

CITY OF WHITEWATER LANDMARKS COMMISSION

MAY 4, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Landmarks Commission was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairperson Pat Blackmer . MEMBERS PRESENT: Blackmer, Helmick, Kienbaum (Ken), Richardson, Haselow, Grady. MEMBERS ABSENT: None. (Board has one open position due to resignation of Kori Oberle). OTHERS PRESENT: Virginia Epps, Linda Robinson. CITY STAFF PRESENT: Michele Smith.

It was moved by Helmick and seconded by Haselow to approve the agenda and to approve the Landmarks minutes of 3/17/17 and 4/6/17. AYES: Blackmer, Helmick, Richardson, Haselow, Grady. NOES: None. ABSENT: Kienbaum. The next meeting of the Landmarks Commission is scheduled for 6/1/17. Councilmember Christopher Grady, new council representative to the Landmarks Commission, was welcomed to the group.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None.

PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING DESIGNATION OF MOKSNES/EPPS HOME AT 970 HIGHLAND STREET AS A LOCAL LANDMARK. Chairperson Pat Blackmer opened the Public Hearing. Dr. M. Virginia Epps has applied for Landmark status on her home at 970 W. Highland Street. The home, built in 1972 at the request of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Moksnes, is of modern “Wrightian” design. Architect Fritz Dreger, son of Herbert Dreger, was a local Whitewater talent who attended Whitewater College High and graduated from Whitewater High School in 1960. Frtiz’s family resided on Blue Spring Lake in Palmyra. Dreger defined his design as “radical” where he turned the house around so that the living room and dining room faced the back of the lot. The home was sold to Dr. Virginia Epps in 1993. She is the second and current owner of the home. Dr. Epps was present to describe further details of the home and to confirm her desire to have the home designated as a Landmark. Consensus was that the home is of unique architectural design and definitely qualifies for landmark status. Public input was solicited. The public hearing was closed, and it was moved by Helmick and seconded by Richardson to designate the Moksnes / Epps home as a local landmark. AYES: Blackmer, Helmick, Richardson, Haselow. NOES: None. ABSENT: Kienbaum.

HISTORIC HOMES PHOTO PROJECT. Still underway and will be worked on as weather and time permit.

BURIAL PRESERVATION ACTS COMMITTEE REPORT (STATE OF WISCONSIN). No further information was available regarding the status of the changes to the State’s burial preservation act.

WALTON OAKS PARK DESIGNATION AS LOCAL LANDMARK. Pat Blackmer has been working with Karen Coburn of the Urban Forestry Commission and with Ruth Walton regarding designation of the Park as a local landmark. Ruth Walton has provided a great deal of beneficial information. More information will be forthcoming at the next Landmarks Commission meeting.

BRICKYARD PARK HISTORIC AREA DESIGNATION AS LOCAL LANDMARK. Brickyard Park, located at the intersection of Jefferson Street and Starin Road, has been considered for designation as a local Landmark area. Unfortunately, there is some confusion as to local ownership of the property, and any activity on this parcel will have to be delayed.

EFFIGY MOUNDS PRESERVE. A successful clean up day was held with close to 20 people assisting to clean eight mounds. A presentation about the mounds is planned at the Senior Center on May 17th.

INVENTORY TAGS FOR CITY-OWNED PROPERTY. Suzanne Haselow reported that there was a misunderstanding about the serial numbers, but the project is back on track, and prices have been obtained. It was agreed by the group that 250 tags are sufficient. It was agreed that the order for the tags would be placed prior to the next Landmarks Commission meeting. Haselow will contact City Clerk Smith to purchase.

