

Portage Historical District Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
July 1, 2015

HDC members present were: Mark Reile, Fred Grunert, Suzanne Nemeth, Katie VanLonkhuyzen, Russ Randall, James Ebert, Jessie Duniphin, Erica Eklov

HDC member absent: Christine Broberg

Guests: Mick Lynch, historic property owner; Devin Mackinder, Director of Technology Services Department; Brad Buiwitt - Secant Technologies, Lilly Browning

- HDC members reviewed previous meetings minutes. Only name spelling errors for correction, otherwise approved.
- Discussed - letter required for site visit to Vergunst property (5720 Oakland) - letter as to what has been approved by HDC thus far.
- Reviewed that the Application for Certificate of Appropriateness for 3221 W. Milham property was rejected.
- Discussed site visit to 5720 Oakland Dr. property:
  - Russ Randall commented prior to leaving meeting that the barn structure didn't appear to him to be in as bad of disrepair as he expected. Would like to see its key architectural elements braced for now so the deterioration does not get worse.
  - Suzanne Nemeth commented that there is historical significance to this particular barn structure in that it utilized board and batten construction which is not evident in many other historic barn structures in the district.
  - Katie VanLonkhuyzen comments on garnering a timetable from the property owner as the dismantling of this barn structure is a huge undertaking. She would like to push for a plan of action and time frame from the owner.
  - Mark Reile discussed a partnership with Community Development regarding the non-conforming aspects of this structure and how they would be handled in order to re-assemble structure to its original plan and height. Commented to table action on other parts.
  - Mick Lynch - offered recommendations on this undertaking from his past experience. Owners need to understand the flaws in evolution of construction in order to make this structurally sound, again. He would take down and salvage as much as possible. Plan for securing wood properly and consider round nail issues which are harder to extract and deal with. Mick could volunteer his services to the owner for guidance. Owners need a step by step plan. Talk to several contractors. Safety is a big issue and concern with this barn's restoration.
  - Mark Reile noted all comments and directed this topic to be take up at August HDC meeting and plan an open conversation with the City's planning and community development depts.

- Next, meeting was directed to discussion of proposed Wi-Fi equipment to be installed throughout Celery Flats historical structures.
  - Devin explained that AP antennas are required throughout the Celery Flats area for good coverage to enhance festivals and programs that the city wishes to provide for the community. The I.T. dept. wanted to make members of HDC committee aware of these antennas and their proposed locations and verify if the committee was o.k. with where they would like them installed.
  - For registered historic structures they can reside inside and behind windows. Stuart Manor will have one housed in the basement next to electrical box.
  - Erica mentioned to Devin that the Barn is actually not a registered historical building.
  - Devin and Brad commented that if the boxes needed to be external they can be placed near the eave lines, painted to match the building with a matching colored face plate - as low profile as possible. Also, noted that fiber is eventually needed in the Celery Flats area.
  - Devin stated we could set up a site visit after work is completed.
  - Russ noted that he was glad that the boxes for the historical structures could be out of view and inside. And that, although we can understand the desire for current technologies in this area, we and I.T. still needs to be historically sensitive to these buildings.
  - There was a motion to approve this plan. Motion passes.
  
- Next, meeting was directed to a discussion with guest Mick Lynch regarding his application for exterior changes to his property at 10209 Portage Rd.
  - Mick noted desire for paint modifications - paint more of blue / slate gray color; viewed to be the original color on barns. Wants house and all barn, out buildings to tie together. Barns would be med gray with white trim. Fences would be white. He has a desire for property to look like a running horse farm, again.
  - Mick also noted request to take the existing diamond shape shingles on the house that have been there since 1937 and replace with metal standing seam material in a silver color. All buildings on property would have this metal roof and is historically more accurate for the time period of this structure. Erica agreed on metal roofs being a material of choice during the houses time period.
  - There was a motion to allow Mr. Lynch to paint and re-roof his structures. Motion passes with Jessie noting she will trust the opinions of other commissioners on this vote since she hasn't seen the property before.
  - Mick also noted he would like to do the fence but he won't be able to do that until next spring. Approval of modifications for this property does not include the fence at this time.

### New Business

Mark did note that he went to Council and pointed out the issues the commission is currently having with historical property out buildings and barns. He made them aware of our desire and perhaps need to work closely with community development around these historical properties and also discussed the concerns of historical property owners wanting to remove

their properties from the register. Mark noted that all council members wanted to know more about all of these topics and expressed concerns.

Mark brought up a recent discussion he had with Portage City Manager regarding the Van Riper Property at 3821 West Milham Ave.

- City Manager let Mark know that the new property owners (assisted living facility) are not interested in the historic structure and had met with him to discuss options for the property. They discussed the city could consider buying the property and creating some sort of "go to" interpretive center type facility, It could be moved to a Celery Flats or Eliason city property.
- Suzanne Nemeth discussed the fact that this property was sold to the assisted living party with the complete understanding that this purchased included historic district property. The owners led us to believe that they were interested in utilizing the structure for some sort of welcome center. This property was here first and I as well as many other commissioners feel a bit duped by them. This property has too much history there and I would not even consider moving any of its structures off of the property.
- Mick Lynch did express his dismay with the soon to be new owners. Noted that this brick type of structure would not be easily moved and cited it could become severely damaged or be completely destroyed. He did let us know his agreement with this new owner did include his first right for refusal and he wanted to look further in to this new issue with the property,
- Katie did express that this property does have significant history and also has a historical connection to her historical property. She agreed that moving the structures from its original location should not be an option.
- Mark was going to let the City Manager know HDC opinion on not liking several options suggested by the new owner and City Manager but that the HDC would be willing to discuss this major issue with the City and the new owner at a later date.

Next month's meeting was scheduled for August 5. Suzanne let Mark know that she would be unavailable to attend August's monthly meeting.

Meeting adjourned soon after final comments on the Van Riper property (9:45 a.m.).