

VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
Historic Preservation Commission Special Meeting
December 13, 2017

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

Present: David Franek, Michael Pritz, Brian Prestes, Tom Zurowski, Al Popowits, Carla Graham-White, David Raino-Ogden

II. PUBLIC COMMENT (Items not otherwise on the agenda)

None.

III. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING – Application #17-01 - Certificate of Appropriateness application for the DEMOLITION of the single family residence located at 747 William Street, River Forest, IL, a structure listed on the Village survey of architecturally or historically significant properties

Jan Saeger, 435 William, brought up conversations with the Hess family who owned the home before the last sale. She suggested asking the real estate listing to indicate its historical significance. She indicated that this was to obtain knowledge for future sales of historical pieces of property.

Chairman Zurowski asked for additional comments.

A Commissioner added into the record a letter from the Applicant dated December 10 and pictures from the architect on the project, Pat Magner.

Commissioner Popowits asked the architects on the Committee to evaluate the value of the letter and the accompanying pictures.

Commissioner Raino-Ogden stated that there are 25 homes built at the same time with the same construction techniques. He stated that they all have two stories and they are all standing.

Commissioner Popowits read a paragraph of the letter. “This minimal amount of concrete is not adequate to support a second story. It was merely placed at the time of construction to provide a level surface. Also note a hole has been broken into the wall to indicate the concrete is hollow, rather than solid.”

Commissioner Raino-Ogden stated he would not add weight to this piece of concrete. He was not impressed by what he saw as the concrete slab’s integrity.

They discussed the fact that the concrete slab needs to be replaced.

Pat Magner, the architect for the Applicant, commented that the slab was not placed as a proper footing. He stated that what was there was not placed for a structural load. He did not believe the slab was a proper structural load despite the fact it has been in place for over a hundred years. Pat stated that the Applicant could restore the slab to be a structural load bearing slab, but the Applicant would likely not make a profit off of it.

Commissioner Pritz asked the Applicant if there were any circumstances where he would consider rehabbing the house instead of demolishing it.

Rob Sarvis, the Applicant, stated that if he felt it was possible to rehab the home then he would do it. He stated, given the condition of the property, it was not feasible for him to rehab the property. Each time the Applicant looked into the rehabilitation of the property, the costs were too high.

Commissioner Raino-Ogden asked the Applicant what the costs of repair versus the costs of building a new home would be. The Applicant answered that that was proprietary information. The Applicant stated he had an idea of what the numbers for demolishing or rehabbing are.

Commissioner Pritz stated they have no say in whether the property gets rehabbed or not. It would be up to the property owner.

Tom Bierzychudek, 754 William, stated the only thing the Commission could do was stall the Applicant, hurt him financially, and create a warning for the next person who tries to do this.

IV. DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

Commissioner Franek stated that the goal of the Applicant was to demolish the property. This was the third time this issue had come up before the Commission. Commissioner Franek encouraged anyone who felt that there needs more to be done to contact the Village President and voice their concerns. Commissioner Franek said he was in favor of imposing limitations upon the demolition of the property. He was in favor of limiting the maximum demolition delay only if certain conditions were met to maintain the original design and materials.

Commissioner Pritz moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Franek seconded the motion. A vote was held to close the public hearing.

Ayes: Pritz, Popowits, Franek, Prestes, Zurowski, Graham-White, Raino-Ogden
Nays: None.
Motion Granted.

V. DECISION REGARDING CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Commissioner Prestes moved to deny the Certificate of Appropriateness and impose a full demolition delay of 6 months. Commissioner Franek seconded the motion.

Ayes: Prestes, Zurowski, Raino-Ogden, Graham-White, Pritz, Franek

Nayes: Popowits
Motion passed.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

The Commission then held a discussion of conditions that would shorten the demolition delay just approved: front room façade (open front porch) maintenance, same building materials (stucco and wood), same height (current height), same set-back distance, home style (simple Prairie School-style), and same square footage. If the Applicant meets these conditions, the demolition delay will be over.

Commissioner Pritz made a motion to allow the Applicant to obtain a demolition permit prior to the end of the 6 month demolition delay, contingent on the conditions just stated. Commissioner Popowits seconded the motion. A vote was held to consider shortening the demolition delay.

Ayes: Popowits, Raino-Ogden, Graham-White, Pritz
Nayes: Prestes, Zurowski, Franek
Motion passed.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commissioner Franek and seconded by Commissioner Prestes to adjourn the meeting of the Commission. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.