

WATERLOO HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING – December 19, 2023– 4:30 P.M.
The meeting was held in the Mollenhoff Room at City Hall

Chairperson Gilbert called the regular meeting of the City of Waterloo Historic Preservation Commission to order at 4:30 p.m.

Commission Members present were: Matthew Gilbert, Jared Hottle, Cole Weliver, Ed Ottesen, and, Terry Stevens.

Commission Member(s) absent were: Ivan Valtchev, Hector Salamanca Arroyo, Nick Hedrick, and Susan Price.

Others present were: Lexi Schneider and Noel Anderson - Planning Staff, Ed Gallagher – Grout Museum, and Tim Kuhlmann – Cedar Valley Historical Society

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Stevens, seconded by Weliver to approve the agenda of the December 19, 2023 regular meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Ottesen, seconded by Stevens to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2023 regular meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Oral Presentations

No Report

Hearings

None

Reports

1. Main Street

Ottesen noted Santa was in the park with llama's and fireworks for the holidays.

2. Silos and Smokestacks.

Hottle noted he contacted Silos and Smokestacks to find out how they can collaborate. They responded by stating they are busy right now and he should contact them again in January.

3. Grout Museum

Gallagher stated the Executive Director at the Grout retired after 35 years. The Grout has started to look for a replacement by doing a national search for candidates. The museum will be getting

two new exhibits, a Bosnian exhibit and a toy exhibit. A dinosaur exhibit will be coming in May to the Imaginarium.

4. Project Update

Schneider noted the Civil Rights project has been finalized and submitted to the federal government. Anderson stated the consultants did meet all of the requirements of the federal government for the grant. Gilbert explained the Commission will want to come up with a way to present the project at the Awards Banquet in May.

5. Highland

Weliver noted the Christmas Party was small this year and it was hosted by Nick and Lindsey.

6. Walnut

Gilbert stated the Walnut Neighborhood hosted a Saturday pancake breakfast on December 16th.

Discussion Items/Possible Action Items

1. School Art Project 2024

Gilbert asked if a meeting can be set up with the Waterloo Library and the Waterloo Center for the Arts to plan a workshop to start off the School Art Project. Stevens noted that can be done and Gilbert offered to help with the project.

2. Main Street Waterloo Collaboration

Gilbert explained he will be discussing the Historic Preservation Commission Banquet and Tour De Loo with Jessica next year.

3. Other Collaborations

Hottle noted he can contact the Hawkeye Community College employee responsible for the class that builds the homes and see if they would be willing to collaborate with the Commission on an education workshop.

Hottle explained he was invited to the Church Row Action Team. The action team strives to move rentals to owner-occupied units by using incentives for smaller developers and landlords.

4. City-Owned Properties and Demo List

Ottesen asked for an update on the Rath Administration Building located at 1515 Sycamore Street. Anderson explained two West High graduates are looking to develop the building into 90 senior units. They are planning to use Iowa Finance Authority Tax Credits to complete the project. However the developers are concerned with the requirement by the IFA to not raise rents over a certain amount and still make enough money to support the project. The City presented a moving percentage rate for rebates to combat the missing cost. The developers also questioned if they could do a PILOT program, which Anderson noted they could not do a PILOT program

because it can not be used for residential developments. Anderson noted this project would be a great improvement for the City of Waterloo and a good addition to the Human Services Campus. The City is hopeful they can figure out the small details and continue to move forward with the redevelopment of the Rath Administration Building.

Schneider noted the property on 207 Lafayette Street is now a vacant lot after the house was recently demolished.

5. Maps

No Report

6. Goals and Action Plans

Schneider noted Gilbert, Stevens, and Ottesen's terms will be ending in February. Staff is looking into whether Stevens and Ottesen can continue to serve on the board as they are past their three term limit. The chair and vice-chair elections will also be coming up in January for a new chair and vice-chair for 2024.

Discussion Items:

1. Dunsmore House

Anderson began by giving a short summary on the ownership history of the Dunsmore House. He noted the Dunsmore House is owned by the City and 4 to 5 years ago the City Council approved \$80,000 to be set aside for the Dunsmore House to entice a buyer. A buyer for the home has never been found. Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity looked at the house and declined due to the layout of the home and the constant maintenance the historic home would need. Mike Hayworth looked at the property and quoted \$180,000 to \$200,000 to fix up the property and the property could potentially be sold at \$110,000. The home is part of a double lot, so the north lot could be sold to build another home.

A museum has come up in the past as a possible reuse of the structure. However, it could cost \$800,000 to \$1,000,000 to bring the structure up to commercial code. Also, the Grout has expressed they do not have interest in the home unless it was moved near the Snowden House and the Grout Museum. Staff presented the idea of using \$35,000 to \$40,000 of the money previously set aside to stabilize the structure to City Council and they denied the use of the funds as there was no use planned for the building.

Anderson noted funds can be obtained again to fix up the home and use it as a single family home, but the Historic Preservation Commission should go to Council to ask for the money to fix up the structure rather than staff. It would be a benefit to the City of Waterloo if it was fixed up as a historic home. Ottesen stated it would bring a property back onto the tax rolls for the City.

Anderson explained the University of Northern Iowa is working on an impact statement, which could help the City see the benefits of an additional home on the property.

Hottle questioned if the City would pay a private developer \$180,000 to rehab the home and sell it, to which Anderson stated the City would hire a contractor themselves and sell the home by

hiring a realtor. For example, the City hired Amy Weinands real estate to sell the home on Johnson Street even though Hawkeye Community College students built the home. Hottle asked if Hawkeye Community College has a program for historic structures and if they don't they should.

Stevens noted the Dunsmore House could be a good location for the African American Museum, to which Noel presented a concern with funding for the Museum. Ottesen stated a concern for who would run the Museum. Stevens stated there could be constant programming at the Museum, so it is used constantly like Museums in other communities.

Gilbert explained the Dunsmore House would be a unique home to live in. He questioned if there are other uses for the land, such as a park. The property is unique because of the windows and the location to a busy highway. Hottle noted the historic uniqueness to the structure could be appealing to some buyers.

Gilbert stated he cannot envision the structure as a single family home in a rental neighborhood. He questioned what would need to be done per planning and zoning regulations to make the structure into a museum, to which Anderson noted a Special Permit would be needed and it would need to meet commercial code.

Anderson gave a summary of the CIP Program and informed the Commission they could ask for money through that and split it between fiscal years due to the construction season being in the middle of a year. A plan to reuse the building would need to be made by the Commission before going to the City Council or setting up a workshop with the Council to ask for money to fix up the building.

Gilbert questioned if the \$80,000 that was previously set aside for the project was still available, to which Anderson stated the money is not available. The money cannot sit and earn interest; it has to be spent.

Anderson summarized the discussion by explaining a single family home would be a source of revenue for the City whereas a museum would be more costly to open and would have very minimum revenue. The City could possibly look at moving the box car to the Dunsmore House site, if it was turned into a Museum and it could be a central location for learning about African American history.

Design Guidelines:

No Report

Adjournment

Chairperson Gilbert adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lexi Schneider

**Lexi Schneider
Planner I**