



**Meeting Minutes**

**Historic Preservation Commission**

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Thursday, October 24, 2019

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

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**A. CALL TO ORDER:**

**B. ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Phil Garrison, Chairman Kevin Peterson, Carrie Doyle, Mark Urda, Chris Jacks, Emily Ory, Brian Eveslage, Councilman Patrick Kelly (non-voting), Louise Howard (non-voting)

**Absent:** Brett Fessler

**C. PUBLIC FORUM:**

**D. OLD BUSINESS:**

**E. CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

Consider the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Request for Demolition for the buildings located on the Little Friends Campus (140/126 North Wright Street and 619 E. Franklin Avenue) - COA 19-2840

Scott Day, Attorney for the Petitioner provided an overview of the COA request on behalf of the Petitioner.

The HPC inquired about the vote on the COA request and about the reference of the building as a single structure. Staff stated the HPC will first vote on the request for total demolition of all the structures on site and following the result of the vote, deliberation on alternative motions that consider the demolition of the buildings individually. Scott Day stated there are two buildings on site, and only one building is subject to a COA.

Mike Briggs, CEO and President of Little Friends gave a presentation providing information on the purpose and goal of Little Friends, Inc. citing the need for relocation given the current constraints found in the existing buildings. Mr. Briggs stated Little Friends has received 7 offers from land developers and only one of the offers included retention of the Kroehler Mansion, but was 30% lower than the market value of the property.

The HPC asked for more information regarding the conveyance of the Little

Friends property in 1989. Members of the public inquired about the offer made on the subject property. Scott Day provided a brief history of the property conveyance and responded the offer made on the subject property with the Kroehler Mansion remaining was 4 million and 11 thousand dollars.

Scott Day asked Brian Kraft, Farnsworth Group, to testify regarding the structural analysis report submitted by Farnsworth Group and asked Brian Kraft numerous questions regarding the content and structure of the report.

Leanne Meyer-Smith of Wight & Company, architect for the petitioner, testified about the Facilities Conditions Assessment Report prepared by Wight & Company and submitted by the petitioner.

The HPC asked Leanne Meyer-Smith about the reference in the presentation regarding multiple buildings on the site. Leanne Meyer-Smith responded that while the Facilities Conditions Assessment Report references several buildings, she still considers it to be one building with multiple additions.

Members of the public asked Ms. Meyer-Smith numerous questions regarding the structural conditions of the buildings and inquired about the presence of asbestos. Leanne Meyer-Smith concluded the building envelope is found to be structurally sound and acknowledged the presence of asbestos stating removal of asbestos would have to follow State regulations.

Commissioner Urda inquired about the size of the lots provided in the subdivision plans that are included in the Wight & Co. report and if the lots could be reconfigured if the mansion were to stay. Matt Ishikawa, CBRE, real estate agent for the petitioner, stated developers do not find the mansion in its location to be desirable.

Phillip J. Butler, appraiser for the petitioner, gave an overview of the submitted appraisal included in the petitioner's application and stated he conducted the appraisal of the property assuming the property was not subject to any historic district regulations.

Members of the public noted that the value of properties within the Historic District are not comparable to other properties located outside the district given demolition is permitted outside the district. Members of the public also inquired if utilities are included in the cost evaluation. Phillip J. Butler stated utilities are available for each lot and the comparable price included

in the appraisal was based upon lots of a similar character.

Commissioner Urda inquired about the potential sale price of the future homes. Phillip J. Butler stated the appraisal was an evaluation done based on the value of the land and cannot speak to the potential sale price of the future homes.

Chairman Peterson called for a 10 minute recess.

The meeting reconvened.

Members of the public asked if Little Friends will be the developer and raised concerns regarding the decrease of property values in the Historic District with construction of new homes in the district. Phillip J. Butler stated Little Friends would not be the developer. Scott Day stated that demolishing the buildings on the Little Friends property would be an improvement to the district finding the historical significance of the buildings on site to not be architecturally significant and construction of new homes could be built to be in line with other homes in the Historic District.

Jeff Oaken inquired why multifamily was not included in the property appraisal, believing duplexes should have been considered and finds excluding other options skews the appraisal. Phillip J. Butler selected single family development based on the fact that it is predominantly found in the neighborhood.

Julie Garrison testified that she believes entities and organizations located in the Historic District are allowed to do things that individual homeowners cannot. Ms. Garrison provided an example that an older couple might want to maximize the sale of their property by demolishing their home in order to move into a nursing home. However, they are going to be told they have to sell the property within the bounds of the Historic District regulations.

Michael Crash asked how much Little Friends paid for the property. Scott Day provided a history of the transactions and stated the original purchase price was \$650,000. Staff clarified that the \$650,000 Little Friends paid was reduced by the CDBG funding in the amount of \$284,000.

