

Draft
Historic Preservation Commission
Minutes
January 10, 2024

A meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) of the Village of Fayetteville was held in the village hall board room on January 10, 2024 starting at 7:00 PM.

Members Present: Craig Polhamus, Pam Bender, Greg Daily, Ronald Russell, Jane Mulvey. [Absent: Richard Greene, Nikki Waters]. Also present: Trustee Mark Matt.

Minutes:

A motion to approve the November 8th meeting minutes was made by Pam Bender, seconded by Ronald Russell, and approved by all present.

In considering goals for the HPC in 2024, the commission began a discussion to revisit consideration of **expanding the historic district** and perhaps making this topic a priority. Member Bender noted some recent renovations in the Huntleigh Park area and is concerned the integrity of this area could be lost, citing how this neighborhood was noted how “intact” it was during the reconnaissance survey work.

Chairperson Polhamus agreed it is something to consider but should be mindful of the timing and perhaps best not to initiate an undertaking of this scale until this year’s elections are complete. The first process at least has already been done by having done the survey of the village to identify focus areas for expansion, such as Huntleigh Park area.

Member Daily questioned if it could be more difficult to expand to an area that is not contiguous to the current district.

Member Mulvey said the Huntleigh residents have much pride in their neighborhood and so may be open to the idea.

Expansion of the historic district is a goal worthy to consider, if can increase the district without forcing a debate but with getting a percentage of the residents to support it, such as how when the sidewalks were added. It should also be noted to residents of the tax advantages and other tangible benefits.

Member Bender said then the next step is the need to focus on education of the benefits being in an historic district, perhaps having something on the village website or having forum speakers. They need to start with education to tap into the pride residents have in their area. Trustee Matt said this would create the drive that is needed.

Modifying village codes was also discussed. This would provide opportunity to incorporate more review/oversight of the type work being done at the time a building permit is requested.

There is a need to create a balance of character with the work residents requesting permission to do. Also having a relationship with the planning board where the HPC can weigh in on some applications would be beneficial. All this provides an opportunity for applicants to stop and think about the renovations, rethink their projects.

Chairperson Polhamus said another avenue to take, if not historic district expansion, is historic property designation, that can be locally designated, such as the Seymour June house.

The HPC Guidebook produced some years ago for historic district residents should be reviewed and updated if needed and made available. Remind residents they are “buying a community, not just a house.”

The question was raised regarding houses in the historic district- do we want to increase dwelling units to fill current housing needs or is it better to maintain the status quo to avoid unwanted or unsightly modifications and increased parking needs? The commission discussed the pros and cons of potential renovations creating multi-family and/or single family housing.

Ledyard Canal was another topic the commission wished to revisit. The grant submission to the Preservation League had been denied due to lack of information. This could be reworked and resubmitted at the next grant opportunity.

Senior Center Cottage is another topic of interest. Craig Polhamus is the architect working with Trustee Rice on plans to stabilize the structure for future yet-to-be-determined use. The process is just beginning. The next steps is to prepare for bidding and to secure grant funds for the work. It was noted that the origins of the cottage are still unknown, having very thick foundation walls and older than the main house on the same property.

Earth Fest was noted by Chairperson Polhamus as another education opportunity for the HPC if anyone was available May 4th when the event will be held. This event promotes sustainability and there could be tours of houses in the historic district that show you can have both preservation and sustainability, like solar and thermal heating and special gardening.

It was noted that this year is 100th anniversary of the state canal system.

If no applications have been submitted for HPC review in February, it was decided that the next meeting will be held March 13th; there will be no meeting in February.

Adjournment:

A motion made by Greg Daily at 8:45 pm to adjourn was seconded by Craig Polhamus, and unanimously all were in favor.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Karen Shepardson