

**Historic Preservation Commission**  
**Wednesday, August 18, 2010**

1. **Call to order:** Chair Arlan Kay called the Historic Preservation Commission meeting to order at 7:00 am on Wednesday, August 18, 2010.
2. **Roll call:** Present: Arlan Kay, Al Miller, Patrick Molzahn, Steve Peotter and Phil Harms. Absent: Joan Gefke and Beth Sever. Also Present: Village Administrator Mike Gracz, Building Inspector Mike Kleisch, and Clerk Assistant Amanda Martinelli.
3. **Approval of Minutes:**
  - a) 06/16/10 – **Miller moved to approve the June 16, 2010 Historic Preservation Commission minutes. Second by Peotter. Motion carried 5-0.**
4. **Public Appearances:**
  - a) Discussion and Possible Action re: Improvements at 101 S. Main Street: Kleisch is waiting for the building owner and/or mason to step forward with samples of work to approve and had nothing new to report.
5. **Communications and Miscellaneous Business**
  - a) Chair's Report: Tuck Pointing Standards (FYI): Kay mentioned the supplement Tuck Pointing letter to the National Trust Standards with suggestions from the State Historical Society.
  - b) Update re: 119 South Main Street Building: Dave Slitka, who is renting the studio at 119 S. Main Street, spoke on behalf of Kim Smith (the building's owner). Slitka mentioned that there's a lot of work that needs to be done, especially when it comes to tuck pointing. He explained that he's only gotten one bid so far and is wondering what needs to be done in order to get other bids. Slitka stated that, from what he understands, the outside of the building is what he needs to be more aware of as far as standards of historical preservation. Kay responded that, as far as the tuck pointing standards, they were just discussed. Kleisch has standards for how to do the tuck pointing and also supplemental Wisconsin information describing the process. The authority that we have here is limited to the exterior on the shell of the building. Kay asked Slitka if he was aware of the investment tax credits that are available to the owner. Slitka responded that he was not. Kay went on to explain that because Smith has owned the building for quite a few years, there's probably depreciation on the building with a fairly low basis value. Depending on how much money is spent, any amount over what the basis of the building is worth can be redeemed in the form of investment tax credits for 20% from the federal government and 5% from the state. Slitka estimates that renovations will be between \$30,000 and \$100,000. He stated that he really likes the building and sees a lot of potential in it, but knows there are a lot of things that need to be done. Slitka questioned how to get bids from several contractors with positive credentials and asked if it was possible for the Commission to recommend people. Kay responded that being a public body puts us at a disadvantage because we can't recommend anybody specific. Peotter said this is someone who's looking to improve one of the properties in downtown Oregon and looking for direction and help from the Commission. Slitka's question is for help to find somebody to do the work at a level of quality that is representative of what the Village would want. Peotter would like to be able to say yes and provide a list of companies that we feel do work that would be reflective of the image of our community. He would like it if the Village was able to have a list or could point Slitka to somebody that might have one to get him in the right direction. Gracz brought forth another suggestion. Either Slitka can hire someone who knows historic preservation as an architect to help get him through the process or call the City of Stoughton and ask who their business owner's use as contractors. He stated that the HPC really can't give out recommendations. Peotter stated that one thing he would suggest is going to the Chamber of

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Commerce in the Village. There was further discussion about the need for Slitka to get approval from the HPC before doing renovations.

Peotter told Slitka that he appreciates his willingness to go through the process and educate himself on what's going on in order to improve a really important building. He thanked him for what he was doing and stated how much the HPC appreciates all the effort he's going to put in to it. Slitka asked for clarifying information about receiving bids and coming back to the HPC before proceeding. Kay responded that he needs to come back to the Commission when he has a plan of what he's going to do.

Slitka asked a question about signage. He was wondering if he needed to talk to the Commission about putting signage out; his plan is to hang something in the windows. Gracz answered that Slitka would want to talk to Kleisch and the zoning administrator will approve the use of signs.

Harms asked Slitka what kind of business he runs. Slitka responded that he's a sport's photographer and has starting doing portrait work. There was more discussion about the type of photography Slitka does and his plan for future projects. Peotter thanked Slitka once again for taking the time to express his concerns and questions. There was more discussion about the possibility of giving a list of resources out, as long as recommendations were not implied. Molzahn stated that we really should be trying to educate and give direction to new owners. It's part of our mission to help them move forward and give them as much information as possible.

Gracz summarized that he doesn't think the problem will be finding a contractor, but making sure that no steps are missed. It's possible to find a contractor who's very good at tuck pointing, but they may not understand the things that Kay was talking about in terms of tuck pointing in a historic building. Gracz suggested talking to some of the owners who have had renovation work done in order to find out if they're happy with it. Kay asked Slitka if he felt like he had more direction and useful resources to turn to. Slitka responded that he thinks he has a better starting point now. Kay welcomed Slitka to the Village and thanked him again for coming.