Scott Day provided a summary of the architectural and historical significance of the Little Friends property.

Public Testimony:

Patti Boheme, Executive Vice President for Little Friends, spoke in favor of demolition stating Little Friends has a dire need for a new building.

Nancy Knott, Auxiliary Board for Little Friends, spoke in favor of demolition explaining the positive impact Little Friends has on the community.

Carrie Provenzale, Executive Director of Turning Point Autism Foundation, spoke in favor of demolition stating the need for Little Friends to continue their mission.

Tim Messer, Board of Directors of ECHO, spoke in favor of preservation and spoke on behalf of himself wishing to preserve the structurally sound Kroehler Mansion.

Tom Connors, Board Chair of Little Friends, spoke in favor of demolition stating the land is Little Friends biggest asset and they are unable to financially maintain the building as it currently stands.

Bill Simon, resident in Naperville, provided a presentation on the history of Peter Kroehler and the Kroehler manufacturing Company and the impact Kroehler had on Naperville. Based on the provided history finds Peter Kroehler to be significant, concluding the house has historical significance and is in favor of preservation.

Tom Ryan, Architect and Board member of Naperville Preservation, spoke in favor of preservation and finds that a creative designer would actually use the Kroehler Mansion as a focal point of the property instead of demolishing it.

Joe McElroy spoke in favor of preservation stating historic preservation benefits the entire community and believes demolishing the Kroehler Mansion would be the end of the Historic District. Does not believe Little Friends should be exempt from the historic preservation regulations.

A motion was made by Commissioner Doyle, seconded by Commissioner Ory, to extend the meeting until 11:30 pm.

Ron Franczyk lives in the Historic District and spoke in favor of demolition finding that a reuse of the building will lose the integrity of the home and would like to give the future property owner the best use of the property that works with the neighborhood and the community as a whole.

Tom Coyne, resident in Naperville, spoke in favor of preservation

requesting the future developer make the request for demolition and present the plan for the future of the property.

Becky Simon, Naperville Preservation, spoke in favor of preservation stating Little Friends can still sell the property with the Kroehler Mansion on it, but might not get the price they desire.

Randy Smith, resident in the Historic District, spoke in favor of preservation stating Little Friends should not be exempt from the code requirements based on slight economic hardship noting the offer the property owner was given.

Dawn Dmambro spoke in favor of demolition stating the importance of the Little Friends school.

Don McNugent spoke in favor of preservation and about the impact Peter Kroehler and the Kroehler business had on Naperville.

Stephanie Galloway spoke in favor of demolition and about the importance of Little Friends receiving approval of the demolition request.

Commissioner Eveslage inquired asked the petitioner who has made offers on the property.

Matt Ishikawa, CBRE stated all proposals have been by homebuilders. Mike Briggs confirmed NCC has not made additional offers on the Little Friends property at this time.

Commissioner Urda asked if the petitioner has looked into other properties that would be less costly.

Mike Briggs stated other cheaper facilities they have looked into would not fit their needs.

A motion was made by Commissioner Doyle, seconded by Commissioner Urda, to extend the meeting until 12:00 am.

Scott Day provided closing remarks.

HPC Deliberation of Factor 5.1

Chairman Peterson does not consider the proposed demolition to be an improvement and therefore finds Factor 5.1 does not apply.

Commissioner Jacks believes that if the Commission does apply Factor 5.1, the proposed improvement is the request for demolition and believes the proposal for demolition is incompatible with the district.

Commissioner Garrison concurs with Commissioner Jacks but thinks that instead Factor 5.1 does not apply given the definition of a demolition is not an improvement.

Commissioner Urda concurred and believes Factor 5.1 does not apply in the case of demolition.

The HPC weighed in on Factor 5.1 and voted by a show of hands to find this Factor is not be applicable given the current request.

Aye - Commissioner Doyle, Chairman Peterson, Commissioner Urda, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Eveslage, Commissioner Ory

Nay - Commissioner Jacks

#### HPC Deliberation of Factor 5.5

The HPC weighed in on the Krejci Academy as to whether it is architecturally or historically significant and if its significance outweighs the cost to achieve occupancy.

Chairman Peterson found the significance of the Krejci Academy does not outweigh the cost and believes the reuse of the building is difficult.

Commissioner Doyle and Commissioner Urda concur.

The HPC weighed in on Factor 5.5 and voted by a show of hands to find the significance of the Krejci Academy does not outweigh the cost to achieve occupancy.

Aye - Commissioner Doyle, Chairman Peterson, Commissioner Urda, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Eveslage, Commissioner Ory, Commissioner Jacks

Nay - none

The HPC weighed in on the Gymnasium as to whether it is architecturally or historically significant and if its significance outweighs the cost to achieve

occupancy.

