

CITY OF NORTHVILLE
Local Historic District Study Committee Meeting Minutes
May 2, 2019
Northville City Hall - Council Chambers
215 W. Main Street
Northville, Michigan 48167

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Allen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the City of Northville Municipal Building, City Council Chambers, 215 W. Main Street, Northville, Michigan, 48167.

Present: James Allen
Leanie Bayly
Mark Chester
Suzanne Cozart
David Field
Robert Miller
Jeff Russell

Absent: None

Also present: Elaine Robinson of Commonwealth Heritage Group, Planning Consultant Sally Elmiger and approximately 17 guests.

APPROVAL OF 11/8/2018 MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Russell, support by Chester, to amend the November 8, 2018 meeting minutes as follows:

- Page 8, last line: . . . the last boundary change was ~~2002~~ 2003.

Motion carried 6-0-1 (Miller abstained).

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Nancy Chiri, 661 W. Main, was concerned about the proposed changes to the Cady Street Overlay, which would be before City Council for a 2nd reading soon. The changes allowed greater density in the area of proposed development. Existing guidelines restricted the number of units, etc., and two developers were currently building in the area per the existing ordinance. Residents in the Historic District were held to tight restrictions, and future developers should be held to the same level of scrutiny.

Jennifer Luikart, 521 W. Cady Street, asked some clarifying questions regarding the southwest corner of the Historic District boundary, specifically regarding whether the properties at 146 and 208 S. Rogers Street were remaining in the District. The Committee explained that on June 12, 2018 they had voted to remove those properties from the District.

Tim Luikart, 521 W. Cady, provided a letter and photographs to the Committee. He requested exclusion of their home at 521 W. Cady Street from the Historic District boundaries, or alternatively add back in 146 S. Rogers and 208 S. Rogers. He pointed out that the homes next door to and across the street from

521 W. Cady were non-contributing homes, and removing the homes on Rogers from the District left 521 W. Cady even more unprotected as a historic home.

**CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON 2ND DRAFT OF LHDSC REPORT DATED SEPTEMBER 2018
(Elaine Robinson of Commonwealth Heritage Group)**

Ms. Robinson reported that since the last meeting she had received one phone call from a resident who never followed up further. Another resident had sent revisions regarding the narrative for their property; those would be incorporated in the final draft.

The draft copies of the report were still from September. All changes since that time would be incorporated into a final draft prior to the final meeting.

**SET FINAL DEADLINE OF MAY 17, 2019 FOR PUBLIC TO SUPPLY NEW INFORMATION
TO BE INCLUDED IN THE STUDY REPORT**

MOTION by Cozart, support by Field, to set the final deadline of May 17, 2019 for the public to supply new information to be included in the Study Report.

Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Allen asked the Committee to make a recommendation regarding 521 W. Cady Street, as petitioned by Tim and Jennifer Luikart.

Member Bayly said that the original Historic District boundary was still in effect until City Council made their final decision. On June 12, 2018 the Committee had moved to remove 146 and 208 S. Rogers from the District, but City Council had not acted on the Study Report or on the changes in the boundaries to the District.

Ms. Luikart explained that in the last three years three houses on their block had become noncontributing structures because of permitted alterations and tear down/new construction. The result was that their 1450 square foot home was surrounded by much bigger, non-contributing homes. If the homes on the west side of Rogers were removed from the District, the buffer for the Luikart's small, contributing home would decrease further, because the homes on Rogers could then be rebuilt or altered to be even bigger, as they would only have to meet the zoning requirements of the underlying district.

Ms. Luikart added that originally the Committee was trying to reduce the size of the Historic District in order to raise the percentage of contributing structures. However at the last meeting Ms. Robinson said that percentage no longer mattered. If the percentage of contributing structures was not important, there seemed to be no justification for reducing the size of the District.

Chair Allen asked if homes in the District were required to be designated contributing or noncontributing in the Study.

Ms. Robinson explained that the designation of contributing/non-contributing had to be included in the Study, in order to mirror the National Register nomination. Also CLG funding, protection of rights-of-way, etc., all depended on homes being designated as contributing or noncontributing.

Modifications of contributing homes would be held to Secretary of Interior standards. Non-contributing homes would be held to Design Standards for New Construction, which should result in homes compatible with the contributing resources.

