



City of La Porte Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 5:30 PM
City Hall, Council Chambers, 801 Michigan Avenue

A meeting of the City of La Porte Historic Preservation Commission (“Commission”) was held at City Hall Council Chambers, 801 Michigan Avenue, La Porte, IN, 46350 on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 5:30 P.M. (“Local Time”), pursuant to notice duly given in accordance with the rules of the Commission and the Indiana Open Door Law.

This meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Sallie LaRocco, Chair.

On call of the roll, the members of the Commission were shown to be present or absent as follows:

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sallie LaRocco, Fonda Owens, Jeanne Rafaj, April Hacker, and Peter Steele, and Bruce Johnson (Advisory Member)

- MEMBERS ABSENT:** Cassandra Redeagle and Maggie Caviston.

- GUESTS PRESENT:** David Heinold, Drew Buchanan, Deb Parcell, Mayor Tom Dermody, Lexi Blozis, and Father James Ellison.

- MINUTES:** A motion was made by Fonda Owens to approve the April 16, 2024 meeting minutes and the motion was seconded by April Hacker. The motion passed 5-0.

CORRESPONDENCE REPORTS (CLAIMS, COAs, Demolition Reports):

- A. Certificate of Appropriateness
 - a. 612 D Street – Paint exterior of home and garage
Deb explained the staff report for painting the exterior of the home and garage at 612 D Street. Jeanne Rafaj made a motion to **approve 2024-COA-05 for painting the exterior of the home and garage at 612 D Street** and the motion was seconded by Peter Steele. The motion passed 5-0.

 - b. 612 D Street – Replace deck boards on front porch
Deb explained that the replacement of rotten deck boards is considered maintenance and was approved by City staff.

 - c. 1302 Jackson Street – Install vinyl privacy fence
Jeanne Rafaj recused due to being the homeowner and applicant for the COA request at 1302 Jackson Street. Deb explained the staff report for installation of a white vinyl privacy fence in the backyard at 1302 Jackson Street. Deb passed out a sample material of the proposed fence. Fonda asked about the material of the proposed fence if it is solid.

Jeanne explained that the fence is solid in three foot sections and would like the fence to provide privacy from neighbors. There was discussion about the view of the fence from the street view. Jeanne explained that the proposed fence will be mostly hidden from view at the street. Fonda asked for clarification about the existing metal fence. Jeanne explained that the black metal fence is located in the backyard. April asked about the look of the fence on the property.

Jeanne explained that the fence will be located in a manner that will look good and they plan to plant a clematis to grow along the proposed fence. Sallie questioned if the board is setting a precedent for allowing similar backyard fences. Deb explained that the commission should give reasons for the proposed fence or consider changing the design guidelines appropriately. There was discussion about possible motions for the proposed fence. Sallie mentioned that there is concern that the board is making style changes with the trial of a fence that is not approved by the HPC. Sallie explained that the fence is only minimally visible from Jackson Street, which is what the HPC is most concerned with in regards to fence materials. Fonda asked what kind of wood fence would be allowed if the board stuck to the design guidelines. Deb explained that the guidelines show several options for wood fences and privacy fences that are already pre-approved.

There was additional discussion about the proposed fence material. Fonda mentioned that the applicant is asking for an exception to the kind of fence material. Fonda explained that this is a case by case basis and should be either an approval or denial based on the board's justification. The board discussed the proposed fence material and location.

Peter Steele made a motion to **approve 2024-COA-06 to allow installation of 24 feet of white vinyl privacy fence on the south side of the yard at 1302 Jackson Street with the justification that it is only minimally visible from the front yard and street** and the motion was seconded by April Hacker. The motion passed with 3 ayes and 1 nay. Sallie LaRocco, Peter Steele, and April Hacker voted aye. Fonda Owens voted nay. Jeanne Rafaj abstained.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Bruce Johnson reported that we will have to find out how many children for this year's coloring book printing and distribution. April Hacker reported on an idea for the Sunflower Fair booth for homeowner education and an activity for children. The idea for discussion was which house is historic or which house qualifies for designation that would have pictures of different homes that could qualify for designation.

April asked about what is the best way to fund the paper plate stained glass mosaic project idea to develop the activity. Jeanne suggested providing a budget of no more than \$100 to develop the project for the Sunflower Fair booth.

Fonda reported that the Restricted funds currently has \$4,376 for spending on these types of projects. The project idea is to sell plates for \$1 and recoup costs into a dedicated fund for the Sunflower Fair booth project.

Jeanne Rafaj mentioned that she will get a copy of a quote for the new local designation plaques to David for inclusion on the next meeting agenda in June.

Sallie is continuing to work with the 2 homeowners on the local designation process.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Events and Outreach – Sallie reported that Maggie was leading this, but is requesting to resign from the HPC. Sallie recognized the importance of Maggie’s position and background that she would like to keep the position open for a little bit.
- B. La Porte City Hall Window Vinyl Decal Update – David reported that he received a few quotes and samples for discussion about the City Hall window vinyl decal replacements. David passed out the quote received from Legacy Sign Group for removing the existing decal and installing new window vinyl decals above both the Michigan Avenue and Jefferson Avenue doors to identify the building as City Hall. The board briefly discussed the sample of the window vinyl decal and generally agreed with the proposed window vinyl decal. David mentioned that no approval is needed at this time. This item is only for informational purposes at this time.

HEARING OF VISITORS: Mayor Tom Dermody spoke to the HPC and expressed thanks to the commission members for their commitment. Mayor looks forward to including the HPC in

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Deb announced that there will be a Preservation Roundtable at Trinity Lutheran Church, 201 N. Washington St, Valparaiso on June 5th that will feature Kurt Garner West as the speaker talking about local and national designations. Deb explained that the Michigan City HPC is looking at hosting a wood window repair workshop on June 22nd from 10 am to Noon with the location to be determined. Deb also mentioned that she will put together a presentation for a future HPC meeting on the NAPC guide for effective meetings.

There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Jeanne Rafaj to adjourn and the motion was seconded by Fonda Owens. The meeting adjourned at 6:17 PM.



Historic Preservation Commission Chair



Attest