



**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

April 5, 2010, at 4:00 p.m.

Don Curran, Commissioner

Suzell Eisenberger, Commissioner

Betty Breclaw, Commissioner

Blaine DeGrave, Staff Liaison

James V. O'Toole, City Manager

Judith Fouts, Commissioner
Monte Morrison, Commissioner
Mary Maercklein, Commissioner
Ellie O'Donnell, Commissioner

[Escanaba City Hall, Council Chambers, 410 Ludington Street, Escanaba, MI 49829](#)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Curran at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 410 Ludington Street.

Present: Mary Maercklein, Suzell Eisenberger, Chairman Don Curran, Blaine DeGrave, Vice-chair Judy Fouts, Secretary Betty Breclaw, Ellie O' Donnell, Monte Morrison

Also Present: Patricia Baribeau, Bryan Zaplitny, Kevin Cook, Doug Russell

O' Donnell moved, Breclaw seconded, **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**, to approve regular Historic District Commission Minutes from December 8, 2009, as printed.

O' Donnell moved, Morrison seconded, **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**, to approve the Historic District Commission Minutes from training conducted on February 2, 2010, as printed.

ADJUSTMENTS/APPROVAL TO THE AGENDA

Eisenberger moved, Breclaw seconded, **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**, to approve the Historic District Commission Agenda as printed.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

NONE

TREASURER'S REPORT

NONE

UNFINISHED/OLD BUSINESS

A. Historic District Commission By-Laws

The role of the Historic Commission includes some functions in addition to the Ordinance duties and responsibilities. Continued discussion will take place concerning conceptual Historic Commission by-laws, which will, once enacted, facilitate the performance duties of the Commission.

Eisenberger moved, O' Donnell seconded, **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**, to approve the Historic Commission by-laws as printed.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion - Historic District Guidelines

Copies of Calumet's Guidelines shall be given to the commissioners and they are asked to review before the meeting. Discussion will take place concerning conceptual wording and guidance setting the creation of the City of Escanaba's Guidelines.

DeGrave stated Calumet's guidelines are accepted by the State. The guidelines are a bit lengthy for the City of Escanaba's needs. The guidelines also contain some architecture that is not featured in the buildings in Escanaba and could be eliminated.

Breclaw questioned whether or not a district needs to be determined before guidelines are put into place.

DeGrave stated that another request for a district has been submitted. Whether or not a single building or an entire district will be designated will be decided upon by the study committee. Individuals are currently being sought to serve on the committee. A recommendation will be presented to the Historic District Commission. The recommendation will determine whether a single building or entire area will be nominated as a historic district.

Maercklein questioned purpose the guidelines will serve when they are complete.

DeGrave clarified that any building located within a historic district would have to follow the guidelines. Any work on buildings located within the district will have to be approved before the Historic District Commission.

General discussion ensued regarding the fact that the guidelines provided by Calumet are generic. Escanaba has a lot of the same type of buildings. A historic district cannot be defined without consent of the property owners located within the area. Escanaba does not have a contiguous area of historic architecture so it may be necessary to piecemeal the historic districts.

Fouts questioned how the number of historic districts would be determined.

DeGrave clarified that a larger district requires more work upfront, but it would save time in the long run by not having to go through the process repeatedly.

Fouts questioned whether or not the properties within a historic district had to be adjacent. She also questioned how and if changes could be made to the guidelines once they are adopted.

Baribeau, who sat on the Study Committee for the Lofts on Ludington project, clarified that category districts can be established and buildings who fit the district requirements could apply to be part of the district. She cautioned establishing large districts because it can be extremely controversial. Property owners could become disgruntled because of the restrictions set forth by the guidelines for the historic district designation.

DeGrave stated that Nan Taylor from the State Historic Preservation Office recommended creating a larger district. However, she never gave any specifications on how large the district should be.

Fouts recommended using the Lofts on Ludington and 623 Ludington Street projects as pilot programs so that other property owners can see examples.

Curran stated the guidelines from Calumet are consistent with the State Historic Preservation Office's requirements. The guidelines are fairly generic and only some of the types of buildings may need to be deleted because the architecture is not present in Escanaba.

Bryan Zaplitny suggested establishing a district with a dated opt-in approach.

DeGrave requested assistance from the Historic District Commission members to sit on a subcommittee to assist in the revision of Calumet's guidelines.

O' Donnell moved, Eisenberger seconded, **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**, to approve using Calumet's design guidelines as a template for creating Escanaba's design guidelines and that a subcommittee be established consisting of Commissioners Breclaw, Fouts, and Maercklein.

B. Project Updates

1. Lofts on Ludington

DeGrave stated that a request for grant applications was received for time slot in mid-April to assist in funding the project.

2. Various Developments/623 Ludington Street

Sterling Investments Inc. representatives were available to give background on the project. The goal of the developers is to restore the property to its original state. The group is working with the Masons, who own the property next door, to also restore that adjoining building. Sterling Investments would like the Masons to stay in the building and acquire the property. The architect that designed 623 Ludington Street was of some renown. A bulk of the buildings he designed are on the national register of historic places. He is responsible for designing 70-80 schools throughout the Upper Peninsula.

DeGrave stated that a Study Committee is being formulated. It was clarified that Historic District Commission members cannot sit on the Study Committee. The Study Committee will determine how large of an area will be researched for the historic district designation.

Baribeau questioned whether or not the Delta Hotel Building could be considered to be part of the district. The building is already established on the national historic registry. The district could be grown out of the three building area. In order to add to a historic district, the buildings have to be contiguous.

Sterling Investments questioned how long the study committee process takes. Curran and Baribeau clarified that the Lofts on Ludington Study Committee took a year to complete its tasks even though the building owner did a lot of research on his own. It was also clarified that the Historic District Commission cannot do anything besides accept the recommendation from the Study Committee. Sterling Investments pledged their support to assist in any way possible.

Fouts questioned whether or not the guidelines have to be in place before the approval of the project. Curran clarified that the project will still have to follow the guidelines set forth by SHPO.

Breclaw questioned whether or not Commissioners could express support for projects. It was decided that this would create a conflict in the determination of the project by the Commission.

The Commission expressed their support for the project and vowed to expedite the process as much as possible when the recommendation was received from the Study Committee.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Baribeau stated that the sesquicentennial is coming up and the planning group would like to do a book of historic homes and building in the area. Volunteers will be needed for this project, as well as to sit on the planning committee.

COMMISSION/STAFF COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

NONE

ADJOURNMENT

Maercklein moved, Fouts seconded, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Historic District Commission at 4:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Schroeder
Cori Triest
DDA Co-Directors

Approved: _____

Don Curran, Chairman

Approved: _____

Betty Breclaw, Secretary

Approved: _____

Blaine DeGrave, Staff Liason