

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING  
ESCANABA, MICHIGAN  
MARCH 17, 2014**

**DRAFT**

A meeting of the Escanaba Historic District Commission was held on Monday, March 17, 2014, at 4:00 p.m. in Room C101 at City Hall, 410 Ludington Street, Escanaba, MI 49829.

**PRESENT:** Chairperson Don Curran, Vice-Chairperson Judith Fouts, Secretary Suzell Eisenberger, Commissioners: Monte Morrison, and Karen Lindquist

**ALSO PRESENT:** Staff Liaison Blaine DeGrave, Council Liaison Ron Beauchamp, and Confidential Secretary Amy Peltin,

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Ellie O'Donnell, City Manager James O'Toole

Chairperson Curran called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**Roll Call**

Confidential Secretary Peltin conducted the roll call.

**Approval/Correction of the January 20, 2014, Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes**

**A motion was made by Chairperson Curran, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Fouts to approve the January 20, 2014, Meeting Minutes. Ayes were unanimous.**

**Approval/Adjustments to the Agenda**

Blain DeGrave, Staff Liaison asked that we move to New Business item one as the first Agenda item for the meeting as we have a special guest via Skype waiting to give a presentation.

**A motion was made by Chairperson Curran, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Fouts, to approve the meeting agenda. Ayes were unanimous.**

**Conflict of Interest Declarations**

None.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. **Discussion –Historical Façade Design Guideline.** – A draft version was distributed to the Commissioners for their review. The Historical Façade Design Guideline will have to be going before SHPO for approval. This guideline will be used for not only the Historic District Guidelines but also for the Façade program for the City of Escanaba. Blaine DeGrave asked that upon review if anyone has any questions, comments, or concerns to please contact him. Chairperson Curran asked if the Historic District Commission should be reviewing the Façades. Blaine DeGrave explained the Historic District Commission only deals with Historic Districts and at this time there is only one District in Escanaba. The Façade Design Guideline is a Federally Funded program and these standards must be adhered to for qualification for funding from the program. Ron Beauchamp, City Council Liaison addressed the Commissioners stating there will be a joint meeting

sometime in May 2014 with the Historic District Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council to review roles and responsibilities.

## NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Discussion-Certified Local Government Program.** – Jessica Flores is a community outreach specialist with the State Historic Preservation Office and was up in this area in January and looked at a couple façade projects with MEDC and Jennifer Tucker. She is in the Upper Peninsula once every couple months and would be happy to come up and meet with the Commission. The Certified Local Government program is a partnership with the SHPO, National Park Service, and our community. They currently have 23 certified local governments and looking to add more. The program is designed to promote historic preservation at the grassroots level. The biggest component is the local entity and partnership with the SHPO and National Parks Service and jointly administered by both of us and it is a process recognized across every state, which has a CLG Coordinator and program. The purpose of the program is part of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and what came about was in 1980 it was decided to have more of a grassroots effort and have more of a working relationships with our local communities and the CLG was established and part of the Historic Preservation Act. Jessica Flores was looking up records for Escanaba and their records indicate we have some National Register Districts and some potential districts not yet designated. Blaine DeGrave clarified we have one District at this time on the West end of town and we are currently waiting for approval on all of Ludington Street for designation. Jessica Flores noted the difference, the National Historic District is honorary versus the Local Historic District is where you have some protection, and enables the City to have a protective layer from a large big box store move into the district. Blaine DeGrave did explain that we have a Historical Preservation Ordinance in place. An active CLG program works as a vehicle for community development by identifying specific preservation projects and applying for grants to carry out those projects. SHPO is required to allocate 10% of their allocation to communities across the State, which breaks down to approximately \$100,000. If you want to become certified you must maintain an ongoing system for survey and inventory of your resources, you need to develop four year preservation goals for the community, have adequate public participation in the Local Historic Preservation program and process, participation in nominating historic properties to the National Registry of Historic Places, and will be monitored every four years to ensure that all responsibilities are being met. Regardless if you decide to become CLG certified these are good tools to have in your community to establish a baseline and reaching your goals. Chairperson Curran asked of the 29 communities CLG certified how many were from the Upper Peninsula. Jessica Flores stated at this time only two Calumet and Menominee. She has been working very closely with Menominee and they have received funds for the past 3 years to rehabilitate the Opera House and is a great project. The grants are awarded on an annual competitive basis. There are two different types of grants, one being a planning/educational grant and a bricks and mortar grant. A few items that would qualify for planning/educational grant would be developing design guidelines, a preservation plan, and a feasibility study for a building. A bricks and mortar project would be for example a new roof on a library, the Menominee Opera House, roof of the Bell Isle Aquarium, soffit repair, and mortar repair. The grants are 60% federal/40% match, however in-kind services are allowed. In-kind services are funds dispersed by the City or volunteer based services. The intent of the grant program is to augment rather than replace. CLG monies have often been used as gap financing for a project. Example: We want to do something like put a new roof on a building – the building must be owned by the City or by a non-profit. The City could be the Grantee and funnel the money to

the non-profit; it cannot be used for any private entity. One large benefit of the Local Historic Districts is when we lost the State tax credits in December 2012 it was a huge loss to historic preservation however we still have the commercial tax credits, which have to be income producing. Chairperson Curran asked what the next steps are needed. Jessica Fouts explained the next steps are to fill out an application, provide ordinance to Jessica for review, provide maps, list of Historic District Commission members, specific goals outlined, and a survey. The City must also be on board and must have a signed letter from the Mayor or City Manager. Once all documents have been received, reviewed, and create an agreement, once signed it is then forwarded to the Parks Service for approval. They release their grant program at the end of October and have until the end of the year to respond. An application can be found on their website. She also mentioned that once the City of Escanaba has become CLG certified she will discuss with the commission the Main Street Program. Brief discussion of the Main Street program followed by Chairperson Curran.

## **2. Project Updates:**

- a. 2014 MEDC Downtown Façade Improvement – Update was given. A meeting with the architect and property owners was held and the process is moving forward.
- b. MEDC Redevelopment Ready Community Initiative – Update was given. Application for the RRC Program was being review by the MEDC.
- c. National Registry of Historic Places Nomination Update – No further information.
- d. Commission Vacancy and Recruitment Update – Possible interest by Elizabeth Keller. Blaine DeGrave will contact Mrs. Keller.

## **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **COMMISON/STAFF COMMENT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

## **ADJOURMENT**

**A motion was made by Chairperson Curran, seconded by Commissioner Eisenberger, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m. Ayes were unanimous.**

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Don Curran, Chairperson  
Historic District Commission

Next Meeting: April 21, 2014 at 4:00 p.m.