

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2017
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Members Present: Chairman Norris, Bobowiec, Gibson, Kessler, Malay, Pretz, Smunt

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager
Ellen Johnson, Planner
Rita Tungare, Director of Community & Economic Development

1. Call to order

Chairman Norris called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll call

Ms. Johnson called roll with seven members present. There was a quorum.

3. Approval of Agenda

No changes were made.

4. Presentation of minutes of the January 4, 2017 meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Bobowiec and seconded by Mr. Pretz with a unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Malay abstained.

5. COA: 514 Indiana St. (new house)

Chairman Norris asked if the Commissioners had any comments on the modifications made to the original presentation.

Mr. Pretz stated he still had some concerns over the imbalance on the east elevation and the dormer on the front view, but he will support it based upon the floor plan of the house.

Dr. Smunt and Ms. Malay expressed support for the drawings.

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Bobowiec with a unanimous voice vote to approve the COA as presented.

PUBLIC HEARING

6. Eligibility for Historic District Designation: Millington Historic District

The attached transcript prepared by Planet Depos Court Reporting is by reference hereby made a part of these minutes.

A motion was made by Ms. Malay and seconded by Mr. Smunt with a unanimous voice vote to close the public hearing.

MEETING

7. Eligibility for Historic District Designation: Millington Historic District

The attached transcript prepared by Planet Depos Court Reporting is by reference hereby made a part of these minutes.

A motion was made by Dr. Smunt and seconded by Ms. Malay with a unanimous voice vote to recommend to City Council approval of the Historic District Nomination submitted by the St. Charles Historic Preservation Commission and received by the City on December 21, 2016 for the Millington Historic District, based on a finding that the district meets the following criteria, as substantiated in the Historic District Nomination:

- 1. The area contains several structures that meet the criteria for landmark designation, and also includes other structures which, although they may not qualify for individual landmark designation, contribute to the overall visual character of the area and to its architectural and historic significance.**
- 2. The area is historically significant to the development of St. Charles.**
- 3. The area has sufficient integrity to convey the sense of a particular period in the history of the community, specifically the period from the mid-1800's to the 1930's.**

8. Additional Business and Observations from Commissioners or Staff – None.

9. Meeting Announcements: Historic Preservation Commission meeting Wednesday, February 1, 2017 at 7:00 P.M. in the Committee Room.

10. Public Comment

11. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

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BEFORE THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF ST. CHARLES

-----x
In Re: :
Eligibility for Historic :
District Designation: :
Millington Historic :
District :
-----x

HEARING
St. Charles, Illinois 60174
Wednesday, January 18, 2017
7:04 p.m.

Job No.: 131556
Pages: 1 - 56
Reported by: Joanne E. Ely, CSR, RPR

1 HEARING, held at the location of:

2

3 ST. CHARLES CITY HALL

4 2 East Main Street

5 St. Charles, Illinois 60174

6 (630) 377-4400

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13 Before Joanne E. Ely, a Certified Shorthand

14 Reporter, and a Notary Public in and for the State

15 of Illinois.

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PRESENT:

FREDERICK NORRIS, JR., Chairman

STEPHEN GIBSON, Vice Chairman

CRAIG BOBOWIEC, Member

KIM MALAY, Member

PHILLIP KESSLER, Member

THOMAS PRETZ, Member

DR. STEVEN SMUNT, Member

ALSO PRESENT:

RUSSELL COLBY, Planning Division Manager

ELLEN JOHNSON, Planner

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Item No. 6, the public
3 hearing is now open regarding the eligibility for
4 the historic district designation for the Millington
5 Historic District. Before I get started, I'm going
6 to explain the purpose of the public hearing and the
7 procedures we will follow.

8 The purpose of this hearing is for the
9 Historic Commission to gather information regarding
10 the extent to which the Historic District
11 nominations meet the criteria provided in the
12 Historic Preservation ordinance.

13 There are three ordinance criteria:

14 One, the area contains one or more
15 buildings, structures, or sites meeting the criteria
16 for landmark designation, and may also include other
17 buildings, structures, or sites which, although they
18 may not qualify for individual landmark designation,
19 contribute to the overall visual character of the
20 area and to its architectural or the historical
21 significance.

22 Two, the area is historically, economically,
23 or culturally significant to the development of
24 St. Charles.

1 Three, the area has significant integrity to
2 convey the sense of a particular period in the
3 history of the community.

4 After all the information is gathered, the
5 Historic Commission will then make a recommendation
6 to the City Council regarding the nomination.

7 Regarding the procedures for public
8 hearings, the Commission members may ask questions
9 if they have any. After that, I will open the floor
10 to questions from the members of the audience.

11 After all the questions have been asked, I
12 will open the floor to anyone wishing to provide
13 testimony in both support and in opposition of the
14 nomination.

15 Only one person may speak at a time. When
16 you wish to speak, please come to the lectern and
17 speak into the microphone. State your name,
18 spell it, and state your address for the record.
19 The court reporter is here reporting the meeting.

20 Testimony should be kept brief and should be
21 on the basis of facts and specific reasons for
22 review. Commission members may ask questions of the
23 person giving the testimony.

24 Anyone who wishes to give testimony must be

1 sworn in. If you wish to speak tonight, please
2 stand and raise your right hand.

3 (Witnesses sworn.)

4 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: After all the testimony
5 has been taken, the Historic Commission will close
6 the public hearing. After that, they will decide
7 and vote on the nomination. The Historic Commission
8 will provide a recommendation as to whether the
9 nomination meets the ordinance criteria.

10 The recommendation will be forwarded on to
11 the Planning and Development Committee of the City
12 Council for review and then the City Council.

