

Rockford Historic Preservation Commission
June 15, 2005 - 6:00 PM
Rockford City Hall, Conference Room B

MEMBERS PRESENT Valerie Olafson, Laura Bachelder, Jeanne Ludeke, Frank St. Angel, Scott Sanders, Sally Faber, Ald. John Beck (arrived at 6:15 PM)

STAFF Ginny Gregory, Steve Ernst, Dave Camacho, Bill Bittner, Atty. John Giliberti, Sandra Hawthorne

OTHERS Janell Drolsum, Brad Lange (McClure Engineering for IDOT), Gary Anderson, Janet Hill, Lori Gustafson

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Val Olafson

NEW BUSINESS

The minutes for the May 18, 2005 meeting were presented and a **MOTION to APPROVE** was made by Frank St. Angel, seconded by Scott Sanders, and **CARRIED** by a vote of 6-0.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS

▶ **922 C Street - Renewal**

Ginny explained that a Certificate of Appropriateness was granted July 14, 2004, for the construction of a 14' x 12' storage shed on the back corner of the property. The Certificate has lapsed, and the owners would like to renew it. No changes to the original request are being made.

A **MOTION** was made by Frank St. Angel to **APPROVE** the renewal of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a 14' x 12' storage shed on the back corner of the property as originally approved. The motion was seconded by Laura Bachelder and **CARRIED** by a vote of 6-0.

▶ **Haight Village Streets (Rockford Public Works)**

Ginny Gregory explained that changes to the street system in Haight Village have been in the works since October 1996 when the 3rd Street bridge burned down. As discussions with the railroad (which owned the bridge) evolved, the decision was made not to rebuild the 3rd Street bridge, to close 3rd Street at Walnut Street, and to change South 2nd Street back to a two-way street. A series of informational meetings was held with the public and the Preservation Commission with Public Works providing presentations of various plans. Since IDOT is also involved in the project, IHPA was contacted as well. The last contact the City had with IHPA was in 2000, when they acknowledged the Commission's concerns about a cul-de-sac shown in one of the plans. At this time, the request is for two Certificates (one for the

City's portion of the project, and one for IDOT's) and one set of comments concerning the project between East State and Walnut Streets to send to IHPA.

Dave Camacho from the Rockford Public Works Department presented information on the project. He explained the intent is to remove all barriers and barricades at the end of 3rd Street at the railroad and to build a limestone barrier wall with plantings. On South 2nd Street, south of Walnut, they will be replacing curb and gutter from Walnut to Oak to match that from Oak to the end of the street. Mr. Camacho stated consideration is being given to creating a brick paver crosswalk at Walnut and South 2nd Streets. He explained the only decorative lighting planned would be installed south of the bridge at Seminary Street. The lighting scheme in Haight Village will be maintained. Jeanne Ludeke asked about the replacement of the decorative light by the church near Walnut Street, which has recently been removed. Mr. Camacho stated he was not familiar with this but would look into it. Ginny pointed out that work being done thus far is all being done by IDOT. Ald. Beck asked Mr. Camacho to verify that no curb will be removed at the corners and that wheelchair accessibility will be maintained. Mr. Camacho stated that was correct.

▶ **Haight Village Streets (IDOT)**

Dave Camacho also reviewed the application from IDOT. In summary, their request is for:

- Instillation of a traffic island at the intersection of South 2nd and Walnut to accommodate two-way traffic.
- Removal of driveway pavement on the west side of South 2nd Street, just south of its intersection with Walnut Street (church property), replacing it with sod.
- Closure of 3rd Street at Walnut, extending curb, gutter and sidewalk along the south side of Walnut through 3rd Street. Will also include landscaping for the area just south of the sidewalk on Walnut; addition of parking stalls; and conversion of this part of 3rd (200-400 blocks) to a two-way street.

Open discussion:

Gary Anderson, Haight Village resident, felt a three-foot high barrier at the end of 3rd Street would be more in scale with the neighborhood than the four feet that was proposed. Bill Bittner, Director of Public Works, agreed that a three-foot high barrier would provide the necessary protection. This will be incorporated into the plan. Mr. Anderson also had a concern as to why IDOT did not get a 106 Review on this and go through the standard channels prior to construction. Ginny Gregory responded that according to IHPA, there has been a turnover in personnel at IDOT and the new people were not aware of this requirement. They have, however, been made aware that if the Commission does not approve these plans, they may have to redo work.

