

**Minutes**  
**West Lafayette Historic Preservation Commission**  
**West Lafayette Public Library**  
**208 W. Columbia Street**  
**West Lafayette, IN 47906**  
**May 12, 2015**

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Susan Curtis, President, who presided.

Present: Peter Bunder, Kelly Busch, Susan Curtis, Philip Keller, Christ Kulesza, Persis Newman,  
Chandler Poole, Jim Sondgeroth, Arnold Sweet, Kurt Wahl

Absent: Linda Martin

The minutes of the April 7, 2015 Historic Preservation Commission meeting were reviewed by all members. Kelly Busch moved to approve the minutes. Phillip Keller seconded. Chris Kulesza abstained on a vote due to his absence. The minutes were approved as written.

Eric Burns, city attorney, went over a few procedural items at the beginning of the meeting. This is the inaugural hearing of the Historic Review Commission.

Mr. Burns asked the chair entertain a motion to use Roberts Rules of Order to be used as rules of procedure for this meeting and every other meeting until another decision is made. Moved by Commissioner Kulesza, seconded by Commissioner Keller. Motion to use Roberts Rules of Order for this meeting and all other meetings until otherwise stated was approved unanimously.

Mr. Burns stated that this hearing is important to give everyone a full opportunity to present themselves in a forum where the petitioner will be listened to and every factor will be taken into account before making a decision. Mike Plonski is the petitioner and/or applicant. The procedure will be the same procedure that is used in a small claims case in the state of Indiana. Mr. Plonski will go first and state his case. When he's completed, anyone speaking in favor of his position can speak. Next, anyone else would have an opportunity to speak about this matter. Mr. Plonski will also be able to make final comments after the committee has had a chance to discuss this situation. Commissioner Busch moved to use Rules of Procedure which would be the same as the Small Claims Rules in the State of Indiana. Commissioner Newman seconded. Motion to use the Rules of Procedure which are used in small claims cases was approved unanimously.

Mr. Burns continued to go over the procedural issues regarding this hearing. The application has been made and the sub-committee needs to hear Mr. Plonski's argument. This usually will be done in separate proceedings. Mr. Burns suggested that the sub-committee convene, allow the rules of procedure to take place with Mr. Plonski stating his case and allowing others to speak regarding the matter. The committee will then make a recommendation. The board will then take it up as a group and make a final decision. Mr. Burns asked that anyone who may be testifying in this case to be sworn in. Mike Plonski, Rocco Loro, Chandler Poole, Kurt Wahl and Peter Bunder were all sworn in under oath by Eric Burns.

### **Certificate of Appropriateness Committee convened at approx. 6:18 p.m.**

Mr. Plonski passed out 11 copies of his most recent version of his blueprint for his house. The committee had older versions of his plans which were approved by the city prior to this meeting. A few changes were made based on the May 5, 2015 meeting.

Mr. Plonski gave some history about the property in which the new construction will begin. He has owned 204 W. Stadium for approximately 30 years since he was a student at Purdue. When he purchased the house he was aware there was two separate lots in the purchase. When his son expressed interest to attend Purdue he decided to do this project with his son. It was not meant to be an investment property, but an investment in his son. When his son showed interest in Purdue Mr. Plonski contacted Area Plan Commission to verify he could build on those lots. Area Plan Commission implicated that the only requirement Mr. Plonski had to comply with was building standards for undersized lots. Approximately one year ago Mr. Plonski went to the City and no mention was made of the commission. Mr. Plonski reached a formal agreement with the tenants at 204 W. Stadium to let them know his son will be moving into that house for this summer during construction and he bought the tenants out of their lease. Mr. Plonski entered into a contract with ARKOR, Inc., IQ Homes LLC and Rocco Loro to build his property. Mr. Loro agreed to Mr. Plonski's very tight time frame for building. None of those local builders had any knowledge regarding the requirements for the Historic Preservation Commission. February 2015 Mr. Plonski traded comments back and forth with the City Engineer's office regarding requirements. Mr. Plonski applied for his permit on April 20, 2015 with no mention of the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Plonski started doing work in late April and was then notified of the existence of the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Plonski's intent for today's meeting is to obtain a COA and get the project back on track.

Mr. Plonski provided the commission with the second version of his drawing plans that are based on the feedback he received from Mr. Loro after the April 29, 2015 meeting of the COA Sub-Committee. Mr. Plonski made the following changes:

- Replaced the hip with a gable roof.
- Narrowed the porch roof and added square columns.
- Added a stain grade door.
- Added decorative block vs cinder block to the base of the home.
- Added a circular window in the front of the house.

Mr. Plonski believes the main issues is whether or not he should use vinyl siding.

### **Commissioner Bunder asked for any comments in support of Mr. Plonski.**

Rocco Loro spoke in support of Mr. Plonski. He's been working with Mr. Plonski for approximately two and a half years. Mr. Loro feels that Mr. Plonski has made great effort to comply with the suggestions of the sub-committee.