13 The City Council makes the final decision as
14 to whether -- the approval of the historic district
15 nomination.

16 Mr. Gibson, would you read Item No. 2.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN GIBSON: The item before us
18 tonight is eligibility for historic district
19 designation to the Millington Historic District.
20 This nomination was submitted on December 21st,
21 2016, at the direction of the Historic Preservation
22 Commission.

23 Notice of public hearing was published in
24 the Daily Herald on December 31st, 2016, and all

1 property owners within the proposed district
2 were notified by mail.

3 The proposed district constitutes eight
4 square blocks directly west of the Central Historic
5 District. The district is bounded by State Street
6 to the north, 5th Street to the east, Illinois
7 Street to the south, and 7th Street to the west. 51
8 properties are included in the district.

9 The district comprises the bulk of
10 Millington's Addition to St. Charles, which was
11 annexed into the City in 1842. An architectural
12 survey of the area has been conducted. A total of
13 13 structures are rated as significant, 22
14 structures are rated as contributing, and 16
15 structures are rated as noncontributing. Five local
16 historic landmarks are included within the district.

17 We have received a few letters and e-mails
18 regarding the nomination, I will list these items
19 for the record as exhibits.

20 Exhibit A, a letter dated 1/13/17 from Eric
21 M. Larson, owner of 605 West Main Street and 522
22 West Main Street, expressing his support of the
23 nomination.

24 Exhibit B, an e-mail dated 1/16/17 from

1 Sheryl and Tony Emralino, 114 South 6th Street,
2 expressing opposition to the nomination.

3 Exhibit C, an e-mail dated 1/16/17 from
4 Wendy and Fred Mosier, 423 South 7th Street,
5 expressing support for the nomination.

6 Exhibit D, an e-mail dated 1/18/17 from
7 Laura Rice, 201 Chestnut Avenue, expressing support
8 for the nomination.

9 Exhibit E, an e-mail dated 1/18/17 from
10 Laura Binning, 505 West Main Street, expressing
11 opposition to the nomination.

12 Exhibit F, a letter dated 1/18/17 from
13 Dr. Daniel Kelly, 11 South 6th Street, expressing
14 support for the nomination.

15 Exhibit G, a letter dated 1/18/17 from Adam
16 D. Gibbons, Preservation Partners of Fox Valley,
17 expressing support for the nomination.

18 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Thank you.

19 I will now take questions from the
20 Commission members. Any questions? Steve?

21 MEMBER SMUNT: I have no questions.

22 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Okay. If there are no
23 further questions from the Commission, I will then
24 take questions from the audience.

1 Again, if you wish to speak, please come up
2 to the lectern and speak into the microphone.

3 MR. BINNING: Hi.

4 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: And your name?

5 MR. BINNING: My name is Tim Binning,
6 B-i-n-n-i-n-g. I represent MDW Properties at 505
7 West Main Street.

8 We would just ask -- we've got the new
9 building. We're getting ready to occupy it in about
10 two weeks. We would just ask to be either exempt or
11 left out of the -- we're not opposed to the historic
12 district per se, just our building is obviously
13 brand new, so we wouldn't want to be subject to
14 approvals from the historic district committee.

15 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Russ, that's a question?

16 MR. BINNING: For the record.

17 MR. COLBY: Yes. This is a statement for
18 the record.

19 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Okay.

20 MR. COLBY: The request will be made part of
21 the public record that will be forwarded to the City
22 Council.

23 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: In this portion, we're
24 just asking questions.

1 MR. BINNING: Okay. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Any other questions? The
3 next portion will be testimony. This is just for
4 questions.

5 MR. ELSNER: Andrew Elsner, and it's 116
6 South 7th Street.

7 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Can you spell your name
8 too?

9 MR. ELSNER: Yes. E-l-s-n-e-r.

10 My question following that statement is is
11 it possible to be exempt if this is passed, or is it
12 all inclusive?

13 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: That's a question for the
14 statement. Okay.

15 MEMBER SMUNT: I'd like to answer that.

16 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Please.

17 MEMBER SMUNT: We have a proposed boundary,
18 and you were informed about that, and you live
19 within that boundary.

20 After testimony is given, I mean, we'll have
21 a discussion. If there is a valid, logical argument
22 for your property to be excluded from the district,
23 we could table our proposal and possibly amend the
24 boundaries. So that is -- that's always a

1 possibility.

2 There is not an exemption, so to speak, but
3 we can rebound or do a re-boundary. That is our
4 option. And so we're basically here to learn about
5 you and your concerns, and hopefully, I answered
6 your question.

7 MR. ELSNER: You did. Thank you.

8 MEMBER SMUNT: Sure.

9 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Are there any other
10 questions before we move on to testimony?

11 Please.

12 MR. MENDEL: My name is Steve Mendel,
13 M-e-n-d-e-l. I have two properties in the district.
14 One is 117 South 5th Street. One is 515 State
15 Street.

16 117 South 5th Street, I'm in the process of
17 plans -- having plans drawn up because it's a double
18 lot. This house sits in the middle of the lot, and
19 I was going to tear it down and possibly build two
20 houses. I was wondering how this would affect my
21 plans continuing on if this was passed.

22 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Sure. After the
23 nomination, it goes to the City Council, and it's
24 their decision to either accept it or reject it.

1 There will be a date on that; and after that date, I
2 believe that will be the start of the historic
3 district.

4 So if you were going to go in right away, it
5 would probably be pretty good. If it was going to
6 go in in the future, then it probably would go in
7 front of the Historic Preservation Commission.

8 MEMBER MALAY: Can I answer that too? There
9 is a process. So we would actually review your
10 plans --

11 MR. MENDEL: Okay.

12 MEMBER MALAY: -- and determine whether or
13 not it was appropriate or it wasn't appropriate and
14 what solutions we could possibly come up with.