Mr. Anderson also raised the issue of brick crosswalks, stating that any new crosswalks should match the brick ones in the rest of Haight Village. Commission members agreed that the brick crosswalks should be included around the perimeter as part of the identification to this historic district. They also expressed concern with the large amount of paving on the island on the southwest corner of Walnut and South 2nd Streets. Plantings were preferred instead of solid paving. Mr. Bittner said this would not be feasible with the small size of the island. Scott Sanders agreed with Mr. Bittner, stating soil depth is not conducive to plantings. It was

agreeable to all parties that stamped concrete paving to simulate the brick crosswalks in the District would be used.

Gary Anderson continued, stating that the closure of 3rd Street at Walnut Street will make it difficult for visitors to find the Erlander Museum and to gain access to the two churches at this intersection. He asked if this had been considered in the planning process. He also asked if there was a way to design signage for ease in direction. For clarification, Bill Bittner stated this project was in the making before the 3rd Street bridge burned. In defense of IDOT, Mr. Bittner explained the City initiated the project and IDOT joined in later, picking up most of the costs using funds set aside for safety improvements.

Alderman Beck feels this project will benefit the neighborhood. He would like to be certain that signage is addressed so that visitors can find their way around the neighborhood. He is in support of this project and requests the Commission allow it to proceed. [Ald. Beck then left the meeting.]

Lori Gustafson, Haight Village resident and President of the neighborhood organization, was concerned that the lamppost taken down at South 2nd by Centennial Church be replaced and that any signage installed replicate the era of the village. Brad Lange from McClure Engineering explained the decorative lamps and the location of lighting. Scott Sanders verified no contemporary lighting will be installed in Haight Village.

The Commission had a concern with the cobra style lighting at the intersection of Walnut and South 2nd Streets. Mr. Bittner explained because IL Route 251 is a major road, sufficient lighting is required to ensure the safety of pedestrians. He further stated there could be options to the light design, but questioned if it would be worth the expense to decorate a light that is above a traffic light. Lori Gustafson suggested looking at the North Main project lights. Steve Ernst, Public Works, explained the North Main lights are not in conjunction with traffic signals. Val Olafson stated her opinion was that trying to make a cobra light historic was absurd. She stated the lights have always been there but no one has taken notice of them. She felt safety needs to be considered and that making a functional piece of equipment that did not exist 100 years ago look like it did exist is not practical. Discussion was held on having black or green colored traffic signal poles. Mr. Lange stated they had looked at having one post function for both signals, but because of the trees present it was not practical. He stated black equipment is not readily available and would require a long lead time. Val stated this was not considered a feasible excuse because IDOT did not file a 106 a year ago. Black is available and would be more agreeable. The Commission and neighborhood residents agreed.

Ginny indicated that the one part of the project that has not been finalized is how to handle parking in the 200 block of South 3rd Street. The initial plan was to add a new entrance to the existing parking lot of First Lutheran Church and to change from standard parallel parking to diagonal parking along this portion of 3rd Street. Steve Ernst indicated that he has been talking with representatives of the church and they do not want a new access into their parking lot at this location. Their feeling is that this would simply result in lots of people cutting through their parking lot as a means of turning around. These discussions are still on-going, but the current thought is that there would be something similar to a hammerhead cut into the sidewalk where the additional curb cut was going to be to make it easier for people to turn around in the street, and to leave the parking in its current configuration of standard parallel parking. Commission members encouraged the latter since it at least preserves the

appearance of the street whereas diagonal parking would completely change the appearance. Ginny concluded this part of the discussion by reminding Mr. Ernst that the City would need to obtain an additional Certificate for any other physical changes that might be made here once a final decision is made.

