



DeKalb City Hall
200 S. Fourth St., 2nd Floor
Glidden Conference Room

MINUTES
LANDMARK COMMISSION
AUGUST 4, 2016
7:00 PM

The Landmark Commission held a Meeting on August 4, 2016 in the Glidden Conference Room at the Municipal Building, located at 200 South Fourth Street in DeKalb, Illinois.

Chairman Gable called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

A. ROLL CALL

The following members of the Landmark Commission were present: Donna Gable, Robert Glover, Amanda Durik, and Donna Schultz Xidis. Don Whitmore arrived at 7:25. Member absent was Pam Collins.

Also present were City of DeKalb Community Development Director Ellen Divita and Lauren Wood, owner of Cracker Jax.

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA – ADDITIONS / DELETIONS

Chair Gable indicated she would add Lauren Wood to the agenda under Public Participation.

C. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – Director Divita indicated she has asked Ms. Wood if she wished to join the Commission after she had had opportunity to view a series of historic DeKalb postcards owned by Ms. Wood. She suggested that some could prove to be beneficial for the Commission’s Walking Tour and other educational materials. Images discussed include the Glidden Block at the NEC of Second and Lincoln. The current one story retail structure replaced a 3 story building with 100 Hotel Rooms. The hotel was built prior to modern plumbing; it burned in 1962.

Also discussed was the “Freeland Dining Parlor.” Chair Gable indicated she believed this to be one of the early Rooming Houses built by the Ellwood Family. They often became known by the name of the people that managed them. The Commission thought this particular structure to now be known as “The Suite 16.”

Pictures of the Still Hall and the Interurban Trolley which ran from the Teachers School (NIU) to 13th Street through the 1920’s were also viewed. The Commission thanked Ms. Wood for sharing these early images with the Commission and invited her to stay for the duration of the meeting if she chose to.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – ADDITIONS / DELETIONS

1. A. Durik moved to approve the minutes of April 28, 2016, seconded by D. Whitmore. All were in favor.
2. Commissioner Durik moved to approve the minutes of May 18, 2016, seconded by Commissioner Whitmore. All were in favor.

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion of RFP Responses ensued. E. Divita discussed the goals of the project and measures against which to compare the interested consulting firms. The project is three fold:
 - To prepare a survey of the historic buildings downtown and confirm historic significance and potential contribution to a Local or National Register District. Either designation could allow property owners to receive tax credits for appropriate and pre-approved (by the State Historic Preservation agency) renovation work.
 - To prepare a building analysis and identify both small and large restoration projects that if completed would contribute to the health of the downtown buildings, creating a greater sense of place through preservation of the downtown's unique building stock. Small projects could be as simple as removing paint from brick or transom windows. Larger projects could be candidates for TIF funded assistance.
 - To write Design Guidelines which could aid the Commission in review of construction projects – both renovations and/or new construction.

Eight responses were received and four were chosen for interviews. Responses were compared based on:

- Experience in the expected project deliverables,
- Experience working in similar towns.
- Use of technology for the survey, communication of project status, and creation of the final documents.
- Approach to the Project.

- Interaction with and expectations of work to be completed with Staff and Commission time during the process.

The Commission discussed ideas for project start-up, public communication, and evaluation factors for the consulting firms.

It would be helpful to inform the public, including building and business owners, of the project. An information sheet will be created that can be given to businesses when the survey of their building is being done and also sent via Chamber blast, posted on the City Website, and circulated through social media. L. Wood volunteered to share with the Downtown Merchant group which works to collaboratively market downtown and to ask each business owner to share with the property owners.

It was noted that the firms offered different approaches to communication during the project with some maintaining interactive websites.

Consensus held that when interviewing, it should be identified if the firms were more oriented towards survey and documentation work or architectural and construction work. The professional qualifications of the work team should be considered. Location of the firm and familiarity with Illinois should be considered. Final product – either electronic or digital should be identified. The checkpoints and interaction with the Commission should be discussed. Other factors identified were: when the firm was available to start; how big is the firm; could they hold to the 6 month schedule requested; what survey form would they use and why; to anecdotally describe a most successful project and describe what was it about the project kick-off that lead to the success.

Interviews would be held on August 11th. Two Commissioners would participate: D. Gable and D. Xidis.

F. OLD BUSINESS

1. None discussed.

G. ANNOUNCEMENTS

E. Divita discussed several other projects underway including a look at potential programs to help induce new construction and encourage renovations. The Council will consider a short term waiver of impact fees. An MBA class will consider the economics of “fix it and flip it” renovations as a Capstone Project this fall. Housing Reach Illinois has been approached for assistance in bringing an Employer Assisted Housing program to the City – employers would set their own parameters and could assist employees in purchase of homes close to work. Also

a matching program for improvements of historic homes in the TIF Districts (for eligible homes) is being investigated.

The next meeting of the Landmark Commission will be September 22, 2016 at 7:00 PM at the Municipal Building in the Glidden Conference Room.

H. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further discussion, Chairman Gable adjourned the meeting at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Ellen Divita, Community Development Director