15 So yes, you would be under our review; and
16 depending on the whole situation, you know, we try
17 to work that out, you know, to make it work for
18 everybody.

19 MR. MENDEL: You stated -- I don't remember
20 the three categories exactly. One was
21 noncontributing structure for architectural --

22 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: It's contributing,
23 significant, and noncontributing, depending on what
24 your structure is classified right now. Certainly,

1 the contributing is a real sensitive issue, and a
2 noncontributing structure is not a sensitive issue.

3 MR. MENDEL: Can you tell me where these two
4 houses fall in that category?

5 MEMBER SMUNT: Your property on South 5th is
6 noncontributing; and therefore, the most liberal
7 interpretation of the ordinance will be applied. In
8 other words, it's -- if you were to propose a
9 teardown, we're not necessarily going to stand in
10 your way of doing that; but we would be very much
11 interested in what you propose to put in place
12 of it.

13 And we would hope that the architecture of
14 your new design would be compatible and not have any
15 negative impact on adjacent properties. So
16 therefore, we're quite flexible when it comes to a
17 redevelopment such as yours.

18 MR. MENDEL: Can you give me a yes or no I
19 can tear it down or not tonight or --

20 MEMBER SMUNT: I can't give you that because
21 you're -- well, I would not be able to do that at
22 this time, during this hearing.

23 Now, the other property on -- what was your
24 second?

1 MR. MENDEL: That was 515 State. I assume
2 that's probably under the same category.

3 MEMBER BOBOWIEC: Yeah, it is.

4 MEMBER SMUNT: It's a noncontributing
5 structure. So noncontributing structures have the
6 most variables, allowances to what can be done and
7 how strict of a review process there is -- they
8 undergo.

9 That's often under the condition that we
10 would -- that there would be a historic district
11 vote on that. Right now that doesn't exist. We
12 have no review of your existing properties as they
13 stand today.

14 MEMBER MALAY: Well, and I think -- I'll
15 just clarify. One of the reasons why we can't say
16 yes or no right off the bat is because we need to
17 know what's going in its place. We need to make
18 sure that what is replacing that building is
19 appropriate for the area.

20 MR. MENDEL: There has been a few new houses
21 built in this thing, so as long as I conformed and
22 made them look somewhat similar, then it could be
23 rebuilt.

24 MEMBER MALAY: You know, again, we can't

1 really say absolutely yes.

2 MEMBER SMUNT: The Historic Preservation
3 Ordinance has a section on neighborhoods and
4 streetscapes, and it talks about wanting the fronts
5 of the home to be pretty much the same setback,
6 approximately within 10 percent of variation of each
7 other. That's one example of compatibility or
8 blending.

9 Let's say, like, there's three different
10 styles of homes in your specific neighborhood where
11 you want to rebuild; and if you chose to pick one of
12 those styles, even though it's a new home, that
13 would be a compatible style because it exists in the
14 surrounding neighborhood.

15 So those are just some generic examples that
16 I'm trying to put forth to kind of help answer the
17 question.

18 MEMBER MALAY: And to kind of give you --
19 earlier this evening, we approved a new home. So I
20 mean, we're definitely open to it, you know.

21 MR. MENDEL: In a historic district.

22 MEMBER MALAY: In the district. That's what
23 he was here for, to build a new home in the
24 district.

1 MR. MENDEL: Okay. All right. I think
2 you've answered my question as best you can. Thank
3 you.

4 MEMBER MALAY: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Please.

6 MR. MURRAY: Hi, good evening. Jace Murray
7 with Murray Commercial. Our firm currently
8 represents the property at 619 West Main Street.

9 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Spell it for the court
10 reporter.

11 MR. MURRAY: J-a-c-e Murray, M-u-r-r-a-y.

12 Just a general question. When the general
13 historic district was boundaried back whenever that
14 was boundaried, why was this area not included back
15 in that time frame, and what's bringing us to the
16 front today?

17 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Sure. It's called the
18 Central Historic District.

19 Steve.

20 MEMBER SMUNT: The actual original historic
21 district that was proposed followed the boundary of
22 the original town of St. Charles. So we went with
23 the historical boundary as a starting point.

24 MR. MURRAY: Sure. And what year was that

1 done?

2 MEMBER SMUNT: Around --

3 MEMBER MALAY: 1995.

4 MEMBER SMUNT: -- '95, 1995, approximately
5 in that time frame.

6 And since then, we've had about 40-some
7 landmarks designated. We have another historic
8 district in the southwest of our central district
9 called Moody-Millington District.

10 And now before you is the Moody -- I'm
11 sorry -- the Millington Historic District, which is
12 basically two blocks further to the west of the
13 original Central Historic District.

14 There was a feeling that it is our west
15 gateway into our downtown, and our City has invested
16 millions of dollars, not only City money but also
17 reinvestment by private investors.

18 And we feel that -- most of the
19 commissioners, I think all the commissioners, and
20 many of the people we have been in communication
21 with have voiced concerns about a desire to maintain
22 the integrity of the historical downtown, and that
23 west gateway has become a significant component of
24 that, and we're hoping that that becomes a component

1 of our district.

2 MR. MURRAY: Very good. I appreciate the
3 comment. Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Sure. Any other questions
5 from the audience?

6 (No response.)

7 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Seeing none, I'd like to
8 go to the next portion. This item is called the
9 testimony.

10 Is there anybody who wishes to give
11 testimony to this nomination?

12 MR. MARINACCIO: Good evening. My name is
13 Lee Marinaccio, M-a-r-i-n-a-c-c-i-o.

14 MEMBER PRETZ: Can you give us your address?

15 MR. MARINACCIO: My address is 213 South 5th
16 Street in St. Charles.

17 Katie, who is here now, and I have been
18 residents of the community for a long time. We have
19 enjoyed our stay in the community. We actually
20 thought that this would be a great place for us to
21 raise our children because of the various eclectic
22 nature of the homes in the community, the wonderful
23 character that exists in St. Charles, and it drove
24 us to this community because we felt it was

1 different than a lot of flat little suburbs that
2 exist throughout the Chicagoland area.

