



**MEETING MINUTES**

**PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Tuesday, October 10, 2023  
7:00 P.M.

Members Present: Aleca Sullivan, Carl Klein, Sarah M. Dreller, Stuart Cohen, Beth Bodan  
Amanda Ziehm, John Jacobs, Joshua Bowes-Carlson, Charles Smith,  
Thomas Ahleman

Members Absent: Samantha Steele

Staff Present: Cade W. Sterling

Presiding Member: Sarah M. Dreller, Chair

Minutes Taken by: Cade W. Sterling

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**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Members of the public are afforded three (3) minutes per person to provide testimony related to items listed under presentations, discussion and staff reports, 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 following presentation by the applicant in a manner and under time limits determined by the Chair.

- No public comment was given.

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Landmarks Illinois - Relevancy Project**

Bonnie McDonald, President and CEO of Landmarks Illinois will present the Relevancy Project, a vital component of the visioning process for Landmarks Illinois' future, and more broadly a process to reimagine preservation's future in Illinois. This work creates a bold organizational vision that provides ideas for actions that can be taken to make the future of preservation more relevant, and more equitable -- addressing the ways preservation is misunderstood, criticized, challenged, marginalized, and even vilified.

Bonnie has led the statewide nonprofit preservation organization Landmarks Illinois as its President & CEO since 2012. She is a national voice for relevant change at this inflection

point for the preservation movement with her work on The Relevancy Project, supported through a James Marston Fitch Charitable Foundation 2020 Mid-Career Fellowship. From 2018-2021, Bonnie chaired the board of the National Preservation Partners Network, the national nonprofit representing preservation organizations, she currently serves as an appointee to the State of Illinois Route 66 Centennial Commission and she was appointed co-chair of the Chicago Monuments Project in 2020 by then Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot. Bonnie holds a Master's Degree in Historic Preservation Planning from Cornell University

- Bonnie McDonald gave a presentation on Landmarks Illinois' Relevancy Project, followed by a question and answer period between Bonnie and members of the Commission.

## **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

### **Minutes of September 12, 2023**

- The minutes were approved as presented without amendment.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Larimer Park Concept Plan**

In accordance with Code Section 2-8-3 (G) 24. and Article 8 of the Commissions Rules and Procedures, the Commission is afforded the opportunity to review and comment on City projects or activities affecting landmarks or districts, or areas, properties, structures, sites or objects eligible for designation as landmarks or districts.

The Public Works Agency will present a final concept plan for improvements at Larimer Park, located in the Ridge Historic District.

- Lara Biggs, City Engineer provided a Commission with an overview of the proposed improvements at Larimer Park.
- Ms. Biggs described the proposed work as similar in layout to existing, with some minor modification intended to improve circulation and safety, while maintaining the general programmatic spaces and features that exist currently including a basketball ball court, play area, and covered shelter.
- Ms. Biggs described the proposed material pallet and aesthetic as natural, and nature play themed, a common vocabulary in park design that is preferred by Evanstonians.
- Commissioners asked how the location of the park, and it being within a historic district, informed the design decisions.
- Ms. Biggs acknowledged that it wasn't a primary consideration, largely because the desired aesthetic and material selections by the neighboring residents, complimented that which they would have proposed in a historic context.
- Commissioners noted that the location was significant, and that its history should be considered and represented in unique ways. This could include reference to the former Larimer School, the locations proximity to Ridge Avenue, a well traveled indigenous thoroughfare, the locations geological significance as the historic edge of Lake Michigan, or more broadly the stories of the people who have used this space as a park for decades and representation of their attachments to this place and its individual meanings to them.
- The Commission identified possible mediums including interpretive panels, plaques,

narratives on paving materials, etc.

- Ms. Biggs stated that there are some examples of this type of interpretation in other parks and that could be used as precedent.
- Ms. Biggs stated that they would take these recommendations under consideration and as the project was in the design development phase, they would try to incorporate them during the Construction Documentation portion, and submit something for review to the Commission.

### **October Newsletter**

Staff will provide an update on the upcoming October newsletter and next steps.

- Staff provided an update on the newsletters development, noting that it was in a good position for release the following Friday.
- Commissioner Smith offered to assist in writing an ongoing column on the histories and stories of Evanston's park system.

### **ADJOURNMENT**