

City of Charleston
Historic Preservation Commission
City Council Chambers
520 Jackson Avenue
Charleston, Illinois
June 14, 2019

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:08.
2. Commissioners Present: Guiliana Dongu, Kit Morice, Merry Lichtenberger, Matt Madigan, Nora Pat Small, Erin Blitz, Bob Bertrand
City Staff Present: Deborah Muller
3. No guests present.
4. Continued Review and Discussion of Historic Preservation Section of Comprehensive Plan Update

Goal 1: Educate local property owners, residents, and city officials about the benefits and ethics of historic preservation.

Historic Preservation is the practice of conserving old and historic buildings, structures, and landscapes, also known collectively as historic resources. Preserving the past in physical form allows our city to preserve its sense of place, both in its unique and its commonplace attributes. Property owners and communities, alike, benefit from the economic and social stability that preservation practices yield. Income-producing properties listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places may be eligible for Federal Income Tax Credits, when rehabilitated in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Recommendations:

- Meet on a monthly basis to fulfill the expectations of the City Ordinance under which it was created.
- Hold public educational events and programs.
- Reach out to owners of historic properties, both those designated as local landmarks or within designated districts, and those that have not received a designation.
- Continue to apply for Certified Local Government grant money when available and appropriate to support education efforts.
- Maintain the Historic Preservation Commission website at charlestonillinoisihpc.org

Goal 2: Identify historic resources (buildings, structures, and landscapes) throughout the city.

The Historic Preservation Commission has completed surveys of multiple areas throughout the city. Since 2009, the Commission has approved Landmark designations for 1002 7th St, 838 7th

St., and for the Will Rogers Theater. In keeping with the National Register of Historic Places guidelines, properties, sites, or collections of buildings under 50 years old are generally not considered eligible for Landmark or District Designation.

Recommendations:

- Survey more areas of the city built prior to 1979. Properties built, created, or erected before 1979 will become eligible for consideration of local landmark or district designation over the life of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan.
- Pursue listing of Charleston's Historic Courthouse Square on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Continue to apply for Certified Local Government grant money when available and appropriate to support survey and listing activities.

Goal 3: Facilitate the restoration, renovation, and adaptive reuse of historic structures in the city.

The Historic Preservation Commission was instrumental in the multi-year effort to preserve the old Charleston Post Office [20??- 2013?], ensuring that it was available for adaptive reuse and thereby remains as a vital element in Charleston's historic streetscape. Historic Preservation does not seek to freeze or prevent development, but only to ensure that our historic neighborhoods and streetscapes maintain their visual continuity and unique sense of place. Adaptive reuse provides a community with an alternative to demolition. The process takes buildings that are significant to our community and turns them into new businesses or dwellings while maintaining their historic attributes.

Recommendations:

- Continue to be available as a resource for owners or prospective owners of historic properties seeking to preserve, rehabilitate, or adaptively reuse a building, site, or structure.
- Facilitate applications for grants or tax credits available to designated historic properties.
- Oversee Certificates of Appropriateness.

Goal 4: Foster cooperation among all entities involved directly or indirectly with the City's historic infrastructure, buildings, and historic material culture.

Recommendations:

- Encourage cooperation between private, nonprofit, and public sectors in the preservation and adaptive reuse of structures. Those entities may include, but are not limited to, Charleston City Council, City of Charleston Building and Planning Development Office, Coles County Board of Zoning and Appeals, Coles County Regional Planning's Historic Preservation Advisory Council, Association for the Preservation of Historic Coles County, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Landmarks Illinois, and various offices and departments at Eastern Illinois University.
- List Charleston's Historic Courthouse Square on the National Register of Historic Places. A National Register listing could be a great asset to historic preservation efforts in Charleston. National Register listing comes with NO restrictions whatsoever on listed properties, and with no additional layer of oversight on the part of any government entity. Property owners may continue to maintain, use, sell, or demolish listed properties as they see fit. The primary

benefit of listing Charleston's Square is a marketing one. Such designation indicates to travelers and residents alike that Charleston has a historic resource worth visiting and preserving. Income-producing property owners who undertake qualified rehabilitations of their properties may be eligible for Federal Income Tax Credits.

I decided that I don't like our last recommendation. I think it oversteps our mandate. Could we talk about it some more?

Encourage cooperation between private, nonprofit, and public sectors involved in the preservation of Charleston's history
Charleston Tourism Director
CCHS

And our Goal 4 recommendations might be redundant overall. Perhaps we need to rethink what we want to accomplish with all our cooperation?

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 by acclamation.