A **MOTION** was made by Jeanne Ludeke to **APPROVE** the request from the City of Rockford Public Works Department to remove the existing guardrail and barricades at the south end of South 3rd Street and replace them with landscaping and a limestone barrier wall to be three (3) feet high, and to **APPROVE** the installation of new curb, gutter and sidewalk on South 2nd Street south of Walnut Street; as well as resurfacing the street and striping it to convert 2nd Street from a one-way to a two-way street. Any further changes on South 3rd Street for curb cuts or changes in on-street parking will require an additional Certificate. The motion was seconded by Laura Bachelder and **PASSED** by a vote of 5-0-1 with Scott Sanders abstaining. [Mr. Sanders worked on the project in his capacity as an employee of McClure Engineering.]

A **MOTION** was made by Jeanne Ludeke to **APPROVE**:

- Installation of a traffic island at the intersection of South 2nd and Walnut to accommodate two-way traffic with a stamped concrete insert to give the appearance of brick.
- Removal of driveway pavement just south of the intersection of South 2nd and Walnut (church property).
- Closure of South 3rd Street at Walnut, extending curb, gutter and sidewalk along the south side of Walnut Street through 3rd Street, with landscaping to be installed in the area just south of the new sidewalk.
- Re-installation of any period street lights removed during the construction.
- Installation of traffic poles and mast arms that are black, with input from IHPA on appropriate light fixtures to be placed on these poles.
- Installation of a new crosswalk on the south side of Walnut at 2nd Street to be of stamped concrete to match in appearance existing crosswalks in Haight Village.

The motion was seconded by Frank St. Angel and **CARRIED** by a vote of 4-1-1 with Valerie Olafson voting no and Scott Sanders abstaining.

COMMENTS FOR SECTION 106 REVIEW OF IDOT PROJECT

Ginny explained that most of the portion of IDOT's project that is north of Haight Village falls within the East Rockford Historic District, a National Register district. As such, it falls under review requirements for the State since state funds are involved. This part of the project includes removal of South 3rd Street between East State and Walnut Streets, replacing it with a sodded area; installation of a median in South 2nd Street between City Hall and Walnut Street; and installation of new traffic lights.

Gary Anderson felt the land area being created by the removal of 3rd Street should be heavily landscaped and have signage to indicate that this is a gateway into the River District. Jeanne Ludeke agreed that the proposed changes north of Walnut Street need to include trees and landscaping. Bill Bittner indicated that, while landscaping may be desirable here, it is highly unlikely that IDOT will include it as part of this project since it is being paid for out of funds set aside for safety improvements. This is something that the City will have to work on in

the future. Ginny suggested that this could be a joint project of the City, the River District and the City of Gardens.

The other major point discussed was that the Commission strongly recommend that any and all future changes to this historical area be discussed and reviewed at the beginning of a project and prior to any work starting on same instead of after work has begun. Doing it this way makes everyone involved look bad.

Mr. Bittner assured the Commission that the City will work through some of the suggestions, such as the black poles. It may be necessary to install regular light poles while waiting for black ones in order to be certain everything is operational. However, he also wanted the Commission to understand that IDOT came into this project after the City had already initiated it and picked up most of the cost.

Jeanne Ludeke made a **MOTION** to send a letter to IHPA concerning this project with the following comments:

- Support for the removal of 3rd Street itself as shown on the plans;
- Addition of stamped concrete to the top of the median in South 2nd Street north of Walnut Street;
- Request for landscaping in the former 3rd Street area north of Walnut Street; and
- Request that IDOT seek review of historic resources before beginning projects in the future.

The motion was seconded by Laura Bachleder and passed 5-0-1 with Scott Sanders abstaining.

OLD BUSINESS – Nothing to Report

STAFF REPORT

Ginny reported that she had received a first draft of the historic resources survey of the Barber-Colman area from the consultants, Granacki Historic Consultants. She asked for one or two Commission members to volunteer to go through the survey forms with her to evaluate their ranking of individual buildings. Scott Sanders agreed to do this.

Ginny also reported she had received a request from a homeowner to withdraw from the Brown's Hills/ Knighstville Historic District. This individual was not involved in an earlier attempt to put together such an application. The homeowner is in the process of obtaining signatures.

The National Trust will hold its annual conference in Portland, Oregon during the last week in September, first week in October. Brochures were distributed to members who may be interested in attending.

Ginny will not be in attendance at the July 20th meeting. Elizabeth Kinsinger will attend in her stead.

With no further business to report, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.