3 It was a great place for us to raise our
4 children. It gave us an opportunity for them to
5 learn about historic homes, to learn about values
6 that exist in our community, and we think that part
7 of that -- all of that is important in raising
8 families.

9 This new historic preservation district that
10 you're proposing in my estimation is a wonderful
11 thing for our community. It will be the gateway --
12 I think that word was already used -- to the west of
13 our community. People who come in from the west are
14 going to see these historic homes and see the
15 wonderful character that exists in the community
16 firsthand, if we are able to preserve the
17 significant architecture and structures that exist.

18 There are many significant architectural
19 features along Main Street that I am fearful will no
20 longer be here if we don't have the kind of Historic
21 Preservation Commission and this historic district
22 to preserve the character of our community.

23 I think that it's important for our future
24 generations to have an opportunity to see the kind

1 of character that built our community, the years
2 that have been put into it by our founding fathers
3 and by many people such as yourselves to try to make
4 this a great place to live.

5 If we can continue to do that, this will be
6 good for the rest of our future generations. I
7 think the Millington subdivision that you're talking
8 about making into a historic preservation district
9 will give us that opportunity.

10 I strongly urge the Commission and our
11 community to consider following this recommendation,
12 and I support it wholeheartedly. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Thank you.

14 Any other testimony? Please.

15 MS. AMUNDSON: Good evening. My name is
16 Jhennifer Amundson. I spell Jhennifer,
17 J-h-e-n-n-i-f-e-r Amundson, A-m-u-n-d-s-o-n. I live
18 at 500 Cedar Street and have done so for the last
19 16 years.

20 I grew up outside of Elgin, outside of
21 St. Charles in Elgin Township, but because of the
22 way the districts are drawn, I went to St. Charles
23 East before it was East. My children go to East
24 now. So I'm a long-time St. Charles person even

1 though we did go away for a long time for our
2 education.

3 In that education, I pursued my PhD in the
4 history of architecture. So I come to you on the
5 one hand as a long-time resident with a very
6 emotional response to this proposal; but then at the
7 same time, my professional life has been geared
8 towards exactly the kinds of things that you are
9 proposing with this move, and I'm honored to teach
10 at Judson University where I'm also the dean of
11 school of design architecture.

12 I am very strongly in support of this
13 proposal as an extension of the historic protection
14 and encouragement in our town, as the last speaker I
15 think very beautifully put, the importance of
16 maintaining the heritage of our architecture for
17 future generations.

18 And it's not just a matter -- as I think an
19 earlier approach to historic preservation, as you
20 know, were geared towards specific monuments, you
21 know, big fancy churches and town halls; and now we
22 have a much broader and more fair view of what
23 historic preservation ought to be, number one,
24 really encompassing large districts to present a

1 fuller view of what a community is.

2 And, of course, by doing so, you're bringing
3 in a great variety of residential types that tell
4 the story of what St. Charles has always been, a
5 great variety of different kinds of people coming to
6 this town and that we hope to, of course, continue
7 into the future.

8 And I know that -- so on the one hand,
9 there's an emotional appeal to this proposal; but
10 then also, again, the professional recognition that
11 this kind of approach to designation within a
12 downtown area residential or business district is
13 simply good business, of course.

14 It was just last week I saw one more listing
15 by a Chicago magazine online that cited St. Charles
16 with Naperville and Geneva as the three places in
17 the suburbs that are worth leaving the city to go
18 look at and spend some time in.

19 It's not just because of the beauty of the
20 river and the great restaurants. It's because of
21 the physical quality of this place that draws people
22 in for the festivals that we -- that are so
23 successful here, for weekend visits, and, of course,
24 just simply bringing people back home as kids go off

1 to college.

2 And it's proven too in plenty of research
3 that cities that have very strong identifiable
4 architectural and urbanistic personalities are
5 better for business. They have a great character.
6 They draw business. They draw customers.

7 And so they're good for the bottom line, but
8 I, you know, again, as a long-time resident, would
9 say even more importantly, they're great for us and
10 the community spirit within this town. So I'm very
11 much in support of the proposal, and I hope that you
12 will able to pursue it. Thanks very much.

13 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Thank you.

14 Please.

15 MR. SCHWENDNER: My name is Lee Schwendner,
16 S-c-h-w-e-n-d-n-e-r. I live at 615 Cedar Street.

17 My comments will be a lot more -- I have
18 more simple thoughts on this, but they're very -- I
19 feel very strongly about it. I've lived at that
20 address for 30 years, and I think the people that
21 are most affected by this proposal are the people
22 that own their homes there, have invested their
23 money in those homes over the years, and I don't see
24 any compelling benefit to the homeowners there from

1 this proposal.

2 I do see detriments. In my mind, the
3 restrictions, additional restrictions that come upon
4 making improvements to your property; and also I
5 would have the concern that at some point in the
6 future, should I want to try and sell my house, that
7 being in the historic district might limit the pool
8 of people that would be interested in purchasing a
9 home in that area and thereby affect the values.

10 So based on that, I object to the proposal.

11 MEMBER MALAY: May I ask what you think that
12 the detriment would be?

13 MR. SCHWENDNER: Well, instead of just
14 applying for a building permit, I would have to
15 submit for the certificate of appropriateness, and I
16 kind of heard the discussion going on with somebody
17 else's property with the earlier part of this
18 meeting. I guess I just don't see the need for
19 that. It just seems to me like another layer of
20 bureaucracy that's not necessary.

21 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Thank you.

