

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

June 23, 2022

A meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held on June 23, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the First Floor Community Room at the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue.

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Chairman Franek, Commissioners Krusinski, Raino-Ogden, Graham-White, Forehand and Saeger.

Absent: Commissioner Schwartz.

Also Present: Village Administrator Brian Murphy, Assistant to the Village Administrator Matt Walsh and Village Attorney Greg Smith.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – APRIL 21, 2022

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Forehand and SECONDED by Commissioner Saeger to approve the meeting minutes for April 21, 2022 as presented.

AYES: Chairman Franek, Commissioners Krusinski, Raino-Ogden, Graham-White, Forehand and Saeger.

NAYS: None.

Motion Passes.

III. PUBLIC TESTIMONY

No public testimony was heard.

IV. APPLICATION #23-01: APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR THE DEMOLITION OF THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 7620 MADISON STREET, RIVER FOREST, IL.

A. PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Franek explained the procedures for the public hearing and introduced Village Administrator Brian Murphy. Village Attorney Greg Smith swore in those wishing to speak at the hearing.

Mr. Murphy provided background information on the Village's acquisition of the property in question in 2017 and explained that the Village has marketed the site for reuse and

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redevelopment of the property for several years. Mr. Murphy stated his belief that a clear site would be more appealing for potential development.

Mr. Murphy stated the original application was submitted in 2020 and for two years Village staff and Commission members have researched the historic property. Holabird & Root, the architect of the building, believes that records of the project were lost in a flood several decades ago. Mr. Murphy also explained that the demolition would be funded by a state grant, and accordingly would need to be approved by the State Historic Preservation Office. Mr. Murphy also mentioned that the façade of one of the buildings on Madison Street is deteriorating and the sidewalk needed to be closed.

Courtney Bilari was invited to address the Commission. Ms. Bilari expressed concern about the demolition work and its impact on parking and traffic. Chairman Franek explained that the logistics of demolition were beyond the scope of the Commission.

Theresa Peavy, of 13 Ashland Avenue, asked how the Commission could consider the demolition of a significant property while discussing protecting significant properties later on the agenda. Chairman Franek explained that the Village is the applicant for the demolition work, not the Historic Preservation Commission.

Assistant Walsh read emails submitted by Deborah Borman of 14 Lathrop. Ms. Borman questioned the decision to demolish the property without a plan to develop it. Ms. Borman also listed several property maintenance concerns about the current properties. Ms. Borman asked when the decision was made to demolish the other properties and what the deadline was for the grant.

Assistant Walsh read an email from Jean Follett of Wheaton, Illinois. Jean Follett stated the belief that the public hearing is premature due to the lack of review from the State Historic Preservation Office. Ms. Follett also questioned the environmental impact of demolition and the value of having a vacant lot.

Assistant Walsh then shared a summary of a discussion he had over the phone with Annette Madden. Ms. Madden is concerned about asbestos, rodents and other impacts from the demolition.

Attorney Greg Smith clarified that the local Historic Preservation Commission review process is separate from the State review and they both need to occur. Mr. Smith further explained that the future development of the site would require additional public hearings through the Development Review Board.

B. DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

Commissioner Forehand asked for additional information regarding the State Historic Preservation Office review.

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Chairman Franek detailed the efforts to find documentation on the colored windows and windscreen by former staff liaison Jon Pape and Commissioner Raino-Ogden.

Commissioner Saeger expressed that the features from the original structure appear to be mostly intact, and therefore issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness would not be appropriate. Ms. Saeger then stated that enforcing a significant delay would not be effective in this case due to the efforts to market the building for several years.

Commissioner Graham White observed that there are not many mid-century modern structures on the Village's significant property list, and the Village may regret the demolition in future decades. Ms. Graham White asked whether the Village made efforts to reuse the buildings.

Commissioner Raino-Ogden stated that a six-month demolition delay may allow for a buyer to propose reusing the historic buildings. Mr. Murphy stated that the Village has sought users to adaptively reuse the property and there have been no viable proposals. Mr. Murphy added that the Village would be open to salvaging the historic features.

Mr. Murphy was asked about the schedule for the grant. Mr. Murphy stated there were several review steps that needed to occur before demolition could begin, including the State Historic Preservation Office. Attorney Smith reminded the Commission that the Village originally applied for the certificate of appropriateness in July 2020, and effectively there has already been a two-year delay.

Chairman Franek compared the application to past demolition permits, including 1123 Franklin. In that case the building was in structural disrepair due to bank ownership, and the Commission did not issue a Certificate of Appropriateness. A minimal delay in demolition was implemented due to the length of time the home had been for sale.

Chairman Franek further stated that although the concerns shared during the hearing are valid, most of them are not relevant to the decision before the Commission tonight. Mr. Franek reminded the Commission that demolition could not be prevented, only delayed.

Commissioner Forehand agreed with Commissioner Saeger and added the State review of the site is comforting and may find additional information.

Commissioner Saeger reiterated her belief that no certificate of appropriateness should be issued, and added that there already has been a delay in accepting the application.

Commissioners Graham White and Raino-Ogden agreed with Commissioner Saeger.

Village Attorney Smith detailed the timeline of the Village's application. The application was accepted as complete on April 21, 2022.

C. DECISION REGARDING CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Commissioner Saeger made a Motion, seconded by Commissioner Raino-Ogden to withhold a Certificate of Appropriateness.

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AYES: Chairman Franek, Commissioners Krusinski, Raino-Ogden, Graham-White, Forehand and Saeger.

NAYS: None.

Motion Passes.

After some discussion of the demolition delay, Village Attorney Smith clarified that the application was not complete until April 21, 2022.

Commissioner Carla Graham White made a Motion, seconded by Commissioner Saeger to issue a demolition delay through July 1, 2022.

AYES: Chairman Franek, Commissioners Krusinski, Raino-Ogden, Graham-White, Forehand and Saeger.

NAYS: None.

Motion Passes.

V. DISCUSSION REGARDING PROMOTION OF RIVER FOREST ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORY

Commissioner Saeger provided the group with some ideas regarding the promotion of the HPC at upcoming park events, and the increased promotion of historical society events.

VI. DISCUSSION REGARDING ANNUAL PRESENTATION OF PRESERVATION AWARDS

Assistant Walsh confirmed that no award nominations had been received, and that additional promotion would be sent out by the Village.

VII. DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL WAYS TO PROTECT SIGNIFICANT PROPERTIES

None.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

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A MOTION was made by Commissioner Schwartz and SECONDED by Commissioner Saeger to adjourn the June 23, 2022 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission at 8:25 p.m.

AYES: Chairman Franek, Commissioners Krusinski, Raino-Ogden, Graham-White, Forehand and Saeger.

NAYS: None.

Motion Passes.

Respectfully submitted:

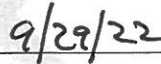


Matt Walsh
Assistant to the Village Administrator

Approved:



David Franek, Chairman
Historic Preservation Commission



Date