

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Approved Minutes

Wednesday April 22, 2015

6:00 pm

City Hall, One Batavia City Centre, Batavia New York

Members Present: *Ashley Bateman, Larry Barnes, Sharon Burkel, Teresa Siverling, Paul Schulte, Joan Barton*

Others Present: Jeff Donahue, Jason Molino, Janice Smith – Recording Secretary

I. Call to order:

The meeting was opened at 6:03 pm by Chairperson, Ashley Bateman.

II. Approval of minutes

Motion by: Teresa Siverling

Motion was made to approve the meeting minutes for March 25, 2015.

Seconded by: Larry Barnes

Vote for: 6

Abstained: 0

Vote against: 0

III. Public Hearing:

A. Holland Land Office Banners. Mr. Donahue came back in front of the commissioners regarding a change to the banners that were previously approved. The banners of Joseph Ellicott and Emery Upton which will be hanging on the Holland Land Office have been slightly modified to include a sponsor's name on the bottom of them (Ken Barrett Chevrolet).

Motion by: Larry Barnes

Motion was made to approve the revised banners.

Seconded by: Sharon Burkel

Vote for: 6

Abstained: 0

Vote against: 0

IV. Communications sent and received: None

V. Old Business

A. Photographs of designated properties. Ms. Bateman asked if anyone would be willing to take photographs of the historic properties from the street. Sharon Burkel, Larry Barnes and Theresa Siverling volunteered to do it in June. At the May meeting it will be verified who is taking pictures of what properties.

B. HPC Conference. Ms. Bateman suggested if anyone felt that there was information of interest for homeowners that they learned at the conference, to put it in writing and it will be held in a binder for future reference.

C. Letters of Interest. Ms. Barton gave Ms. Bateman letters that had been sent out in the past to prospective properties that HPC would be interested in designating.

D. Certified Local Government. Ms. Barton stated that in the past, Ms. Barton and Ms. Burkel had looked into becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG), but HPC couldn't

become that. Ms. Burkel stated that one of the reasons that the City of Batavia could not become a CLG was because City Council did not approve one of the two rules at the time to become a CLG where you could designate any property without the property owners consent, as long as the HPC deemed it necessary. The second stipulation was that 51% of the district would have to be designated. The state stated that HPC could designate an area without 51% of the property owners. City Council wanted there to be at least 51%. Council did approve the designating without the property owners consent but did not approve having less than 51% for a district. Ms. Barton stated that because we are not a CLG we are losing some of the benefits. Ms. Burkel said to Ms. Bateman that they looked into this many years ago and the criteria may be different now.

VI. New Business

A. Comprehensive Plan. Jason Molino, the City Manager, came to explain the planning process of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Molino stated that he has already met with the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Board. The level of involvement from each of the boards is very important to the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan deals not only with the land use model or changes, but also identifies the issues in the community and what the City would like to improve. The Comprehensive Plan will need lots of community involvement. The Comprehensive Plan will take between 12-18 months before it is completed. The Comprehensive Plan will be led by the Planning Board.

Ms. Bateman asked Mr. Molino if felt there was anything that HPC could improve on. Mr. Molino explained that the approach that is taken to designate properties could be improved. The community would want to have a soft approach and discuss what the benefits are with designation. The question that should be asked is what it means to the homeowner to be designated and why it is important to them. Ms. Burkel stated that HPC needs to have something to offer them. Mr. Molino stated that the property tax benefit is a benefit that is unused. Ms. Barton stated unfortunately most people are looking for some type of benefit up front.

Mr. Schulte stated the problem with most of the grants or tax credits is that you have to spend a significant amount of money on the property before you get any benefit. Mr. Molino stated that if this is the problem, then what are the solutions? This type of discussion is part of the brainstorming for the Comprehensive Plan: Identifying what the items are that will have a meaningful impact on the community, prioritizing them and then seeking after them. Ms. Burkel asked if it is possible to do a grant program for historic properties to use in conjunction with the community block grant. This would be a grant to help property owners rehab their properties. As of right now, for most historic properties to receive a grant, they have to be listed on the national historic registry. Ms. Burkel asked if the HPC could get money out of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for rehab on historic properties. Mr. Molino stated that if this idea is made apart of the Comprehensive Plan this would give Mr. Molino more leverage to write a grant for historic properties or properties who want to become designated. This is something that could be discussed. The Comprehensive Plan decides what the priority is and then it gives us a direction on how to work on it.

On a different note, Mr. Molino stated that he wanted to inform the boards that all are currently fully staffed and each of the main boards (Planning, Zoning and HPC) have administrative staff for minutes and a Code Enforcement Officer for questions regarding the code. George VanNest, the City Attorney, and Jason Molino, the City Manager will also be available to provide support and may attend board meetings when it is needed.

- B. List of potential properties for designation.** Ms. Bateman had asked everyone to bring in a list of properties that they would like to see designated. Ms. Burkel brought in a list that HPC had put together in the past. She updated it because some had already been designated. Ms. Burkel brought in the HPC work plan that was done a while ago. Mr. Barnes asked if they had tried to see if the owners at 145 Union Street were interested. Ms. Barton explained that HPC sent a letter a few years ago but there was no reply. Ms. Siverling feels that the way they changed the letter to ask properties to become designated has softened the approach compared to the old letter. Ms. Burkel asked if anyone had seen the Marque on 210-212 East Main Street had been changed. She would like to see it designated. If the Della Penna property at 40-52 Ellicott Street comes to where the property is in danger HPC may want to step in and designate the property, said Ms. Burkel. Ms. Bateman stated that the Wiard Plow office building at 33 Swan Street has also been discussed for demolition. Ms. Burkel suggested that with all these properties that the group should pick one property a month to send a request to the property owner to become designated. Ms. Bateman stated that Mr. Grey's property, at 41 Clinton Street, may be the easiest to start with. The other properties would be 6 Washington Ave and Falcone's Electric at 381-385 West Main Street. Ms. Bateman is going to send letters to Mr. Grey and the City Church at 210-212 East Main Street. Mr. Barnes suggested to take these two property owners out to lunch and discuss becoming designated. These lunches would be reimbursed by the HPC's budget. Start with one a month and see how it goes, Ms. Burkel stated. Ms. Bateman asked if every month everyone would bring one property that they would like to see designated.
- C.** Ms. Bateman updated the group on the Police Task Force. The group has started looking at site plans. She stated that the group will have a recommendation to Council by July 2015.

VII. Adjournment:

Motion by: Teresa Siverling

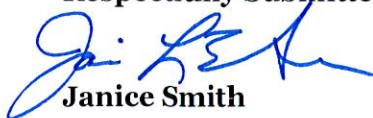
Motion was made to close the meeting at 8:03 pm.

Seconded by: Joan Barton

Vote for: 6

Vote against: 0

Respectfully Submitted,



Janice Smith