22 MR. AMUNDSON: I'll throw in my two cents
23 worth. I'm David Amundson, A-m-u-n-d-s-o-n, 500
24 Cedar Street. I wasn't actually planning on saying

1 anything tonight, but I'll throw in two cents here.

2 In response to what you were just saying,
3 I've seen in the past, reports, studies that show
4 that houses in historic districts actually
5 appreciate at a faster rate than houses not in
6 historic districts.

7 And if you think of your house as a finite,
8 limited quantity, there is a limited number of
9 houses built, say, before World War II; and they're
10 being reduced regularly. They get demolished.
11 They're becoming a rarer and rarer commodity, and
12 people want them. We, when we went hunting for a
13 house, specifically targeted only homes built before
14 World War II.

15 Yeah. You have a limited commodity that
16 people want, and historic districts are generally a
17 good thing. I think there's enough people like us
18 who will be drawn to an area and want to buy your
19 house. So I think it actually adds value. And you
20 all could do a better job of selling that just
21 universally.

22 So yeah, that's -- I'm in favor of it on one
23 hand; and on the other hand, though, I have some
24 reservations like you do because, you know, the

1 thought of, okay, I want to build a fence next
2 summer. Okay. Am I going to have to come in front
3 of you to get a fence permit and have you tell me
4 that you want my fence a little bit differently than
5 I do, and if I lived somewhere else, I wouldn't have
6 to worry about that.

7 So I have some hesitation, not quite fully
8 onboard about the oversight, but I like the general
9 overall thrust of let's not just level it and turn
10 everything into McMansions because I don't want that
11 to happen in my neighborhood.

12 I would like to see better, more proactive
13 something, ordinances from the City, if need be, to
14 control EARs, to control FARs, to control things,
15 that we don't get 50-foot high houses sandwiched in,
16 you know, shoulder-to-shoulder to 22-foot high
17 houses, and that seems to be what's happening.

18 Our code doesn't seem to really control
19 sensitivity all that well. We're getting maybe
20 McMansions with lipstick on them that, you know,
21 they're still not all that good. I think we can do
22 better in terms of appropriateness and fit.

23 I also have some -- and I don't think it's
24 written in the ordinance yet, but ordinances can be

1 modified. One of my hesitations is, well, what if
2 some years from now, you decide you want to judge
3 paint color or something like that. No, please
4 don't do that.

5 And also the idea too that, you know, if
6 there was a house built in 1880, and in 1910
7 somebody wanted to put an addition on it, they did
8 whatever they stinking well pleased. But now we
9 tend to think of it as, Oh, your house was built in
10 1880, so the addition you put on it has to only be
11 appropriate to 1880.

12 And I think there needs to be a little more
13 latitude to allow good design without being
14 stylistically in constraints and just chaining stuff
15 to something that never existed. You know, they
16 didn't care what color they painted their house in
17 1920, even if it was painted something different in
18 1875. And I don't know why we get so hung up on
19 creating -- trying to recreate this past that maybe
20 never existed. And I know you don't do that now,
21 but that's one of my hesitations.

22 So I'm not as enthusiastic as my wife, I
23 think; but conceptually I'm behind it, and in part
24 because I want to keep what we have, and I don't

1 want it to turn into name your favorite suburb to
2 the east that's been, you know, eaten alive and
3 completely rebuilt to the point that it's not
4 recognizable anymore.

5 So yes, asterisk. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Thank you.

7 We're still in the portion of this hearing
8 in regards to the testimony. I'd love to respond
9 back but not in this portion.

10 Any other testimony? Does anyone else wish
11 to speak on this nomination?

12 (No response.)

13 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Steve, if you could speak
14 about the guidelines to the state statutes and what
15 we follow.

16 MEMBER SMUNT: As far as it applies to the
17 certificate of appropriateness?

18 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Right, right.

19 MEMBER SMUNT: You alluded to our ordinance.
20 In our ordinance, there's a set of -- there's
21 guidelines, and we're guided to act under those
22 guidelines.

23 And we developed a booklet, I'm not sure how
24 many pages, called "Design Guidelines for Historical

1 Buildings" specific to St. Charles to give
2 homeowners some direction and let them know what
3 latitude they can take with their improvements to
4 their properties.

5 And it's a great resource to, hopefully,
6 answer some of the questions in the gray area. You
7 brought up issues in the gray area, a painting
8 color, painting the house. Yes, it's not regulated,
9 but some historic districts do regulate color. We
10 don't, but we still give advice on color selection
11 if someone wants it, but it's not a mandatory issue.

12 The thing about -- you brought up another
13 issue is, let's say, the 1880 house, and then
14 someone put an addition on it in 1910, and then now,
15 you, as the homeowner today, wants to tear off that
16 addition and wants to put a bigger addition on it,
17 and how we might be overzealous in our application
18 of the ordinance, perhaps.

19 I think we want to see the size, scale, and
20 proportion. You don't want to see a big McMansion
21 built on the rear of a small house, but we don't
22 want to be overly burdensome when it comes to the
23 stylistic features on an addition. An addition
24 could be much simpler.

1 We actually want the addition to be
2 differentiated from the original structure. The
3 original structure should be preserved as much as
4 possible, and the additions can be sympathetic to
5 it, but they don't have to be duplicates. They
6 don't have every -- the same level of detail going
7 forward.

8 There could be a lot of flexibility if
9 someone wants to propose an addition to their house,
10 and we're quite lenient in that respect. But we do
11 like the size and scale issues. We do not want one
12 neighborhood to have a negative impact on the rest
13 of the block because of an oversize,
14 out-of-proportion addition or a new construction,
15 for that matter.

16 So I hope that kind of helps you because you
17 brought up some questions and several issues, and I
18 hope that helps.