**Commissioner Bunder asked for any further comments in support of Mr. Plonski. None were made.**

**Commissioner Bunder asked for any comments in opposition to Mr. Plonski.**

Katie Bunder spoke in opposition to Mr. Plonski's building. She resides at 701 N. Chauncey which is just across the alley behind stadium from Mr. Plonski's property at 204 W. Stadium. She has lived in this location for 16 years and the property at 204 W. Stadium has been very minimally maintained. She believes this is the one and only opportunity to make the property that Mr. Plonski is building to look good. Mrs. Bunder pointed out that this is the first opportunity the Historic Preservation Commission has to enforce the ordinance and she hopes they follow it well.

Beverly Volkman spoke in opposition to Mr. Plonski's building. She's lived in this district for 60 years. She would like to ditto what Katie Bunder stated. She reiterates the Commission's responsibility to preserve the neighborhood.

Zachery Baiel spoke in opposition to Mr. Plonski's building. He questioned the interior of the house regarding the individual bathrooms for each bedroom in the home. He asked the Commission if the intent is most likely to rent the two remaining bedrooms during his stay at Purdue and will it become a rental after his son graduates from Purdue. Are there any other house on such a small lot that are currently rentals or in existence? Mr. Baiel recited Section 24.188(a) and asked if this will attract new residents pursuant to the section recited.

Mrs. Bunder returned to the podium to question what the parking was going to be now that there are three bedrooms and three bathrooms. Often times the tenants end up on the lawn or Mrs. Bunder's driveway.

Chandler Poole, Director of Development spoke regarding this building. Mr. Poole summarized the first two Certificate of Appropriateness meetings that were held on this issue. Mr. Poole thanked everyone for their work on getting this done in a diligent and quick manner.

Kurt Wahl, consultant to the Historic Preservation Commission, spoke regarding the building. Mr. Wahl pointed out that the Historic Preservation Commission is not concerned with the interior of a project, only the exterior. Mr. Wahl turns to the Secretary of Interior Standards when looking at a rehabilitation project. Item No. 9 of those standards was read for this hearing. Mr. Wahl believes that the only outstanding issue is vinyl siding which he doesn't believe is a historic material. Mr. Wahl also pointed out section 24.188(b) of the ordinance. Mr. Wahl doesn't believe that vinyl siding is a predominant material in that area. He recommends another material other than vinyl be used. He suggested Hardi Board cement backer board material as a durable material to be used.

**Commissioner Bunder requested Mr. Plonski come back to the podium to state any final words or comments regarding his application.**

Mr. Plonski reminded the Commission that 204 W. Stadium is not a part of this issue at this meeting, but he believes it has been poorly maintained. He intended to work on 204 renovation this summer, but his budget for renovating 204 W. Stadium might be decreased due to the funds

going into historic preservation at 206 W. Stadium. Mr. Plonski also reminded the Commission that the interior or parking is mandated by other departments and not regulated by the Commission. Mr. Plonski believes that the majority of the houses around 208 W. Stadium have vinyl siding, therefore his house with vinyl siding would be visually compatible. 204 W. Stadium is the only building on the block with Hardi Board. Mr. Plonski reiterated that his intent for this meeting is to walk out with an approval. If it's the opinion of the committee that the only way for him to get his approval is to do Hardi Board, he will do it.

Mr. Burns spoke again regarding the standard from the Code that Mr. Wahl referred to. He explained the fundamental principal of legal interpretation which is specific language that always controls over general language. The petitioner has focused on the general language found at 24.183.

### **Commissioner Bunder began the deliberations of the subcommittee.**

Commissioner Bunder is sympathetic to Mr. Plonski's plight regarding the City Engineer's office, the Development office and the Area Plan Commission all not catching that this property was located in the historic district. Commissioner Bunder laid out the history of the historic district for the public. He and the rest of the COA sub-committee are concerned mostly about the vinyl siding. The two suggestions made to Mr. Plonski from the two prior subcommittee meetings were window grills and vinyl siding. Neither of those changes have been incorporated into his new plans. Commissioner Bunder is not prepared to vote yes for a Certificate of Appropriateness based on the document Mr. Plonski filed with the commission at this hearing.

Commissioner Jim Sondergrath spoke regarding Mr. Plonski's application and presentation. Mr. Sondergrath also has a problem with vinyl siding. If Mr. Plonski is willing to change it to a more traditional material, then it is a step in the right direction. Mr. Sondergrath mentioned making the new siding a historical color.

Commissioner Newman spoke next. Even though there are buildings in the neighborhood with vinyl and aluminum this is an opportunity to turn that concept around. Commissioner Newman is in agreement with Commissioner Sondergrath regarding the type of siding and the colors.

