

## Rock Island Preservation Commission Minutes

City Hall, Council Chambers (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)

1528 3rd Avenue

January 25, 2023

5:30 PM



### Voting Members Present

Linda Anderson  
Robert Braun  
Diane Oestreich  
Mark Schwiebert  
Deb Kuntzi  
Bruce Peterson  
John Daly

### Voting Members Absent

Addison Kimmel

### Associate Members Present

Jeff Dimer

### Associate Members Absent

### Staff Present

Tanner Osing

### Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Braun called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM and read the roll call.

### Public Comment

There were no comments from the public in attendance.

### Approval of the Agenda

Schwiebert moved to approve the agenda. Oestreich seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a vote of 7 to 0.

### Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes

Oestreich moved to approve the minutes for January 25, 2023 with the recommendation for staff to check the spelling of some commissioner's names. Schwiebert seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a vote of 7 to 0.

### Old Business

#### Maintenance of Locally Landmarked Properties

Osing discussed how staff is wanting to explore ways to better engage landmark property owners. Anderson asked how to notify staff about code violations and Kuntzi asked what is the recourse for property owners. Osing said to notify staff via email about any potential code violations and that there are possible enforcement measures with MUNICIPALITIES. Oestreich added that some issues with landmark properties appear to be violations of the property maintenance code in addition to anything in the Preservation Ordinance. Kuntzi added that there are other issues regarding preservation that are not necessarily subject to the property maintenance code. Kuntzi added that getting letters or postcards out to landmark properties would be a good first step to educate homeowners. Peterson also asked about educating realtors so they can pass information on to new homeowners. Kuntzi added that there does appear to be an education gap with some homeowners. Oestreich also added that education on new building materials is needed since new wood is prone to a shorter lifespan. Kuntzi asked if the

Commission needs to adopt some synthetic materials. Oestreich said that the Commission could consider those materials, but it should be on a case by case basis and not a blanket acceptance.

Schwiebert added that it sounds like there's agreement that the education piece is an important component. He also added that a workshop might be of value to talk about repair methods and appropriate, synthetic materials that offer a longer lifespan. Commissioners concurred that getting out postcards to landmark property owners is an important first step, and a workshop could be explored down the road. Kuntzi asked about local contractors that do historically sensitive work. Commissioners discussed how those contractors are in short supply. Oestreich mentioned that GROWTH used a contractor out of Princeton to restore windows. Osing mentioned that staff can begin working on initial outreach by sending out postcards, and then explore options about the possibility of an annual workshop. Commissioners discussed other work done by local contractors. Kuntzi described the process for restoring windows at the Hauberg Estate. Daly reiterated that the postcard is an important first step, and added the message conveyed by the postcard should be positive and provide resources to homeowners.

## **New Business**

### Discussion on updating the City's educational materials for historic preservation

Osing asked for Commissioner's ideas on updating older preservation materials or producing new materials. Oestreich commented that thinking of ways to best disseminate the information is an important part. She also commented that some older materials could be updated. Kuntzi asked if grants could be written to update older preservation materials. Osing responded affirmatively. Anderson commented that she believes that most grant money in the past was used for the printing of materials. Peterson asked about other ways of getting information out, such making audio recordings of the old walking tour booklets accessible on cell phones. Kuntzi added that is a similar concept to what QC PastPort is doing. Anderson discussed options to get a project like that started. Schwiebert mentioned that it's important to consider the different markets a project like that would be tailored to, such as residents or tourists. He mentioned tourists may be the most appealing market and to start with something simple, such as a downtown walking tour. Schwiebert also mentioned another audience for educational materials is home buyers, and there may be opportunities there to market Rock Island as a city that is strong on history. He added that Bill Nelson would be a good resource to reach out to for walking tour related ideas, and targeting two or three areas in the City would be a good start. Kuntzi discussed tourism events that are happening in Moline. Schwiebert added the QC Botanical Center is apparently a big hit with some tourists.

Daly discussed that its important to think of a business plan for the different ideas, and come up with an outline for the different materials. Oestreich added that marketing is an important component, and that the Broadway Neighborhood is a good example of how marketing a historic neighborhood/area can change over time. Commissioners discussed possible areas for walking tour locations. Anderson added the possibility of a river walk in the downtown area. She also mentioned that neighborhood tours typically generate a good turnout. Oestreich proposed the idea of permanent signage for buildings in the downtown that highlights the history of the building. Peterson discussed an example from Norway where they used wrapping around scaffolding that displayed a painting of the building that was being renovated. Anderson added that the QC PastPort group will be installing signs in the downtown this summer. Daly offered his help to staff to create a plan for some of the proposed ideas. Oestreich added that commissioners are willing to help staff on different projects. Osing mentioned that he is excited to get things moving for 2023.

**Other Business**

Peterson asked about the Rock Island County Courthouse, and if the City and the Preservation Commission were taking a stance on the matter. Osing reiterated that the City position is to remain neutral. Commissioners discussed the past history with the building and mentioned that demolition is likely imminent.

Peterson also asked about the old Post Office building at 1956 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, and if the City had any plans for development on that lot. He said an interesting use for the property would be a park similar to what was historically known as Spencer Square. Oestreich mentioned that adequate greenspace used to be a bigger issue downtown, but now there are other park opportunities. She added that another park downtown would likely be a hard sell, even though it would be a wonderful area. Kuntzi also mentioned potential issues with financing for another park.

Anderson mentioned that landmarking properties has slowed down in recent years. She added that it would be nice to see some momentum to begin identifying buildings that would be important to landmark. Oestreich and Anderson discussed ways to encourage property owners to landmark their homes. Anderson said it's important to spin it off as a celebration of what's there rather than having the burden of added regulations. Commissioners also discussed the National Register designation. Schwiebert added that it's important to consider flexibility regarding materials, especially, when some traditional materials are cost prohibitive.

**Adjournment**

Daly moved to adjourn. Schwiebert seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a vote of 7 to 0 and the meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Tanner Osing.