Member Field said he could not find any mention of contributing/noncontributing structures in the Michigan Enabling legislation, in the HDC training manual, the Secretary of Interior standards, or in the Northville Historic District standards.

Ms. Robinson said National Parks Bulletin 16A contained information regarding contributing/noncontributing structures as that impacted inclusion on the National Register. The National Register required the contributing/noncontributing designation, and the local District should mirror the National Register District.

In response to a question from Member Miller, Ms. Robinson said ~~a property owner would need to file for a Section 106 exemption for MDOT to protect a historic home's right of way when improving a road~~ when a road project was being planned that would impact an historic home, the historians would note that there was a National Register District and follow the requirements for a historic property. If only the local historic district existed, the MDOT would do some further investigation and would likely treat the resources as if they were listed in the National Register.

In response to comments about residents being confused by the contributing/noncontributing designation, Ms. Robinson said that education was the best way to alleviate that confusion.

Chair Allen returned the discussion to the Luikart's request to either remove their property at 521 W. Cady from the District or add back in 146 and 208 S. Rogers.

Member Bayly said she felt the Luikarts had made a compelling argument for how their property had become an island in the Historic District with a "moat" of noncontributing homes around it. When the current study began the Committee had been advised that they needed to raise the percentage of what was considered contributing properties within the Historic District. Now that was not the case and it seemed more important to keep the designated Historic District outline as it was set forth in 1972 and amended in 2003. She recommended that the Luikart's property should be protected as requested. Additionally, many residents had asked if the Historic District could be expanded. While expansion was not the purview of this Committee, she recommended that 146 and 208 S. Rogers remain part of the Historic District. She felt the only section that made sense to remove from the Historic District was the parcel on Randolph by 8 Mile Road, where there was new construction abutting condominiums.

Member Bayly continued that she agreed that removing 146 and 208 S. Rogers exposed the Luikart's property, as they had described. At a previous meeting the Committee had already indicated they wanted to keep 521 W. Cady Street in the District, but the Committee should also offer protection to the home as requested.

Regarding the question regarding why properties were designated contributing or noncontributing, Member Bayly said those designations were at the heart of what a Historic District was and what Historic Preservation was. She agreed that it was important to educate residents as to what those terms meant.

In response to a question from Member Field, Ms. Robinson said there had been a staffing change and an accompanying policy change in the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which was why the percentage question was no longer so important.

Member Chester asked if there was any compelling reason to make any change to the 1972/2003 boundaries. Ms. Robinson said the boundary needed to be justifiable to the National Park Service and to SHPO. When a parcel had lost its integrity in terms of the Historic District, and it was on the border and

not affecting other properties, there seemed little justification to leave it in. However, she agreed that it made sense to leave the properties on S. Rogers Street in the District.

Ms. Robinson added that if the scope of the Study had included expanding the district, she would have looked at some of the nearby properties that would benefit from inclusion, including other homes on S. Rogers Street. Member Cozart said that as discussed in an earlier meeting, there was a fine line between wanting to have something in the Historic District because it was a truly historic structure, or wanting to have property in the District in order to control development.

Member Miller agreed with leaving 146 and 208 S. Rogers in the District.

In response to comments from the Committee, Ms. Robinson said the Enabling Legislation, the parameters of the Study, and the application to the National Registry left no place for the Committee to make recommendations outside the scope of the Study, but she felt it would be appropriate for a cover letter to state that the Committee was making a recommendation for the current report, and also was encouraging City Council to appoint another study committee to look at expanding the District as appropriate.

After further discussion, and noting again that a motion at the June 12, 2018 meeting had removed 146 and 208 S. Rogers Street from the District as part of changes that would be recommended to City Council, Member Bayly made the following motion:

MOTION by Bayly, support by Field, that the parcels known as 146 and 208 S. Rogers Street be added back into the Historic District as defined in 1972 and amended in 2003.

Motion carried unanimously.

SET FINAL PUBLIC HEARING DATE FOR JUNE 6, 2019

Chair Allen asked for a motion for the public hearing date.

MOTION by Field, support by Russell, that the Committee set the final public hearing date for June 6, 2019.

Motion carried unanimously

ADJOURN

Seeing that discussion had ended, Chair Allen adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl McGuire, Recording Secretary

Approved as amended 06/06/2019