

**MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

January 14, 2015

I. CALL TO ORDER

The January meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was called to order on Thursday, January 14, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Barbara Buschman.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Buschman, Batistich, Flynn, Roy, and Yates present. Commissioners Cummins and Schwartz absent. Charity Jones, Planning & Development Director, Heather Valone, Village Planner, and Trustee Liaison Ronald Stapleton were also present. Gay Dall, court reporter, was present to record testimony of the public hearing.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Batistich, seconded by Ms. Roy, to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2015 meeting. Voice vote: 5 ayes. Motion passed.

IV. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

V. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Certificate of Economic Hardship for the demolition of old St. Patrick School and convent (220 E. Illinois) also known as St. James Academy

Motion by Ms. Yates, seconded by Ms. Roy to open the public hearing at 6:35 p.m. Voice vote: 5 ayes. Motion passed.

Charity Jones, presented the background, exhibits and staff assessment of the application, stating that there is only one criterion to be considered for the Certificate of Economic Hardship: whether there is evidence that the property cannot yield an adequate economic return unless the proposed work for which a Certificate of Appropriateness has been denied is allowed to proceed.

The Archdiocese of Chicago is owner of the building and property, but financial responsibility for its maintenance is the responsibility of St. Patrick parish. The parish states that it no longer has any use for the building and is financially unable to stabilize, repair or maintain it. A property appraisal report prepared by the Gorman Group for the Archdiocese, details property description, market value, highest and best use, and compliance information. Missing from the compliance data is specific information on how many potential buyers were contacted by the Archdiocese, asking price, and whether the property was listed in broad circulation to real estate brokerages as directed by the Mayor and staff.

A current offer by Patrick Commercial Real Estate for the building, property, and lot to the east for the sum of \$3,500 cash was rejected by the Archdiocese.

Pastor Kurt Boras, parish attorney Thomas Moore, and parish Finance Chairman John Basareal, spoke for the parish, elaborating on its 175 year history, the mission of the parish, and financially prioritizing the Church building and worship space, and secondly the ability to provide support for youth education through the school it jointly provides with St. Alphonsus parish.

Rev. Boras cited safety concerns with the St. James building and presented a letter from the Fire Chief stating that due to the condition of the roof, the Fire Department could not enter the building should any fire occur.

Financial information supplied by the parish attorney reported a parish debt of \$77,967, net unrestricted deficit operating income of \$239,670 over the past 8 years, and necessary capital expenditures for the church building at \$150,000. Estimates to demolish

the building range from \$100,000 - \$150,000. Mr. Basareal stated that the ability of the parish to raise funds for any capital expenditure is difficult, given the weekly collection and the size of the parish.

The parish stated that it had paid \$122,000 for the lot to the east of the old school. The Gorman appraisal stated a value of \$30,000 for the lot.

Members of the audience were asked for comments.

Dale Boe, 701 Porter Street, a life long member of the parish, cited examples of buildings which had been successfully saved, rehabilitated and re-purposed for other uses, including Central School, and encouraged St. Patrick's to work with Patrick Real Estate on a similar solution for St. James.

Susan Donahue, 902 Talcott Street, stated her concerns that full specifics be provided as to efforts to market the property and documentation supporting the demolition cost estimate. She would also favor selling and re-purposing the building.

John Quinn, 307 Lemont Street, asked for documentation of the \$122,000 purchase of the east lot. He stated the parish should reconsider the current offer, and consider that the parish would have the financial benefit of not having to divert funds to pay the \$150,000 demolition cost and could proceed with other needed capital improvements. He provided examples of buildings downtown that Pat Stanton had successfully renovated.

Comments from the Board:

Susan Roy asked St. Patrick's how much they have spent in subsidizing the Davey Road school and was told the figure was around \$1million over the past 8-10 years. She questioned the decision to fund a school building not on the premises at the expense of the failing school building on the property.

Commissioner Batistich asked about parish plans for the property if the building were demolished and was told that the parish would take the long view as to future expansion, and also cited current lack of parking as a possible use.

There being no further comments, a motion was made by Mr. Flynn, seconded by Ms. Roy to continue the public hearing until February 11, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. to allow the Archdiocese and the parish to provide additional information including documentation of total marketing efforts, asking price sought for the property and whether the property was listed on any broadly circulated real estate platform. Voice vote: 6 ayes. Motion passed.

Charity Jones notified the parish representatives that it is not a requirement to provide additional notice for the continued hearing.

VI. APPLICATIONS

VII. PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR COMMENTS

A. National Register Application

Heather Valone announced that the application for National Register designation for the core commercial portion of the Historic District identified by the State Historic Preservation Agency would be submitted January 15 for preliminary review. After comments are received and any revisions made, the Commission will receive a copy of the application.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

VIII. ADJOURN

Motion by Mr. Batistich, seconded by Ms. Roy, to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. Voice vote: 5 ayes. Meeting adjourned.