19 VICE CHAIRMAN GIBSON: I'm one of the junior
20 members on this Board. I've been on the Commission
21 for a couple of years, and I have to say it is
22 unfortunate that we can't do a better job of
23 publicizing.

24 I don't think it would be a very good TV

1 show if every second Wednesday, there was an
2 hour-long special that talked about historic
3 preservation; but I would say this, most people
4 don't even run into a situation until they're ready
5 to make a change in their house and they find out
6 they have to do a certificate of appropriateness.

7 But my experience in the couple years I've
8 been involved with this is very few people come to
9 see us and talk to us about their house that leave
10 not being satisfied with the process. And I know
11 you have to kind of take that at face value. I'm
12 just telling you that.

13 But I would encourage anybody who wants to
14 come any time, we're every other Wednesday, the
15 first and third Wednesday, and see the process; and,
16 hopefully, before you have to go through the process
17 if your house ends up being inside a historic
18 district. But I would say most of what we're
19 interested in is exactly what Commissioner Smunt
20 said, fit and finish of the house. The scale and
21 size of the house matches the neighborhood.

22 Like I think you indicated, if there was no
23 control in 1910, there were all sorts of changes
24 that were made. Well, that's part of the character

1 of the neighborhood in and of itself. So the
2 changes that you might want to make to the house
3 would be absolutely perfect with that.

4 Another thing we don't worry about so much
5 is that part of the house we don't see from the
6 street. Once you're away from the part that's going
7 to affect your neighbors and other people's values,
8 we're not quite as strict on that.

9 So I think there's a lot of things -- and
10 that's why it's important that you understand it
11 isn't just a checklist that we go through from the
12 top and if you come out on the bottom, you get your
13 certificate. It's a discussion.

14 And in a lot of cases, even though you talk
15 about fences, we've had some discussion on fences,
16 and it's different even then what we thought we were
17 going to approve when we went into it. The
18 discussion starts one way, and we end up the other
19 way. So it isn't necessarily cookie-cutter
20 responses, and it isn't necessarily the idea that
21 nothing can change because that wouldn't work.

22 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Kim.

23 MEMBER MALAY: A little bit too on the
24 history. We were trying to get an ordinance

1 approved, a historic preservation ordinance approved
2 since the -- and it took the teardown of Farnsworth
3 mansion back in the early '90s to make it a
4 Commission and an ordinance happen.

5 So we were losing very significant
6 resources, and so the preservation ordinance was put
7 in place to make sure that that didn't continue and
8 that we were able to keep what brings us all here
9 and it helps us stay here, that charm, that historic
10 charm that St. Charles has. And reserving that
11 history is very important.

12 Now, we've had an ordinance in place for
13 over 20 years now, and you've heard very little
14 controversy, if really any, about the Commission and
15 what they've done. We've done a very good job of
16 working with the residents within that district --
17 in those districts and making sure that everybody
18 comes out getting what they need to get
19 accomplished.

20 So we really do sit down with you, we listen
21 to what you have to say, and we work with you to be
22 able to make what you need happen.

23 And to your point about additions and stuff,
24 actually 606 Cedar Street is a really good -- I

1 mean, it's right down the street from you. That's a
2 really good example of what we were able to
3 accomplish. That house had an addition on it. We
4 let them take it off and put on a pretty sizeable
5 addition.

6 You know, what it means to be in a district,
7 yes, you'll have to come before us when you do
8 exterior work, and that's not even everything.
9 Obviously, paint we won't regulate. We had a big
10 situation years ago where people wanted us to
11 regulate paint, and we said no, because the state
12 recommended we do it. So we don't want to touch
13 that. As Steve said, we'll recommend if you want
14 some recommendations. But we try to be very, I
15 think, you know, approachable and work with you on
16 this.

17 And, you know, what it doesn't mean is it
18 doesn't mean that we're going to tell you what the
19 exterior -- or the interior of your home, what you
20 can do and not do in there. We have no regulation
21 on the inside. It's strictly exterior. It doesn't
22 mean you can't put on a porch. It doesn't mean you
23 can't put on a deck. It doesn't mean you can't
24 build a fence, you know, or change windows. All

1 those type of things we'll look at, but we --
2 obviously, there's been a lot of work done in the
3 district over 20 years.

4 So we're definitely here to be more of a
5 resource even for you. You know, that's what we're
6 really trying to accomplish, just protect what
7 St. Charles stands for. To protect its integrity,
8 its character, and its heritage.

9 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Tom.

10 MEMBER PRETZ: Yes. I would like to direct
11 this to 615 Cedar and your COA concerns, certificate
12 of appropriateness, and COA is not a bad
13 three-letter word. It really is a partnership.

14 The group up here, we have to think in terms
15 of anything that you want to do with your house, you
16 have to follow City code. So you have all of the
17 City codes and that that guide you on what you can
18 and can't do.

19 The only additional step -- and our meetings
20 are twice a month. The only additional step is that
21 it requires you to have a permit if you're having,
22 you know, a change that requires it. The City will
23 then say you need to come for your COA prior, and
24 then they release the permit to you.

1 Our group is really a partnership with you.
2 We provide and give guidance for the size, the
3 scale, as well as the style; and contrary to what
4 people may think when they have a developer or a
5 contractor that they're utilizing is that the
6 sensitivity towards style and these three elements
7 may not be there.

8 So our job is to help you, the owner of the
9 home, and guide you so that you can, in fact, put in
10 something that is complementary to your building as
11 well as beneficial to your neighborhood, your
12 neighbors and that.

13 Our job really is to send you out with a yes
14 on your request, and that's really what we do, and I
15 think we have had more than -- in the 20 years more
16 than a thousand COAs.