Commissioner Bunder brought to the sub-committee's attention that they are not obliged to comment on the color of Mr. Plonski's house.

Commissioner Newman moved that the sub-committee denies Mr. Plonski's application for his certificate of appropriateness. Commissioner Sondergrath seconded. The motion was approved 3-0.

### **Commissioner Curtis re-conveyed the Historic Preservation Commission meeting at 7:28 p.m.**

Commissioner Curtis requested a recommendation from the sub-committee. Commissioner Bunder relayed the recommendation of a denial. Motion to accept this recommendation was

moved by Commissioner Bunder. Commissioner Sweet seconded. Motion was approved unanimously to accept the COA sub-committee's denial.

Mr. Plonski was given another chance to speak regarding his application. He spoke regarding the "visually related" language in the ordinance. Mr. Plonski reiterated his willingness to use Hardi-Board if that's what it will take him to get a Certificate of Appropriateness application approved today. Mr. Plonski asked that the full committee vote on a modification to the application to use Hardi-Board rather than vinyl.

Mrs. Bunder spoke to ask a question about the Hardi Board siding and its dimensions.

Zachary Baiel spoke regarding the trees on the particular lot. He recited Ordinance No. 19-3 Section 24.183. He asked that those trees be into the Commission's consideration as they are mature well-established trees. Kelly Busch referred to legal counsel regarding the trees on this property to determine if this is something that can be brought up now. Mr. Burns, believes the only thing at issue currently is the vinyl and possibly windows.

Commissioner Bunder spoke again regarding the process of the sub-committee.

Commissioner Busch asked Mr. Plonski why he didn't use divided light windows such as the sub-committee suggested. He stated he wasn't sure that this issue was still open since the last meeting. There are only 3 or 4 houses out of the 12 with grids in the windows. He didn't feel it met the standard, but he's willing to put the grids in the windows if that's what it takes for him to receive a COA.

Commissioner Busch and Mr. Plonski had a discussion regarding Section 24.188 and "visually related." Commissioner Busch states the ordinance regarding visually related intends for the new buildings to be "visually related" to buildings that are designated as historic within the neighborhood, not just buildings in the same area as the new home. Mr. Plonski disagreed with her interpretation.

Motion to deny certification of appropriateness was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Busch motioned to replace the vinyl with Hardi Board with a width of 6-8 inches and use the divide light windows. Commissioner Keller seconded.

Commissioner Sondergrath spoke regarding the divided light windows. He suggested that if they were going to make Mr. Plonski use a divided light window, they should be the panes of glass set in the wooden mullions which are historic. Mr. Plonski spoke up regarding the fact that he's not willing to accept the windows with the wooden mullions. Mr. Wahl stated that the windows Mr. Plonski have proposed does fit the historic nature the commission is looking for.

Mrs. Bunder asked if the double pane windows with the lines inside the glass are less historic than no grids at all. Mr. Wahl stated that they were. Mrs. Bunder asked that the windows go back to the original plans without any divided lights.

Kelly Busch amended her motion to remove any language regarding windows. Commissioner Kulesza seconded.

A motion to allow the certificate of appropriateness to pass with Mr. Plonski using 6-8 inch Hardi Board instead of vinyl siding was approved unanimously.

Mr. Plonski submitted a hand drawn modification showing he'll use the 6-8 inch Hard Board with his signature.

**Commissioner Curtis provided a guide update from Katie Morrison who was unable to attend this meeting.**

Commissioner Curtis asked for public comment. Zachery Baiel commented about how to protect the mature and established trees in the neighborhood. He also commented on the lack of accessible information on the City's website.

Commissioner Bunder questioned whether or not the streetscape will be covered in the manual. Mr. Wahl stated there is a conversation about the streetscape in the Lafayette guidebook, but it doesn't state specific types of landscaping. That conversation is more related to wrought iron fences, pavers, etc. There is some mention of vegetation but it doesn't specify what type of vegetation. Commissioner Bunder stated that perhaps there can be an area about streetscapes modified in the West Lafayette version to include vegetation. Commissioner Curtis stated that adding this is an important issue, but there are some very old trees in the neighborhood that she fears will blow over every time there is a storm.

Mrs. Volkman added public comment regarding the tearing down of trees from Grant to Northwestern to make room for football and basketball parking.

Laura Kessler, resident at 479 Maple Street made public comment regarding possible moves by the Area Plan Commission regarding public alleyways. Ms. Kessler also asked the Commissioners to be knowledgeable of all the materials that are available to homeowners besides vinyl and Hardi Board.

Commissioner Keller made a final comment apologizing to Mr. Plonski regarding his application process.

Commissioner Kulesza stated it would be beneficial for the commission to get copies of the materials and plans in advance of the meeting.

Peter Bunder moved to adjourn. Kelly Busch Seconded. Unanimous approval.

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.



Linda Martin, Secretary