to adjourn the May 29th, 2025, meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission.

AYES: Commissioners Saeger, Graham-White, Muhr, Forehand

NAYS: None.

Motion Passes and the meeting ended at 7:33 PM.



Luke Masella
Deputy Clerk/Management Analyst