

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
ALTON HISTORIC COMMISSION
Tuesday, June 7, 2016 at 7:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Doug Bader, Mary Anderson, Monica Mason, Diane Plummer, Charlene Walker and Matt Asselmeier

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jonas Janek

OTHERS PRESENT: Bob Barnhart, Public Works, Christian Hill District Infrastructure Project, Josh Young, Proposed New Historic District and Debbie Beck, Secretary

The meeting of the Alton Historic Commission was called to order by Doug Bader at 7:01 pm on June 7, 2016.

Monica Mason moved to accept the minutes of May 17, 2016 as presented. Mary Anderson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Doug Bader then introduced each member of the commission and explained to the audience that this meeting is audio and video recorded.

CHRISTIAN HILL DISTRICT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT:

Bob Barnhart, Director for Public Works, then took the floor to explain this project. Barnhart stated that a grant was available through ITA Historical Transport, to repair brick streets. He stated a letter from the Historical Commission in support of this project was needed to send with the application. Barnhart stated that William St was in the Christian Hill Area Historic District and would be fixed. He stated that the existing brick would be taken up and stored off-site. The ground would then be graded, with concrete poured on top and reset with the bricks. If any bricks needed to be replaced, they would first use bricks from the city's stockpile then use stamped concrete to keep the historical look. The sidewalks and curb cuts for street crossings would be ADA compliant. The sidewalks would again be all brick, with stamped concrete for any replacements and the limestone curbs would be maintained if it was there originally; if not, molded stamped concrete would be used. Monica Mason questioned how the existing tree wells in the sidewalks would be handled. Barnhart stated that the trees would remain, as long as they did not interfere with the ADA guidelines, if they did, the trees would be dug up and relocated to another area.

Doug Bader stated that he had sent a copy, to each commissioner, of the letter proposed to be sent. Mary Anderson made a motion for Doug Bader to send the proposed letter to the mayor. Matt Asselmeier seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Bob Barnhart also stated that there would be an open meeting on Wednesday, June 8, 2016 in the lunchroom of city hall starting at 6:00 pm. He stated that this meeting would be a Q&A session.

PROPOSED NEW HISTORIC DISTRICT:

Before Josh Young took the floor, Doug Bader explained that this meeting was for Young to explain his application. He stated if the application was approved during this meeting, the application would then go to a public hearing, which would occur within 45 days. Bader then stated if the application was

approved at the public hearing any property owner could appeal to the city council who would then either approve the application, or overturn the Historical Commission.

Bader then spoke with the commissioners. He stated since there was a large crowd and other people were wanting to speak, he wondered if a 10 minute time limit would be enough for Young to explain his application. The commissioners agreed. Bader then explained to Young that he had 10 minutes.

Josh Young then took the floor. Young stated that the application, which he had submitted to Mr. Asselmeier, was not complete and that it only consisted of the addresses of the 22nd Precinct and did not include all of the parcels that he wanted to include for this district. Young stated that these additional parcels had African American churches and schools, which have been demolished. He stated that there were at least 400 more parcels to be added. It was explained to Young that the application was completed when he turned it in to Asselmeier and that by city ordinance the commission had to take up the application. Also, there had to be enough time to send out letters to the other property owners so they would be able to voice their opinions. Young then stated that he had declared that the application was not complete, but when asked if he submitted the declaration in writing he stated no. Young also stated that he had included the book 20 Century African American Leaders in Alton, which had been accepted as part of the appendix, but the book was not on the website. Young then requested a layover. Bader stated that Young could withdrawal the application, but Young refused.

Bader got the list of attendees. It was decided that each speaker would be allowed 5 minutes to speak. Listed below is each speaker and a synopsis of their speech, the complete information is on the audio recording.

Barry Clayton, 401 Henry St.

Clayton stated that he was a property owner of some of the properties in question. He asked if all the properties would have to go before the commission for any alterations. The answer was yes any alterations to the outside of the properties that were under the guidelines would have to come before commission. Clayton stated that this area is a distressed area and it would cause an undue burden on the owners of these properties.

Jeffrey Bridges, 1019 Diamond St.

Bridges stated that he moved from Massachusetts and moved to Alton eight years ago. He stated that he has made great friends in this area. He stated he was told Mr. Young was a renter and he should not be able to make this application. Bridges stated he was against this application.

Marty Lucas, Central Ave. Area

Lucas stated that she was interested in this proposal and would like to hear more about it and she wished for everyone to keep this civil.

Calvin Hammonds, 1104 Putnam.

Hammonds stated that he liked the idea and he would like to hear the whole plan. He stated that he had not gone to the website and would like for the commission to allow Young to speak.

Keith Stampley, 1209 Hampton Ave.

Stampley stated he had come to be informed. He stated that area is a lot of rental properties. He thinks that there is a place for a historical district for the African American community, but that an area

consisting of 800 properties was too large. It would create a hardship on the poor of the community in this area and he stated that it would be better to clean up the area.

Mark Leady, 1008 Diamond St.

