MINUTES
Historic Preservation Commission
April 8, 2010
Municipal Complex, 100 W. Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL

I. Call to Order

Chair Alt called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call/Attendance

Present were the following commission members: Chair Brice Alt, Diana Kenney, Tom Nemcek, LeeAnn Atwood, Michelle Rozovics, and Bob Wyman. Member Sandy Price arrived around 8:00 p.m. Staff member Elizabeth Maxwell, Planner, and John Cowlin, Attorney was present.

III. Public Comment

There was no one in the public who wished to comment.

IV. Approval of Minutes of the March 4, 2010 Regular Meeting

Member Kenney moved to approve the minutes of the March 4, 2010 regular meeting. Member Wyman seconded the motion. On voice vote, all members voted aye. Motion passed.

V. Memo from City Attorney regarding Grant Disbursements to board members

Attorney John Cowlin discussed his memo regarding a possible conflict of interest or impropriety if the Commission gives grants to members of the commission. He explained several examples of conflicts of interest involving people within McHenry County. Member Rozovics stated that the commission allocates funds and provides the ability of owners with a plaqued historic building to apply for those funds. She also stated if the commission was to deny the right of one group of owners to apply for those funds it could be a violation under the 14th Amendment of the Constitution as a taking without Due Process.

Mr. Cowlin stated that the commission should use caution when applying for or receiving grants funds which they control. There are several laws regarding conflict of interest. Member Rozovics said everyone with a historic property can request it be plaqued and can request these funds. Member Kenney said their Ordinance does not guarantee grant funding to properties. She stated it was something the Commission chose to do as an incentive to get more houses plaqued. Member Rozovics stated that the grant funding should be within their Ordinance that way it protects the Historic Preservation Commission. Member Atwood asked if they do not have a right to provide grants to homeowners, should they look to use their funds for something else; such as donations to a larger historic charitable cause.

Member Nemcek said that he was not knowledgeable if Due Process was required or not, it was simply unethical for a commission member to apply for grants. He suggested there needed to be better criteria for the disbursement of grant funds. Mr. Cowlin agreed that the commission should look at their Ordinance and add some language regarding ethics or grant disbursement requirements.

VI. Proposed Downtown Historic District

The Commission members asked Mr. Cowlin his thoughts on the presentation of the District to the City Council. He said that several of the Council members had questions on some of the proposed buildings or the proposed boundary. He suggested the commission meet with

City Council members to discuss the boundary or prepare a packet with all of the historical background on the properties. Member Kenney stated that the District will be voluntary and if the property owners object they will not do the district. She stated that she and Planning and Economic Development Director Michelle Rentzsch are creating a presentation to Member Nemcek asked about the status of that. Member Kenney said they have not established a set of public meeting dates. Member Nemeck thought their first step should be to meet with the property owners.

VII. Discussion of the 2010 Trolley Tour

Member Rozovics stated April 19th was the due date to get her photos and articles. Member Price stated that she was having a hard time tracking down information for the property owners from this time period of home construction. Chair Alt provided some tips on finding obituaries and other information when people move out of town. Member Nemcek said that the commission should go through a draft of the booklet. The commission members agreed on April 27th at 7:00 p.m. at the Colonel Palmer House.

Member Kenney noted that the commission still needed to seek advertisers for the historic trolley tour book. Member Atwood stated her husband would purchase an ad space just like last year. Member Wyman said that he would approach the Knights of Columbus and would assume they would also purchase an ad space the same as last year. Chair Alt said he would approach the architect John Behrens to see if he would like to purchase an ad space.

VIII. Discussion regarding moving the meeting times

Staff Planner Maxwell explained that this was an inquiry from staff. Staff wondered if the current 7:30 pm start time worked for all commission members or if they would like to move to a daytime meeting. All commission members agreed that the current meeting date and time worked best for them.

IX. Member Inquiries and Reports

Member Kenney stated the Joint Council of Historic Groups was very complimentary of Crystal Lake and the work they do. If anyone wants to be on the mailing list they should email Bill at bill@cl-hs.org. Member Kenney also reported that May is look at local history month and the City of Crystal Lake will have a proclamation at the City Council's May meeting. Also June 18th the Illinois Association of Historic Commission is holding a workshop at the Dole Mansion. It is a ½ to ¾ day event and the commission members should consider attending and assisting since it is within our community.

Member Nemcek said that he is still working with Gig on his garage on Caroline Street. Faith in Action, a religious group, has assisted him with some property clean-up. Member Nemcek said he would try to meet with Gig to complete his application to have his property plaqued.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business, Nemcek moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 p.m. Member Atwood seconded the motion. On voice vote, all voted aye. Motion passed.