Minutes of Regular Meeting
Joliet Historic Preservation Commission

At the regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Joliet, Illinois held on Wednesday, August 27, 2014, at the hour of 7:00 p.m. in the South Wing Conference Room of the Joliet Municipal Building, 150 West Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois, the following business was discussed:

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Kevin Heinemann opened the meeting at approximately 7:00 pm.

2. DECLARATION OF QUORUM: Chairperson Kevin Heinemann declared a quorum:

   The following members were present:
   
   Members absent:
   
   John Chow   Gerri Eck                          Hal Carlson
   Michael Grady   Kevin Heinemann, Chairperson   Mike Daniels
   Sharon Merwin   JoAnn Potenziani              John Hickman
   Ray Skaggs (arrived late)

   City Staff / Elected Officials present: Members of the Public:

   Kendall Jackson, Planning Director

3. COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC and STAFF:

   Kendall Jackson, Planning Director was present to give updates on various projects of the City of Joliet. He gave an update on the progress at Union Station and the new transportation center, noting that Amtrak will be vacating Union Station and the City is taking ownership of the building. IHPA is reviewing work on repair to the pavers and membranes on the upper outdoor level of Union Station. Mr. Jackson noted that there is a recent effort to save the switching tower and incorporate it into the new building. Money will be saved because there would be no cost to demolish it. Mr. Jackson also noted that the eastern platform of the Rock Island tracks near the corner of Eastern and Washington is progressing well.

   Mr. Jackson also reviewed the restoration work being done at the Rialto Theater, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The initial shipment of terra cotta came from England, but did not match the terra cotta already on the building. New samples are being sent, and work will resume on the roofline project along the Van Buren façade.

   Sharon Merwin moved and JoAnn Potenziani seconded to amend the agenda to accommodate Mr. Jackson’s schedule and his involvement with various agenda items. The motion passed with all in favor.

Old Business:
Certificate of Appropriateness for 360 Whitter  Commissioners reviewed and discussed the information and specifications for new windows at 360 Whittier, a local landmark, as provided by the owners. JoAnn Potenziani moved and Gerri Eck seconded to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for 360 Whittier. The motion passed with all in favor.

New Business:

Certificate of Appropriateness for 625 Western  Commissioners reviewed the Certificate of Appropriateness for the exterior paint and trim for 625 Western, part of the Upper Bluff Local Historic District. It was noted that paint color was more stringently evaluated when the City of Joliet provided matching grant money to owners of historic properties under the Paint Grant program. Jo Ann Potenziani moved and John Chow seconded to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness. The motion passed with all in favor.

Certificate of Appropriateness for 703 Buell  Commissioners reviewed the Certificate of Appropriateness for a wrought iron fence at 703 Buell, a local landmark at the corner of Buell and Wilcox. No modifications are being done at the house, only the installation of a 4-foot wrought iron fence on a stone retaining wall alongside the sidewalks on Buell and Wilcox. Commissioners discussed how the proposed fence would be incorporated into the stone wall, which was installed somewhat recently. The owners may also be considering other alternatives with this project. Mr. Jackson noted that the owners have been working with the City on the permit process as well. Sharon Merwin moved and Gerri Eck seconded to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness as presented by the owners in their application. The motion passed with all in favor.

Swinbank Terrace  Mr. Jackson gave an overview of the recent activity at Swinbank Terrace, which are 1880-1890s (?) rowhouses on the west side of Hickory Street between Jefferson and Oneida. The property has been in the media lately as a new owner/investment group want to increase the number of housing units within the rowhouses from 15 to 18 to accommodate a veteran housing project. The investment group that owned the property is gutting the building; this is evident from the outside as stairs and entrances have been demolished/altered. The owners have submitted an application for a variance for the additional units, which is being reviewed by the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Jackson explained that it appears the property was originally built as 6 units, which were probably rather spacious in their day. Sometime after 1965 the property was divided up to more than 6 units and over the years the number of units has increased. In 1987 the property came under the city’s Rental Inspection program and has been certified since then. Various City departments – such as the Legal Department and Planning and Zoning – have been evaluating and reviewing this project.

John Chow noted that public housing, such as a project like this, cannot allow a preference for specific groups, as this does not comply with the Fair Housing Act.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Jackson for his presentation and expressed interest in further updates on the property, particularly any community meetings that the owners are proposing.
4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES   The minutes for the July 23 meeting were not available. They will be reviewed and approved at the September meeting.

5. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

Hal Carlson was not present to give a report on the Nominations and District Committee. Those reports and an update on Public Awareness can be discussed at the September meeting.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A. 2014 Goals and Establishment of a Five-Year Plan  Commissioners reviewed some of the goals and activities they may wish to pursue, such as planning a tour of historic churches, increasing nominations of historic properties and giving the annual preservation award. Kendall suggested the Mode Theater, as acquired by University of St Francis, might be considered for a future award.

B. As noted above

7. NEW BUSINESS

All items: As noted above.

8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS.

Sharon Merwin briefly reviewed the Your House Has A History document and two landmark nominations, as part of new commissioner training and awareness. As the meeting was running late, this could not be done in depth.

JoAnn Potenziani mentioned the Commission will have to review three sets of minutes in September; those being the minutes for June, July, and August. The June and July meeting minutes were not available for approval at their respective meetings.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, JoAnn Potenziani moved and John Chow seconded to adjourn the meeting at about 9:10 pm. The motion passed with all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Merwin
JHPC Commissioner