Chairman Peterson finds there is no significance of the Gymnasium that outweighs the cost.

Commissioner Doyle concurred.

The HPC weighed in on Factor 5.5 and voted by a show of hands to find the significance of the Gymnasium does not outweigh the cost to achieve occupancy.

Aye - Commissioner Doyle, Chairman Peterson, Commissioner Urda, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Eveslage, Commissioner Ory, Commissioner Jacks

Nay - none

The HPC weighed in on the Administration Building as to whether it is architecturally or historically significant and if its significance outweighs the cost to achieve occupancy.

Chairman Peterson again found the reuse to be very difficult and did not find the significance of the building outweighed the cost.

The HPC weighed in on Factor 5.5 and voted by a show of hands to find the significance of the Administration Building does not outweigh the cost to achieve occupancy.

Aye - Commissioner Doyle, Chairman Peterson, Commissioner Urda, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Eveslage, Commissioner Ory, Commissioner Jacks

Nay - none

The HPC weighed in on the Kroehler Mansion as to whether it is architecturally or historically significant and if its significance outweighs the cost to achieve occupancy.

Chairman Peterson believes the architectural significance of the Kroehler Mansion is subjective but does believe the historic significance of the building outweighs the cost. Peterson finds the costs provided in the Wight report to be inflated and finds the Farnsworth report does not take into account all the costs that may be necessary since the costs that were

evaluated were only the costs to obtain an occupancy permit.

Commissioner Urda finds the cost provided in the Farnsworth report to be reasonable when evaluating the cost per square footage, therefore finding the historical significance of the building outweighs the cost. Commissioner Urda requests the code be changed to require the architectural and historical significance analysis be completed by a consultant believing the discussion on the historical significance by the applicant was minimal. Commissioner Urda concluded he will not be supporting demolition of the mansion.

Commissioner Jacks believes the significance of the building outweighs the cost given the buildings are found to be structurally sound.

The HPC weighed in on Factor 5.5 and voted by a show of hands to find the significance of the Kroehler Mansion does outweigh the cost to achieve occupancy.

Aye - Commissioner Doyle, Chairman Peterson, Commissioner Urda, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Eveslage, Commissioner Ory, Commissioner Jacks

Nay - none

Based on the HPC finding, under COA Factor 5.5, that the significance of Kroehler Mansion outweighed the cost to achieve occupancy, HPC moved to deny COA 19-2840.

Councilman Kelly asked staff if there needs to be deliberation on Factor 5.3 prior to making a motion on the request for COA.

Staff responded the motion made is a motion to deny the request for full demolition on the Little Friends site. After this motion is taken the HPC will move to the analysis of Factor 5.3 specific to the Kroehler Mansion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Garrison, seconded by Commissioner Doyle, to deny COA 19-2840, Request for Demolition as requested by the Petitioner.

Roll Call

Aye: Doyle, Garrison, Jacks, Ory, Eveslage, Peterson, Urda



Nay: None

#### HPC Deliberation of Factor 5.3

Chairman Peterson finds the numbers in the Wight report to be inflated and finds it is economically reasonable to preserve the Kroehler Mansion.

HPC also noted that the cost of preserving the Kroehler Mansion would be the responsibility of a future developer, and found that preserving the Kroehler Mansion would still allow for development on the remaining portions of the property.

The HPC weighed in on Factor 5.3 and voted by a show of hands to find it is economically reasonable to preserve the Kroehler Mansion.

Aye - Commissioner Doyle, Chairman Peterson, Commissioner Urda, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Eveslage, Commissioner Ory, Commissioner Jacks

Nay - none

Based on the HPC's findings of Factor 5.5 and Factor 5.3, HPC made a motion to deny demolition of the Kroehler Mansion and approve demolition of the Krejci Academy, Gymnasium and Administration Building located on the Little Friends Campus.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Doyle, seconded by Commissioner Urda, to deny demolition of the Kroehler Mansion located on the Little Friends Campus and approve demolition of the Krejci Academy, Gymnasium Building and Administration Building located on the Little Friends Campus.**

**Aye- Commissioner Doyle, Chairman Peterson, Commissioner Urda, Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Eveslage, Commissioner Ory, Commissioner Jacks**

Nay- none

## F. REPORTS

Approve the minutes of the September 26, 2019 Historic Preservation Commission meeting

**A motion was made by Commissioner Doyle, Seconded by Commissioner Ory to approve the meeting minutes of the September 26, 2019 Historic Preservation Commission meeting.**

**Aye- Commissioner Doyle, Chairman Peterson, Commissioner Urda,**

Commissioner Garrison, Commissioner Eveslage, Commissioner Ory,  
Commissioner Jacks

Nay- none

**G. NEW BUSINESS:**

**H. ADJOURNMENT:**

11:54 p.m.