



## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

7:00 P.M. Council Chambers, Floor 2, 909 Davis Street

Members Present: Carl Klein, Thomas Ahleman, Amanda Ziehm, Sarah M. Dreller, Lesa Rizzolo, John Jacobs, Matthew Johnson, Charles Smith, Beth Bodan

Members Absent: Joshua Bowes-Carlson, Stuart Cohen

Staff Present: Cade W. Sterling

Presiding Member: Carl Klein, Chair

Minutes Taken by: Cade W. Sterling

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## **CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM**

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Members of the public are afforded three minutes per person to provide testimony related to items listed under discussion, or to otherwise address the Commission generally. Members of the public wishing to provide testimony on new or unfinished business shall be given the opportunity to do so during those agenda items in a manner and under time limits determined by the Chair.

## **SPEAKER SERIES**

### **Beyond Buildings: Preserving Historic Landscapes**

[Julia Bachrach](#), preservation consultant and previous Chicago Park District historian and planner, will provide an overview of landscape preservation methodologies and guidelines, highlighting projects from her long and storied career.

- Julia Bachrach presented to the Commission followed by questions.

## REVIEW AND COMMENT

### **Grey Park - Proposed Dog Park - Concept Plan**

Representatives from the Public Works Agency will present concept plans for creation of a dog park in Grey Park, located within the Ridge Historic District. The Commission shall provide comments for consideration per code section 2-8-3 (G) 24.

- Members of the Public Works Agency, and a hired consultant, presented the overview of the proposal including its physical design and outreach process.
- Members of the Commission recommended that the final design include the following in order to improve the project and minimize adverse effects to the parks historic associations and existing design vocabulary.
  - Retain unfringed access to the parks stone amphitheater as a character defining feature of the park.
  - Alter the orthogonal layout of the fencing to better respect the existing design vocabulary of the parks curvilinear bed lines and pathways and soften its insertion into the landscape through additional plant material on the park side of the proposed fence.
  - Engage in further conversations with Albany Care and its residents who frequently use the park to understand and integrate their needs instead of fencing them out of the bulk of the park and deterring their use of the park.
- It was suggested that there was an opportunity to move the bulk of the dog area to the west and south, and provide screening by way of landscaping along Ridge and Maple in order to address the concerns the community members had about dog comfort closer to the road. This would allow access to the core of the park including its physical character defining feature to remain democratically accessible to all members of the community regardless of social class and status.

## NEW BUSINESS

### **25ZMJV-0017 - 1630 Ashland Avenue - Landmark - Ridge Historic District - Recommendation on Major Variations**

Peter Kaeding, architect and applicant on behalf of the homeowner, requests Major Variations for a north interior side-yard setback of 1' where 5' is required and 6" is the existing legally non-conforming condition (Section 6-8-2-8 (A)(3), and a rear-yard setback of 5' where 30' is required and 28' is the existing legally non-conforming condition (Section 6-8-2-8 (A)(4). The Preservation Commission previously approved a still valid Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed

scope of work, and also provided a positive recommendation on the proposed zoning relief, under case # 24PRES-0047. The applicant proposes a minor adjustment to the approved plans which requires a new Major Variation Application per the Land Use Commissions Rules and Procedures. The Preservation Commission shall review and provide a new recommendation to the Land Use Commission on the appropriateness of the Major Variations requested.

- The homeowner provided background on the request, including changes made since appearing before the Commission previously. Compared to the previous proposal, the new position of the garage is 5' from the rear-yard where 3' was previously proposed. The distance to the side-yard remains the same, as does the position of the garage in relation to the homes side elevation. The garage just got slightly shorter.
- Additionally, the homeowner stated they now had letters of support from all neighboring property owners.
- Commissioner Ziehm asked staff how the proposal was allowed to be reconsidered based on the Land Use Commissions rules and procedures governing reconsiderations and submission of new proposals.
- Staff responded that he was not party to those conversations or determinations and was not familiar with the Land Use Commissions rules and procedures. Anytime a new major variation is applied for and scheduled for review by the Land Use Commission that involves a landmark or landmark district, the Preservation Commission is afforded the opportunity to make a recommendation on that request.
- Commissioner Ziehm asked the homeowner which neighbors wrote in support of the proposal.
- The homeowner stated that all of them have.
- Commissioner Ziehm asked specifically about a property that was recently sold and whether it was the new homeowner or the seller who supported the project and stated a neighbor she spoke to was unaware of the proposal.
- Staff stated that the letters of support were included in the packet.
- Commissioner Ziehm stated a preference for construction of a detached garage or attached garage in the expansive side-yard as it was more in keeping with the intent of the zoning ordinance.
- Commissioner Ziehm stated neighbors hadn't been provided notice of the case until late the previous week.
- Staff noted that the preservation hearing on the matter didn't require mailed notice. The notice in question was for the following weeks Land Use Commission hearing.
- Commissioner Ziehm moved to continue the case to allow neighbors more time to review what was being proposed. The motion failed for lack of a second
- Chair Klein asked Commissioners to keep their comments relevant to the

Commissions purview and task which is judging whether the zoning variation is necessary for or in the interest of historic preservation

- Vice-Chair Ahleman stated that the proposal is inherently the same as the previous version the Commission provided a positive recommendation on and it was previously found to be in the interest of historic preservation and improving and retaining the integrity of the landmark.
- Commissioner Johnson made a motion to provide a positive recommendation to the Land Use Commission. Second by Commissioner Jacobs and approved 8-1 (Commissioner Ziehm dissenting).

### **Envision Evanston 2045 - Preservation Chapter - New Policy Statement**

At the April 16 Land Use Commission hearing, the Commission voted 5-2 to include a new policy statement and associated actions within the plans preservation chapter to better represent the actions necessary for the preservation program to meet the evolving needs of the community over the next two decades. The Land Use Commission deferred the specifics of this to the Preservation Commission for further review and development.

- Mr. Sterling provided background on the request from the Land Use Commission. Initially the Commission sought to amend the first proposed policy statement, “to safeguard the integrity of existing and eligible historic resources”. Staff pushed back on this request for the potential to make our historic resources expendable in service of other City goals. Instead, it was suggested that a new policy statement that looked at centering preservation to the needs and lives of residents living in Evanston today, be included.
- The Commission and Staff reviewed and discussed a draft proposal put forward by staff.
- Following discussion, commissioner Dreller made a a motion to approve with conditions, which was seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried on a vote of 9-0. Conditions included:
  - Draft policy statement be changed to “lead in the implementation and discovery of...”
  - Action 8.1 be changed to read, “day to day lives including the role of Evanston’s built and natural heritage in...”
  - Action 8.2 and 8.3 replace the word “respond” and “be responsive to” with action oriented language keeping Evanston at the forefront of best practices, not keeping pace with them.

## **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

### **Minutes of April 8, 2025**

- Approved without amendment

## STAFF REPORTS

### **Preservation Month - May 2025**

Staff and Chair Klein discussed discussed the [April 28 City Council meeting](#) at which the Mayor proclaimed May as Evanston Preservation Month, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the City's first preservation ordinance and creation of the preservation commission.

### **Second Annual Cultural Heritage Awards**

Staff reminded the Commission about the call for nominations that was released for the second annual Cultural Heritage Awards, and asked the Commission to reach out to individuals or groups they felt were deserving of an award.