17 MEMBER MALAY: At least.

18 MEMBER PRETZ: And we're still counting I
19 think for that. So we want to send you out with a
20 yes. We want to send you out with satisfaction. We
21 go back and forth in our discussion during that
22 portion of our meeting on a given night, where you
23 do your presentation and then what your intentions
24 are. We discuss back and forth, come to a

1 conclusion and that is -- fits what you want to do.

2 But it just helps as a guide, and that's all
3 we do is we want to make sure that when you leave,
4 you're happy; that when you are finished and go,
5 Wow, this is fantastic, whatever project that you
6 have and life continues; and so that's what we do.
7 It's not a bureaucracy as it is more of a helping
8 facility to you when you have a project.

9 I hope that helps a little bit to
10 understand.

11 MR. SCHWENDNER: Can I make an additional
12 comment?

13 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Please.

14 MR. SCHWENDNER: You know, yeah, I'm not
15 disagreeing with what you're saying at all; but, you
16 know, looking back over 30 years of living there, at
17 least in the residential section, you know, not
18 speaking of Main Street but up and down Cedar
19 Street, you know, even without this ordinance, I
20 haven't seen any big teardowns, and I haven't seen
21 any additions or improvements to homes down Cedar
22 Street that were inappropriate to the neighborhood
23 or detracted from the character of the neighborhood.
24 It seems to be doing fine, you know, without an

1 ordinance. That's all.

2 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Kim.

3 MEMBER MALAY: Just so you know, at 606
4 Cedar Street, there was actually some, you know,
5 people that were interested in purchasing and
6 tearing that down which could have been a big loss.

7 MR. SCHWENDNER: But wasn't that house
8 already designated as a --

9 MEMBER MALAY: It was.

10 MR. SCHWENDNER: -- historic landmark.

11 MEMBER MALAY: Right. It was.

12 THE WITNESS: So that's a site for --

13 MEMBER MALAY: There was a protection that
14 allowed us to be able to stop that.

15 MR. SCHWENDNER: That's a different
16 situation than this case.

17 MEMBER MALAY: But, again, if there was no
18 protection, we wouldn't have had anything to be able
19 to save that, and that's what the district does too.

20 MR. SCHWENDNER: Okay.

21 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: In regards to Tom's
22 comment, we had a thousand permits. We are a branch
23 of the City Council. If something is not decided
24 correctly, you can always take it up to the City

1 Council. I have been here since '95, and I think
2 we've had only two cases that actually had to go up
3 to that next step. We've always been able to work
4 it out with the committee and work it out with the
5 owners.

6 Russ, if I could put you on the spot.

7 MR. COLBY: Sure.

8 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Something that we do in
9 the central district here, we have a facade
10 improvement program. Can you talk about that, and
11 then also being reimbursed on the residential.

12 MR. COLBY: Yes. Currently, the City has a
13 facade improvement grant program that exists with
14 exterior renovations to commercial properties that
15 are located in the downtown historic district.

16 And the Historic Commission has discussed at
17 least conceptually the possibility of expanding that
18 program to also include residential properties for
19 situations where there will be some improvement made
20 that would be consistent with historic preservation
21 guidelines. So, for example, removing inappropriate
22 materials from the building or restoring a building
23 on the exterior, that could be a grant that assists
24 with funding that.

1 It's only been discussed at a conceptual
2 level by the Historic Commission, and it will need
3 to be reviewed by the City Council going forward,
4 but it's a topic that's being discussed potentially
5 for the next program year, which would begin in May.

6 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: With the facade
7 improvement program, that started in '98? 99?

8 MEMBER MALAY: '95.

9 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: '95 also. And with that
10 we helped the City Council to designate money that's
11 like 50 cents on the dollar, where if they're going
12 to put an improvement on the front elevation, they
13 come to the committee and work with them; and if it
14 meets the criteria, then the City helps on that
15 portion of the improvement on the outside.

16 So that could help. Again, it's not with
17 residential, but it's something that is being
18 broached and maybe further on it is something that's
19 going to help the committee working with the
20 neighborhood.

21 Craig, any comments?

22 MEMBER BOBOWIEC: Just to the fact that I
23 think a lot of people when they think the Historic
24 Commission are afraid that there's a lot of

1 materials that you may not be allowed to put on your
2 house. I mean, we have allowed decking, pond, like
3 artificial ornamentation, like, that's up there, the
4 crown moldings and stuff on houses.

5 I mean, we've come a long way. I've been on
6 this, I think, 19 years. When I started, that was
7 just an absolute no-no; but we have, you know, moved
8 with the times. We have looked at stuff. We have
9 investigated stuff.

10 I mean, we're pretty open-minded. I mean,
11 if this ordinance passes, I'm going to have two more
12 properties in this new historic district that I'm
13 going to personally have to have reviewed and I --
14 you know, I've been doing this a long time; and just
15 from my own perspective, I don't have a lot of fears
16 because I know how these people work.

17 We get so many people that come before us
18 that really don't have a great eye of designing and
19 knowing what they really want to do to their homes,
20 and we welcome people just to come in, just -- you
21 know, and at the end of a meeting, we'll sit there
22 and bounce ideas. Tell us what you want to do, and
23 we're there to advise you, give you ideas to make
24 your project the best that it absolutely can be and

1 to work with you.

2 I mean, you know, some cities, you know,
3 have a bad rap of being like the preservation Nazis.
4 And, you know, in the 19 or 20 years I've been here,
5 that's one thing we have always prided ourselves in
6 is to not have that kind of, you know, attitude
7 towards people. And like I think it was Steve that
8 said, you know, most people when they're all done,
9 they kind of compliment us that we've actually
10 helped them make their projects even better than
11 they originally came in and thought they were going
12 to be.

13 So, I mean, you've got to trust us on that;
14 but, again, in all these years, we have had very few
15 controversial issues that the City Council has even
16 had to hear us. So, I mean, we've really worked
17 well with the community, and that's our goal. I
18 mean, we all live in the neighborhoods.

