

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

ACTION REQUESTED:

Receive the report regarding new business items requested at the June 26, 2025 HPC meeting

DEPARTMENT: Transportation, Engineering and Development

SUBMITTED BY: Brad Iwicki, Assistant Planner

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW:

Submitted for Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) review

BACKGROUND:

At the June 26, 2025, Historic Preservation Commission Meeting, the HPC raised items for consideration under new business, including an outline summarizing the meaning of “in-kind” improvements and research pertaining to sale listings for properties in the Local Historic District.

This report is being provided in response to the items raised under new business on June 26, 2025.

DISCUSSION:

At the June 26, 2025, Historic Preservation Commission meeting, staff presented a training session which outlined the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) process in detail. The HPC discussed the meaning of in-kind replacement as this is a common term used to describe minor work in the District that typically requires an Administrative COA, reviewed and approved by staff.

The Naperville Municipal Code, Title 6, Chapter 11, Section 2 (Definitions) provides that in-kind replacement is, “Repair or replacement of existing materials or features that replicates the original in design, color, texture, dimensions, and other visual qualities”.

There are resources available for staff to determine whether a replacement is in-kind. Existing materials may be identified through photo evidence and observations provided in the 2008 Architectural and Historic Survey, those submitted by the petitioner during the application process, and Google Streetview which allows a user to adjust the exact date of the image being displayed.

223 Center Street

- The existing door details were not clearly visible because the door was obstructed by a storm door in the pictures submitted by the applicant. The HBDRM discourages a storm door which obscures the entry door or detracts from the style of character of the home.
- The replacement door is the same size as the previous door. The approved door is not consistent with the door style recommended for a vernacular style home.

The Upright and Wing style is defined as a vernacular style of architecture. Recommended door styles for vernacular style homes typically includes four or six panel doors.

- The elevations included with the COA application reviewed by HPC showed the proposed door; however, the staff report noted that review of the door was not required as it is classified as in-kind.

To ensure the appropriateness of modifications proposed to the primary facade of a home in the Historic District, staff recommends the following moving forward:

- If there is a COA subject to Historic Preservation Commission review, staff will note all of the changes that are proposed on the primary facade(s) of the principal building or structure, fences, driveways or attached garages, or where projection of the work would be visible from a public street measured by a line of sight perpendicular to the primary facade(s) (even if they technically qualify as in-kind replacement). This will allow the HPC to review and comment on any change that is proposed that will impact the primary facade.
- The following attachments will be included with a COA agenda item so that Commissioners can fully evaluate the proposed improvement against adopted guidelines:
 - Pages from the Historic Building Design and Resource Manual (HBDRM) specific to the architectural style of the home
 - Pages from the HBDRM specific to the changes proposed in the COA application (i.e., doors, windows, etc.)
- For an administrative COA or fast-track COA, *if staff is not clear or questions whether or not an improvement qualifies as in-kind*, one of two options may be used:
 - Option 1: If the proposed change is minor, staff will email the HPC and ask for their input as to whether each member believes the change should be classified as in-kind or if it should require a COA subject to HPC review; or
 - Option 2: If the proposed change is significant enough, staff require the applicant to process the request as a COA subject to HPC review.
- Staff will provide a monthly report to the HPC of all in-kind replacements approved administratively by staff.

While the above process changes are recommended, it is important to note that the purpose of the administrative or fast-track COA is to reduce burden on homeowners and streamline the HPC approval process. City staff wants to ensure that the process is not too difficult for residents by requiring all improvements to appear before the HPC as a public hearing. This is particularly true for improvements that can easily be modified or removed in the future (i.e., a front door) and will not have a permanent impact on the houses in question.

Realtor Listings in the Historic District

Based on HPC's discussion at the June meeting, staff reached out to Oriana Van Someren, former PZC Chair and current realtor, for information related to listings in the historic district. Per Oriana, the listing agent is required to disclose any type of

additional rules or covenants that pertain to a property (i.e., location in an Historic District or an HOA, lead or radon disclosure, etc.). This disclosure is required per the National Association of Realtors (NAR) Code of Ethics. The disclosed information may not be forward facing on the listing websites, but it is within the broker's notes. In addition, the seller's agent would share documents and links related to the Historic District with the buyer and their attorney prior to the closing.

While there may be property transactions that occur absent an experienced real estate agent, staff is not personally aware of any recent instances in which a new Historic District owner has been unaware that the property they purchased is located within the local historic district.

Based on all of the above, staff recommends no further action on this item.

Key Takeaways

- In-kind replacement is defined in the Historic Preservation Code. Staff will adjust the COA process to include additional steps when determining whether an improvement is in-kind.
- Realtors operate within the rules and regulations of the National Association of Realtors Code of Ethics which requires disclosure of a home's location in a historic district. No further action is recommended.