- c) Local History and Historic Preservation Conference October 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> in Lake Geneva, WI (FYI only): Kay suggested forwarding the information to the Historical Society. Molzahn stated that when he received the Wisconsin Landmark Newsletter, the list for Members for 2010 Commission did not include the Village. He questioned if maybe the Village lapsed on their membership. Gracz stated that he knows the Village paid and he will check further into the issue.

**6. Unfinished Business:**

- a) Discussion and possible recommendation to the Village Board re: Minimum Property Maintenance Program for Historic Districts in the Village of Oregon: Kay started by bringing attention to the letter from the Village attorney regarding the matter. He posed the question of whether or not the HPC still wanted to have a minimum maintenance ordinance and, if so, what the purpose of it would be. Peotter responded that the last time we talked about this the Village Board was going to give feedback to the HPC. Gracz explained that the Board saw Matt's memo and sent it back to the Commission for more work. Kay posed a series of questions: What are member's thoughts on the maintenance being for downtown versus all historic districts? How far should this go? What's the purpose of it? Kay mentioned that one of the

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examples, Sheboygan, seemed to be more worried about garbage in the front yard versus minimum maintenance of the building. Peotter suggested that while it's first being investigated to focus on the downtown area that does not include residential. While they're both historic districts, their functionality is very different.

Harms explained that he sees the issue being related to upkeep and maintenance. He agrees with starting downtown. Gracz went into detail about the way things currently are. We've taken the soft approach and first ask for cooperation. We've had very good luck dealing with property owners in town when we've asked them to do things. So that's the question: Do you keep taking that approach or do you actually have something on the code where, if you can't get somebody to cooperate, there's something to enforce? Molzahn asked if there was anything in our zoning already and if we'd be duplicating something that already exists. He mentioned that he is in favor of starting with the downtown area, as well. Harms once again stated that he thinks it would be useful to concentrate on safety to ease into it and then work more towards maintenance. Kay objected to this idea slightly. If it's getting to the point of safety, then Gracz's other remedy would be to demolish the building. We want to work actively to keep it away from that point. Molzahn asked if there was anything in our zoning about aesthetics, such as someone letting their grass grow too high. Gracz said that it's considered a nuisance and we hire somebody to go cut it and charge it back to the property owner. This sort of issue isn't in the zoning code, it's under Public Nuisance. Molzahn posed the idea that we have a similar situation going on here. Somebody has a building that the paint is chipping off and we're talking about wanting to somehow force them to re-paint that building. Is that a Public Nuisance? Is it a historic issue? Kleisch responded that the Public Nuisance covers general stuff like mowing grass, shoveling sidewalks, storage of junk, loud activities and fireworks, but we don't get to the core of the building itself or structural repairs. We just lack in that area. The other question is if somebody doesn't paint their house, what do you do? The Village isn't going to hire someone to go to that house and paint it for them. So then you're just issuing a citation for not complying with an Ordinance and then those just pile up. If they have any money to paint the house, they don't have money to pay the citations and they'll just keep piling up until they sell the house. So even if this is in place, that doesn't mean the building's going to get taken care of. It just gives us the ability to write a citation.

Gracz explained that the new zoning code we enacted a couple of years ago is seen as a tool that allows us to get someone to cooperate if they don't want to. Typically people cooperate with the Village and do things, but it's that one time when that person doesn't want to do it that you then have the zoning code to enforce it. Gracz said he sees the same thing in this situation. We'd hopefully still use the soft approach, but then you'd have this in the background if they just don't want to cooperate. **Motion by Miller to focus attention on the downtown Historic District. Second by Molzahn. Motion carried 5-0.** Miller asked if any one of the examples provided is better than the rest. Kleisch responded by saying that it doesn't really make a difference because it won't get the building done, it just allows citations to be written. Usually people that own the building simply don't have the money or don't care. So even if the ordinance is there, they may not have the money to take care of it. The one's that do have money are generally not aware that there was an ordinance and will take care of it without a problem. Gracz stated that, other than a few houses that may need work, the housing stock in the Village is in good shape. Peotter explained that the worst case situation would be the Village asking an owner to do renovations that they would love to cooperate with but simply don't have the money to do so. Gracz responded by saying that there is a distinction between improving the look or concentrating on public safety. Molzahn stated that the concentration should be more on public safety and avoiding demolition versus concentrating on minor repairs. Kay summarized that the purpose seems to revolve around safety and maintenance for

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the long term preservation of the building. Peotter stated that the next step would be to review the examples of actions taken elsewhere to discuss at the next meeting. Molzahn expressed further concern in regards to tuck pointing. If Kay is not available, do we have the resources to accomplish what needs to be done? He brought forth a general lingering concern of what happens if Kay is not available to inspect. Kay asked if anything else needed to be discussed or addressed.

7. **Future Agendas**

More work on the maintenance code and waiting on 101 and 119 Main Street.

8. **Adjournment: Peotter moved to adjourn the Historic Preservation Commission meeting at 7:57 am on Wednesday, August 18, 2010. Second by Miller. Motion carried 5-0.**

Submitted by,  
Amanda Martinelli  
Clerk Assistant