

Historic Resources Commission Minutes
June 7, 2021

The meeting was called to order by chairman Noreen Keating at 6:00. Those present included:

Mary Hebert

Kay Forster

Noreen Keating

Sherie Gekiere

Wendy Fleming

Sherry Nelson

City Manager, Tom Eustice

City Council liaison, Diane Raab, via zoom

R.J. Archambo was unable to attend due to work commitments

May minutes were approved.

The next HRC meeting is scheduled for July 5. City Hall will be closed for the day, so the meeting will be cancelled, and rescheduled for the following Monday, July 12 at 6:00 PM.

Mary Hebert contacted the Michigan Historic Network to obtain a list of questions for the community survey that was proposed in May. The agency did not respond. Due to the scheduled guest speaker, there was no further survey discussion.

Jessica Flores, guest speaker, and personal friend of Commissioner Fleming, is the founder of Preservation Forward, a consulting firm specializing in economic development and adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of historic buildings. Prior to founding Preservation Forward, Flores worked as Community Outreach and Historic Building Specialist for the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHIPO), specializing in environmental sustainability and rehabilitation of historic buildings across the state of Michigan.

Flores began by saying she wanted to hear about our concerns and successes regarding historic preservation in Cheboygan, and stressed "It's not good because it's old, it's old because it's good."

History. The National Preservation Act of 1966 set up national preservation partnerships that include:

* US Department of the Interior, National Park Service

* Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

* State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO)

The Act also authorized the Historic Preservation Fund.

State laws. Executive Order 2007-53 was enacted by the State of Michigan which stated

* "it is in the best interest of the State of Michigan to have a formally organized state

historic preservation office,” which created the SHIPO program.

- * Local Historic District Act (PA 169 of 1970) was enacted.
- * SHPO language included that “Historic preservation is declared to be a public purpose and...a local unit maybe ordinance regulate the construction, addition, alteration, repair, moving, excavation and demolition of resources in historic districts” ...
- * The DDA, Downtown Development Authority Act (PA 197 of 1975) was enacted.

Identification. Survey is the process for identifying and gathering data on a community’s historic resources

- * Communities prioritize preservation projects for technical assistance, grant applications, and local funding
- * Property owners, developers prepare National Register nominations, enabling use of historic preservation tax credits
- * Planners to develop land use policy and promote responsible decision making
- * Community organizations to develop heritage tourism and educational programming

Designation of Local Historic Districts (PA 169)

- * Enables protection of local historic properties and incorporation into community planning
- * Assists in getting recognition on National Register of Historic Places
- * Enables communities to enact local ordinances to protect historic properties and incorporate preservation into community planning.

Questions about listing on national Historic Register:

- * Does it protect the property? No, there is no protection for private property. Exception—Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, federal agencies must take into consideration the effects of their activities (funding, permitting, or licensing) on properties listed in or eligible for the national Register. However, Section 106 does not guarantee protection or a specific outcome.
- * Does it protect the property? Yes. Local historic district statue provides legal protection by requiring that proposed work affecting the exterior appearance of a property be reviewed and approved by the local Historic District Commission. Work includes new construction, exterior alterations, and demolition. Through the review process, the proposed work is evaluated to determine the compatibility with the character of the property and overall district.

Incentives for Historic Preservation and Rehabilitation

- * 20% Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit
- * 25% State Rehabilitation Tax Credit

Laying the Framework

- * Be aware that guidelines, evaluations, treatments involve interpretation
- *.Involve all stakeholders in whole process
- * Follow submission timeframes and requirements
- * Remain flexible and be able to respond and revise

Preservation Messaging

* Set up a campaign that projects: Preserve + enhance historic fabric of the community = Education + Awareness

Preservation Planning Should Include

- * Local codes and ordinances
- * Master Plan
- * Zoning Overlay
- * National Register Historic District
- * Local Historic District
- * Design Guidelines
- * Local Facade Program

Questions arose throughout the presentation. Diane Raab asked how properties qualified to be “historic.” Flores responded that there are several requirements a property must, or may, meet. First, there is a 50 year old baseline requirement. Next, the following criteria of the National Park Service include:

- 1—Associated with important events or patterns of history
- 2—Associated with the life of a significant person or persons
- 3—Represent distinctive qualities of type, style, or period of design or work of a master
- 4—Have the ability to yield information important to history or pre-history

If properties meet those qualifications, state or federal funding for preservation may be available.

To qualify for funding, through SHPO, the city must apply and be accepted to the Certified Local Government program. Cheboygan has not yet completed the application for CLG status. Tom Eustice said that past HRC projects have used only local resources, and not pursued state or federal funding, or pursued tax credits.

Mary Hebert said that CLG status is required to secure funding for her projects, and volunteered to fill out the required CLG application, along with Sherry Nelson. Eustice said that was acceptable.

Flores stated that the municipal code should be checked to see if Cheboygan has designated a “historic district,” referred to in PA 169. Eustice said he did not know of such a district designation.

Noreen Keating stated that the HRC should get Cheboygan’s downtown listed on the National Historic Register. Sherry Nelson said that she expected business owners to resist such a designation as it implies restrictions in building renovation.

Sherie Gekiere asked about a survey of historical properties. Does it need to be done—or, can we rely on one that was done previously? We agreed to first ask the Main Street/DDA if that group has an updated survey available.

Noreen Keating also asked about available training for HRC commissioners. Eustice said he did not know of any. Keating said she will contact City Clerk Bridget Brown to see if she knows of any. Mary Hebert said perhaps it would be helpful to all read through the HRC ordinance together.

There was some discussion that the visibility of historic preservation must be raised. Keating said that she would write an article for distribution.

Meeting adjourned at 7:39.

Sherry Nelson
HRC Secretary