

Portage Historical District Commission
Meeting Minutes
August 5, 2015

In Attendance: Mark Reile, Fred Grunert, Jessie Duniphin, Russ Randall, Katie VanLonkhuyzen, Christine, Erica Eklov, Guest: Mick Lynch and Matt Nieuwenhuis

Excused Absences: Suzanne Nemeth and James Ebert

Meeting called to order at 8:25 a.m.

July Meeting minutes approved with a few misspellings corrected.

Old Business:

Regarding June 3, 2015 application for 5720 Oakland, the commission tabled the application awaiting further information from the home owner.

Regarding June 15, 2015 application for 10209 Portage, the commission tabled application while owner gets more information on fencing.

Regarding 3221 W. Milham, the owner Matt Nieuwenhuis has orders from Community Development to repair or remove existing barn. He has requested to the district that he be allowed to remove the existing historical barn and replace with a standard 24'x32' pole barn. He brought in some initial specifications for the replacement barn. The commission instructed the home owner to resubmit his application with estimates, and Katie advised that we need to see a more historically accurate design. Matt was very adamant on his financial resources and that he could not economically afford to replace the existing structure with a similar barn. Mick Lynch offered some solutions and offered to consult with Matt one and one regarding salvaging and reusing materials on a smaller version of the barn. Matt conveyed his anger of the situation and his feelings on the commission not being flexible. Commissioners assured Matt that their interest was upholding the ordinance under their responsibilities and seeking a mutually satisfactory solution in the best interest of the identified historic property, the city, the present owner [Matt] and future property owners, and not meant to be specifically punitive for Matt. In the end there was great conversation on downsizing the barn and returning a historically accurate structure to the site. Matt will reapply with additional information.

New Business:

July 24, 2015 Application for 10234 East Shore: The homeowner has requested that the property be divided into 3 parcels with 2 parcels then being sold off. Motion was made and passed to create a study committee. There was concern that the parcel closest to the remaining historical property has historical outbuildings on the site. Special Meeting for review was set for Wednesday September 2, 2015.

3821 W. Milham – Update: On August 4, 2015 a site visit was made by Katie, Mark, Erica and several City representatives. The property was being looked by the City as the new development no longer wants the property and they were on a fact finding mission for potential uses of the property and structures. Mick Lynch informed us that he exercised his right of first refusal on the historical property and will be retraining that parcel after all. He has since begun work on the house and out buildings to get them up to code per Community Development requirements. He had several applications of appropriateness to be considered. The commission decided to hold a special meeting on August 14th, 2015 to address the applications at that time.

1521 East Centre: The owner has updated the commission that they are currently working with a new contractor to design a replacement barn for the one that was demolished last winter.

Erica shared that the property on Mandigo continues to be under watch by Community Development and to date there is a \$12,000 lien placed by the City for repairs and clean up.

Mark announced that he will be leaving the commission at the end of his term which is December of this year.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.