Leady stated that he loved the city, but is disgusted with the racism. He maintains his property, but the area that Young is talking about is mainly abandoned property. Also, the area Young is talking about was built by Mexicans. He stated that it should not be about African Americans, it should just be about people. The area just needs to be cleaned up. He then questioned if Young owned any property in this area.

Dr. Gregory Wahle, 1020 Diamond St.

Wahle stated that he studied the application on the website and the only African American site he could see of the 400 plus properties was the Lovejoy School. He stated that he thought Young was shooting too high in a depressed area. He stated they couldn't get the sewers replaced, but Young wanted them to ask the city for permission to make changes to their properties.

Paul Buttenback, 1631 Central Ave.

Buttenback stated that the city is tearing down older homes and letting new homes being built that are not historic in appearance. Bader stated that if the area becomes a historic district, any new construction would have to go before the commission and the home must be consistent with the neighborhood.

Jeff Sherwood, 917 Royal St.

Sherwood stated that he has lived in the area and recognizes that there should be a historical district for the African Americans. He stated that history is important for this area.

Mary Chappell, 1117 Central Ave.

Chappell stated that she moved to Alton from Mississippi in 1968 and lived in the Elliott and Hampton area, which was full of working people. Chappell stated that there use to be a mansion on the corner of Pearl and Central, which had been torn down for new homes where the rent is too high and the residents would never be able to become the owners. She stated she thought the historic area should be extended because improvements are needed.

Josh Young then took the podium for his rebuttal.

Young stated that the book was the most significant part of his application and it was not on the website. He then stated that the State does not require that he be an owner to bring a property before the historical commission. He stated that the city's resources go to a historic district first. Also, when the midtown area became an historic district, that designation did not raise taxes. He stated that the community could then write grants. Young then asked if Matt Bivens was in attendance. He was not. Young stated if Bivens were present, he would state that the midtown historic district does not have the same architectural styles throughout the district. The mayor would be able to search for more outside resources. He stated that there were many derelict house that needed to be torn down. He stated that the young people could be used as labor and it would take them off the street. He also stated that this is America and home owners would not have to go before the Historic Commission to ask permission to make alterations to their homes. Young finished his speech by asking for a layover.

Doug Bader, who was not at the last meeting, then asked each of the commissioners if they remembered Young stating that the application was not completed. Mary Anderson answered that she

had chaired the last meeting. She stated that the application was incomplete at that time. It had parcel numbers, addresses of the parcels and the names of the owners of the parcels. She stated that the only thing that was discussed was the addresses of the owners could be different from the parcels addresses and that the information was received from Madison County. It was then noted that, originally, Josh Young had asked for an honorary historic district, instead he requested the creation of this district. One of the ideas talked about was the possibility of a driving tour of the area with markers for the historical buildings and sites.

One of the attendees then asked why the Grand Theatre was not listed as a historical building. Doug Bader stated that a few years ago an application came before the Historical Commission and was approved. The owner was very unhappy about this and went before the City Council. The City Council overturned the Historical Commission.

Doug Bader then told the commission that he would now entertain a motion to layover this application. There was no motion made.

Commissioner Monica Mason then asked if she could make a statement. She stated that she was impressed with the crowd. She explained that the commission has to work with the city ordinances and the ordinances are based on architectural designs, not one style, but many different styles. She also stated that the city ordinances do mandate that the home owner of a home listed as historical come before the Historical Commission.

Asselmeier stated the application detailing the boundaries was a list of parcel numbers for the 22nd precinct only. He stated he compared the parcel numbers to the names for the notices and they matched. So the application is listed for the 22nd Precinct.

Bader then stated that under the Alton City Historic Preservation Commission, the ordinances are very clear that you have to go before the commission for any alterations. He stated that there are other communities that also have historic preservation commissions, for example Edwardsville and Belleville, and the owners for these properties have to go before their Historic Commissions.

Asselmeier asked Young if he had any information connecting the 91 individuals drafted for WWI to the proposed district. Young stated he did not have this information. Asselmeier also stated that there appeared to be no information in any of the materials Young submitted in support of his application that tied the information to any property in the proposed historic district.

Doug Bader then explained that, by City Ordinance, Young submitted a completed application and was turned in to the commission by the deadline and the commission must have a meeting on the proposal.

Doug Bader then stated since there was no motion made to layover the application, he would entertain a motion to vote on the application as it stands, with the knowledge that a public meeting would be held in 45 days. Asselmeier stated, if the motion was denied, the application could not be resubmitted for 12 months unless significantly different from this one per city ordinance. Mary Anderson made the motion to approve the application. Monica Mason seconded the motion. A roll call was made for each commissioner with the motion being denied unanimously.

Doug Bader stated a letter would be prepared and sent to Josh Young stating his application was denied.

At this time the meeting was still in session, but the majority of the crowd disbursed.

Asselmeier stated he had new business, but it would wait until the next meeting. Anderson stated she wanted to talk about the fence that had been approved in a sub-committee meeting was not going up as presented. Anderson also stated that the awards were needed to be discussed, but it could all wait until the next meeting.

There being no further discussion or comments from the public, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie J. Beck
Secretary