Evansville Historic Preservation Commission

**Minutes**

**Wednesday, August 17, 2016, 6:30 p.m.**

**Present:**  Steve Culbertson (chair), Steve Christens, Matt Koser, Ald. Gene Lewis, Dan Stephens, Betsy Ahner, Cheryl Doerfer

**Also present:** Community Development Director Jason Sergeant, citizens – Mike Anderson

**Call to order.** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chair Culbertson. Roll call was taken and those listed were present.

**Motion to approve the agenda:** Motion made by Koser to approve the agenda. Second by Christens. Approved by unanimous voice vote.

**Approval of minutes.** Stephens moved to waive the reading of the July 25, 2016 minutes and approve them as printed. Lewis seconded. Approved by unanimous voice vote.

**Introductions and welcome of new member:** Cheryl Doerfer was introduced and welcomed as the newest member of the HPC. She owns a home at 204 W. Main Street and is currently employed as an accountant. She has an interest in historic homes and has had training in architecture.

**Civility reminder.**  Announced by the Chair.

**Citizen appearances.** None.

**Applications.**

1. 341 South First St. – removal or demolition of greenhouse addition. (Application 2016-33) Home owner Mike Anderson was present and explained that the attached greenhouse at the rear of the home is in poor shape and not original to the home. He would like to remove it for safety and to improve the appearance of the home. Originally he thought the greenhouse covered a deck that could be saved but closer inspection shows that the wood floor is actually pallets placed on gravel. Commission members viewed photos of the structure and asked additional questions. Lewis moved to approve the application for issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, as submitted for Application 2016-33. Culbertson seconded. Upon further discussion Lewis amended his motion to state the structure can be removed because it is not original to the home and is not of historical significance. Culbertson seconded the amended motion. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote. Commissioners expressed their appreciation to Anderson for his care of an historic building.

**New business.**

1. Discussion of siding types, installation details and criteria for approval. Sergeant suggested that since no pending applications requested removal of original siding material and replacement with a more modern product, it is a good time to discuss how commission members would view such a request and what type of materials they would be more likely to approve. It is possible that new owners of homes in the historic district are not aware of the historical significance of their properties and the requirement to approach the HPC about intended exterior changes beyond minor repairs and painting. HPC members agreed that education is key and discussed various ways this could be done including annual mailings to all Historic District property owners and a quarterly mailing to new property owners. Experience shows that well educated property owners are more likely to value the preservation of the historical features of their homes and the district. Those applying for tax credits must also meet more rigorous standards to qualify. It was noted that the HPC has a responsibility to other home owners in the district to preserve the integrity of properties in the district. Several commission members stated that in their opinion it is always preferable to use materials that match the original materials or at the very least “do no harm.”

To date vinyl type siding has been approved for buildings that are non-contributing to the historic district, are new construction or where a non-original material had been used on the building in the past. It was suggested that a database of before and after photos of buildings that have been approved by the HPC could be helpful to homeowners planning work on their properties.

**Old business.**

1. Antes Cabin – work to replace the floor, door and rear window of the cabin is being planned. Sergeant said it looked like repair work using historically appropriate and like materials and asked if HPC members felt it needed to be approved by the Commission or if it was something he could approve. The Boy Scouts are providing the labor and several local auto dealerships are providing financial support. Culbertson and Stephens are familiar with the work and agreed it would be appropriate for Sergeant to work with the committee and approve the work.

**Report of the Community Development Director.**

No other items to report on.

**Correspondence, comments, and concerns.**  None presented.

**Adjournment.**

Koser moved to adjourn. Ahner seconded. Approved by voice vote at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Ahner

Secretary

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