PROPOSED LIBRARY EXPANSION PROJECT. Helmick reported that the Library Director, Library Board Chairperson, City Manager, and Neighborhood Services Director recently visited Platteville, Wisconsin, where a Library project similar to that being considered in Whitewater had been completed. It was noted that a Common Council meeting was also held to hear concerns of Council were expressed, and resulting in the Council asking the Library Board to better involve the public and assemble information indicating why a new Library and/or addition are necessary. It was indicated that the Library Board will host a public forum on May 22. Councilmember Grady, who also serves as council representative to the Library Board, indicated that the May 22nd meeting is for the purpose of talking about the history of how the project got to where it is today, but the location is not planned for discussion at all. Grady indicated that the Council asked the Library Board to publicize **why** a Library is needed. The Council did not ask for Library location input at this point. Chairperson Blackmer expressed concern over the fact that the developer has proposed a project where there is no guarantee after the seven year period that the new Library space would actually be deeded to the City, especially in light that the developer cannot commit to this in writing. Grady indicated that in June, Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority ("WHEDA") will be coming before the Council to give a presentation relating to their rules and regulations that would apply to the proposed project. Blackmer indicated that the Landmarks has taken the position that the J.J. Starin Mansion (507 W. Main) is a historic Landmark and is on the State and National Registers, and falls under local ordinance and regulations that would affect the disposition of the property. Grady indicated that misinformation is out there that gives the impression that the mansion would be torn down. Blackmer confirmed that potential developer Troy Hoekstra had contacted her and said he was all for adaptive reuse or moving the property. Grady indicated that until negotiation occurs, the details of the proposal are unknown. Grady believes more information will be available in June. Grady indicated that the newly-created Finance Committee will be meeting and will discuss the City's financial donation to the project. More information will be coming.

"HELLO BUILDING, HOW OLD ARE YOU?" LIBRARY PROJECT IN JUNE. Suzanne Haselow and former Landmarks member Kori Oberle have been planning a Library project involving local youth, teaching

them about our local landmarks. The event is planned for June 15th at 3:30 p.m. at the Irvin L. Young Memorial Library. The planners are seeking assistance from the Landmarks Commission on that day. Helmick, Richardson, and Blackmer agreed to make themselves available.

LOCAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION PROPOSALS – 401 W. Center St. and 222 Center Street. It has been mentioned that these two properties may be worthy of local Landmark designation. No further report is available at this time.

BIRGE FOUNTAIN CONSERVATION. Blackmer reported that McKay Laboratories of Ohio will come to Whitewater this year to view the fountain and to make recommendations regarding the maintenance of the fountain and recommendations regarding products and contractors to be used.

LIBRARY DISPLAY CASE FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION / ARCHEOLOGICAL MONTH. A display in our local Library was completed May 1st, using photographs from Dan Richardson's collection and personal photograph loaned by Shirley Hapka. Focus was on local landmarks, specifically the Birge Fountain and the Green Shutters.

PUBLIC EDUCATION REGARDING LOCAL LANDMARK STATUS AND DESIGNATION OF LOCAL LANDMARK STATUS FOR NEIGHBORHOODS. The Commission indicated it would be nice to have the Starin Park Neighborhood designated as a State and National District and Local Landmark district. The intent of the districts would not be to place restrictions on homes. It was suggested that details regarding this be placed in any presentations, as people may interpret the Landmark designations as placing limitations on their ability to remodel or maintain their homes.

REVISION OF LANDMARKS ORDINANCE REGARDING DECERTIFICATION OF LANDMARK OR DEMOLITION / DECERTIFICATION. It was agreed that this item remain on hold, as amendments to the ordinance now may be misinterpreted as a Landmarks Commission effort to make changes prior to the Library project determination.

THANK YOU LETTERS TO LOCAL LANDMARK OWNERS. Landmarks Chairperson Blackmer has prepared a letter of appreciation which will be sent to each owner of a locally-designated Landmark in the City.

BROCHURE REPRINT – MOKSNES/EPPS. Reprinting of the brochure is pending.

LANDMARK COMMISSION MEMBERS RECRUITMENT. If anyone knows of anyone interested in serving on Landmarks Commission, please have them contact the City Clerk's office.

OFFICER ELECTION Delayed until next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT. It was moved by Helmick and seconded by Richardson to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried by unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele R. Smith, Secretary