

MINUTES FOR JULY 12, 2022, MEETING OF THE FLORENCE TOWNSHIP HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

HPC members present: Katy Beckman, Joyce Engstrom, Carol Gardner, Janet Malotky, Pam Miller, Town Board liaison Jim McIlrath, Goodhue County Historical Society liaison Liz Schmidt

Citizens present: Steve Dietz, Ann Bolin

Chair Katy Beckman called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Katy read the minutes from the June 14 meeting, which were approved without amendments.

BUILDING PERMITS

One permit request, presented by Carol: Dick and Kathy Herron propose improvements to their property at 29226 Van Blarcum Av. (They are on vacation and so were not present, but provided all info needed.) The Herrons seek to enclose their existing deck, add more deck to the east and add a screen porch. Carol inspected the site and examined the U.S. Secretary of Interior's standards for rehabbing properties in a historic district. Her report: The Herrons' house is not a contributing property to the district. It was built around 1920 as a seasonal getaway. The Herrons bought it in May 2013 and in 2017 replaced the old cabin on its same footprint, the small house they now live in. (Their son owns the adjacent property.) It's near Wakondiota Park, a sensitive landscape, but the proposed changes wouldn't negatively impact that landscape and meet guidelines for the HPC and the Secretary of the Interior re historic district properties. Design materials were reviewed. HPC voted unanimously to approve; the Herrons' request now goes to the Town Board.

OLD BUSINESS

Carole Zellie's presentation from last month: Katy reviewed Zellie's (of Landscape Research LLC, of St. Paul, MN) formal written report and said that it, as well as descriptions of 80 historic properties in the district, is now on the Town Board/HPC website. The properties are listed online by address only, not by name, to protect owners' privacy. Discussion ensued about how we share this with homeowners. Drop reports off at homes? Email them? Liz said she has shared this info on the Goodhue County Historical Society website. Janet asked if we should have an intro to explain to people why their house is on this list. Carol suggested waiting for 2023 to do any of these communications; that's when this report will have gone through the National Registry of Historic Places for its final blessing. Others suggested at least letting people know those reports are online in case they disagree with descriptions of their properties. (Such concerns should go to Michael Koop of the State Historic Preservation Office, not the HPC.)

Update on deteriorating historic Locust Lodge property: Katy brought this issue, which has been a problem for years and discussed and addressed before many times, to the Town Board last month and asked them to help. Jim McIlrath said the board will reach out to owner Margaret Anteblian, now of Boston, one more time, but added that no letter has been sent out to her yet. Janet Malotky, reviewing the Town Board's discussion of Katy's presentation, said the subject "kind of slid quietly away without any decision or action." HPC also has concerns about deteriorating properties at the end of Garrard Avenue (Adler property), the old Carlson house, and perhaps the old Post Office, where the Augustin family now lives. Carol reviewed her recent discussions with Goodhue County Land Office folks about these issues. Long story short, the county can't do anything about Locust Lodge within the scope of its

county ordinances because that property is not occupied. (It IS inspecting the Adler property, because it is believed to be occupied.) These Goodhue County folks said the Town Board is our best venue for a challenge to Ms. Anteblian. Discussion ensued in which it was decided that the HPC should craft a “Duty to Maintain” ordinance, perhaps modeled on those in Minneapolis and Excelsior, that would be submitted to the Town Board for approval (and require a public hearing before being approved). To that end, Pam will write a first-draft proposed ordinance. Meanwhile, Janet will work on a letter to Ms. Anteblian to let her know we’re working on such an ordinance out of growing concerns about her falling-apart historic home and would like her to consider, once again, repairing and restoring it, especially since she’s received offers of help and purchase. This is an old issue that has come up many times, all said, but it’s worth one more effort to try to save it. Jim McIlrath said the HPC should “put together what you think is copasetic; I’ll take it to the Town Board” and seek legal advice on how to proceed.

In writing a preemptive letter to Ms. Anteblian about all this, Janet will also seek to recommend to her two inspectors – one for the house’s structural integrity and one with specialty knowledge to assess its Historic District maintenance needs. Ms. Anteblian would need to pay for those inspectors. Janet will seek advice from Michael Koop of the State Historic Preservation Office about inspectors qualified for the later role.

NEW BUSINESS

HPC voted to approve the “request for proposal” seeking a contractor for Part II of our Historic District research/update work. That application, written by Carol and Pam and edited by Michael Koop, was unanimously approved. Pam will email it to three possible contractors.

New HPC bylaws were approved with amendments referring people to existing HPC ordinances that talk about filling vacancies and saying that attendance at HPC meetings can be in person or virtual. accepted.

The two bronze signs at the entrances to Old Frontenac include a link to a defunct website, frontenactours.com. Janet said Steve Dietz is looking into how we might revive that website. Linda Fliess, widow of Bill Fliess, who originated it, may have some info about access to and content for that old site. (Pam and Carol will be polishing up those signs in coming months.)

Carol said she is interested in having **occasional presentations at HPC meetings for educational purposes about how you take care of your historical property.** Replacing or repairing historic windows might be a first good subject. Maybe for September meeting? All agreed that’s a good idea.

Dumpster rollout event: When and how to pay for it? Carol suggested we ask the Town Board for financial help if we fall short on payments for various disposed-of items (as listed on a public info flier about this; Joyce is overseeing that publicity) and donations; could they donate the amount we’d need for those purposes? Katy will ask them Timing for the event: September or October 2022.

New flag to fly outside Florence Town Hall: The old nylon one is woefully tattered. Town Board has not responded to our requests that they procure a new one. So Pam offered to contribute a flag, a high-quality 5-7-feet all-cotton one used at the 1985 funeral of her uncle Harter Kulseth, a World War II veteran and Old Frontenac property owner (Pam now lives on the land he and his wife left to her). (Update: On July 13, Pam and Carol hoisted the new flag. On July 14, Pam and her relatives

ceremoniously burned the old flag according to recommendations from the U.S. government on respectful disposal of worn-out flags.)

Adjournment. 7:11 p.m. (Next meeting will be at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 9, 2022.)

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Miller (HPC secretary)