Evansville Historic Preservation Commission

**Minutes**

**Wednesday, January 20, 2016, 6:30 P.M.**

**Evansville City Hall**

**Present:** Ald. Gene Lewis, Betsy Ahner, Steve Christens, Steve Culbertson, John Decker, and Dan Stephans.

**Absent:**  Matt Koser.

**Also Present:**  Community Development Director Jason Sergeant and Mayor Sandy Decker.

**Call to order.** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chair Culbertson.

**Approval of minutes.** Christens moved to waive reading and to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2015 minutes as submitted. Ahner seconded. Approved by unanimous voice vote.

**Citizen appearances.** None.

**Applications.** None.

**Community Development Director report.**

Sergeant reported that Park & Recreation Department staff have proposed to reconstruct the outfield fences at the South Baseball Diamond and at the tennis courts at Leonard-Leota Park, and to install a wood or composite bench on the island in the West Lagoon in the Park. The commission suggested that a Request for SHPO Review and Comment be prepared and submitted with respect to the proposed work.

Sergeant also recommended that the commission hold one of its meetings at a pavilion in Leonard-Leota Park to raise awareness, and hold joint meetings with the Plan Commission and with the Park & Recreation Board each year to better coordinate efforts and share information.

The City web site will be extensively revised this year, and Sergeant asked commissioners to provide input as to content for the Historic Preservation Commission pages on the site.

Examination of the Scout House at Leonard-Leota Park shows settlement of the foundation, which will require professional evaluation before structural or exterior work is undertaken. The City will have necessary electrical and other life-safety work performed in March, with the expectation that the troop can return in the spring. The troop currently is meeting in the Youth Center.

Construction of the infill residence at 268 W. Liberty Street is progressing, and completion is due in early February in order to comply with the conditional use permit for the property.

**Old business.**

1. **2015 Annual Report.** Christens moved to approve the 2015 Annual Report of the commission, as submitted. Stephans seconded. Approved by unanimous voice vote.
2. **Historic Preservation Plan.** Following discussion and consensus as to amended language, Christens moved to adopt the Historic Preservation Plan for the City of Evansville, as revised. Ahner seconded. Approved by unanimous voice vote.
3. **Proposed legislation affecting historic preservation in Wisconsin.** Decker reviewed the status of AB568 and SB445. The bill authors have submitted a Substitute Amendment to AB568, which significantly revises the provisions pertaining to historic preservation. Owner consent, subject to limitations, is maintained in the Substitute Amendment with respect to designation of individual properties in a local list of landmarks, and with respect to designation of a local historic district. The Assembly bill and amendments will be considered and voted upon by the Assembly Committee on Housing and Real Estate in an executive session scheduled for January 21, 2016. A public hearing on SB445 has been held, but no further action is pending in the Senate Committee on Insurance, Housing, and Trade. The Evansville Common Council resolution opposing both bills has been submitted to both committees. The Cities of Madison, Milwaukee, Green Bay, and De Pere have submitted similar resolutions to date.
4. **Proposed amendments to historic preservation ordinance.** Decker reviewed the revisions to the proposed ordinance amendment which have been made to incorporate suggestions made at prior commission meetings and to readily comply with pending legislation if it should be enacted. The provisions for listing of individual properties and the designation of local districts will continue to have public hearings before the commission, which will be followed by a recommendation from the commission to the Common Council on the issues of local landmark listing, incorporation of properties into a local historic district, zoning changes, and amendment of the official map. Christens moved to approve the revised amendments as presented. Lewis seconded. Approved by unanimous voice vote.
5. **Preparation for public hearing.** Sergeant advised that the first of two public notices of the hearing on the proposed ordinance amendments has been published in the Evansville Review. He circulated a draft of a letter to be sent to all owners of record of properties in the Evansville Historic District, the South First Street Residential Historic District, and the Grove Street Residential Historic District, including a map depicting the district boundaries, and a general description of the ordinance revisions, and apprising owners of the hearing date.

**Adjournment.**

Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John Decker

Secretary

The minutes of the Evansville Historic Preservation Commission are not official until approved by the Commission.