19 I mean, several of the commissioners have
20 homes in the district already or they own landmark
21 homes. So, I mean, we're living it with you. So, I
22 mean, you know, I mean, we're not expecting you to
23 do anything that we're not even, you know, putting
24 upon ourselves in our own way too, so.

1 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Thank you, Craig.

2 Our newest member, comments?

3 MEMBER KESSLER: I'll keep my comments
4 brief. Yes, I am the newest member, just a few
5 weeks; but I've lived in the community for many
6 years, and I've lived in an old home that I've
7 renovated myself. As Mr. Schwendner, I believe, was
8 saying that it was outside of the jurisdiction of
9 this group, but I did it with the historic aspect in
10 mind.

11 But I fully believe in the mission here, and
12 that's why I agreed to join this volunteer group.
13 Because over the years I've learned that, as some
14 other people have also said, the appeal of the
15 architectural character of our community can have a
16 real economic impact. I think that's very
17 important, and that's why I support the mission.

18 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Thank you. Does anyone
19 else have anything to say or comments or thoughts in
20 regards to our nomination?

21 MEMBER MALAY: You know, you guys are
22 obviously -- we're sitting at this table kind of
23 looking down on you, and it's kind of intimidating,
24 I suppose. Our normal meetings are not like this at

1 all. We're actually in the committee room. We
2 actually sit around a table with you. You're part
3 of our group, and we sit down and we talk. So
4 that's another aspect. You know, just so you
5 understand, it's not this formal by any stretch, so.

6 MEMBER SMUNT: I have a question for that
7 gentleman. You were the first person to speak, and
8 you asked about an exemption.

9 MR. ELSNER: Yes.

10 MEMBER SMUNT: What was your address again?

11 MR. ELSNER: 116 South 7th Street.

12 MEMBER SMUNT: 116. Okay. I wanted to just
13 get an idea of what your house -- when we had an
14 architectural survey, whether it was considered
15 contributing or noncontributing.

16 MR. ELSNER: It was in the middle. I think
17 I had a bay window that was contributing.

18 MEMBER SMUNT: Is this it?

19 MR. ELSNER: I can't see that from here. It
20 was just 116 South 7th Street.

21 MEMBER SMUNT: It was newly sided and all
22 that.

23 MR. ELSNER: Yes. It was newly renovated.

24 MEMBER SMUNT: Yeah. I mean, we consider --

1 it's a nice little job. So we actually reviewed the
2 survey information at our last meeting.

3 You brought up the value of your house for
4 the noncontributing rating, the contributing rating.
5 You've actually brought it back to what the house --
6 closer to what the house probably looked like when
7 it was first built. You should be very proud of
8 yourself that you took this upon yourself to do. No
9 review or you didn't come to us for any review
10 process.

11 I was just kind of curious as to why you
12 want to be exempt from the district when you put
13 such -- you followed the guideline without even
14 knowing it.

15 MR. ELSNER: Actually, I just purchased the
16 house. So I didn't actually do any work.

17 MEMBER SMUNT: Okay. Okay.

18 MR. ELSNER: So my hesitation to becoming
19 part of the Historic District is the increase in
20 property value is going to make it harder to sell at
21 some point down the road because it's going to limit
22 the buyers on the property.

23 Property taxes are going to increase as well
24 if the property increases, and then it is going to

1 be difficult and more of a strenuous process to
2 obtain a permit to do any work on the house. And
3 then there's going to be an increased cost of
4 improvements because we have to follow certain
5 stipulations. Where it could be cheaper to do it
6 myself, I'm going to have to hire somebody else to
7 do it to follow the rules and regulations that are
8 going to be in place.

9 Other hesitations I have are you all seem
10 very liberal in what you're saying as far as
11 improvements you'll grant, but one day you're not
12 going to be on the Board. Somebody else is going to
13 take your spot that's not going to be as liberal;
14 and if that's the case, I am stuck with whatever
15 they say.

16 So this isn't going to go into effect and
17 then possibly take me out one day from being under
18 these rules and regulations. It's ongoing, whereas
19 right now you say you'll help people with looking
20 into design. Why put these other rules in place
21 when I can come to you now and say help me as it is.

22 I don't understand why you should put more
23 on everybody. There's processes in place if you
24 think your house is historically significant to go

1 ahead and have your house added to the register. Go
2 ahead and do it that way if that's what you think,
3 but making everybody within a certain area be
4 subject to these new rules and regulations that are
5 being placed, it's just not fair.

6 I just bought the house, and it wasn't in
7 the historic district, and now it's going to be
8 possibly. It just doesn't make sense.

9 MEMBER SMUNT: Just out of curiosity, have
10 you had a chance to look at the guideline book or
11 read the ordinance?

12 THE WITNESS: I have, yes.

13 MEMBER SMUNT: Did you look at the guideline
14 book?

15 MR. ELSNER: I have looked at the ordinance
16 itself, yes.

17 MEMBER SMUNT: Because, I mean, there's a
18 lot of things that -- a lot of good resources that
19 we've put out, we've developed over the last 20-some
20 years as a Commission that are designed to help
21 homeowners who may elect to want to change their
22 properties so that the review process that we go
23 through with those property owners is simplified and
24 nonthreatening. You seem to be threatened by it.

1 MR. ELSNER: Well, the process right now I
2 don't have to follow any of those rules in your rule
3 book. I can do as I feel fit as long as it fits the
4 codes that Tom discussed earlier. If this goes into
5 effect, I have to follow an additional rule book on
6 top of the codes. So that's my objection.

7 MEMBER SMUNT: I see.

8 MR. ELSNER: I'm the homeowner. I bought
9 the house. I pay taxes on the house. I should be
10 able to do what I like to the house.

11 MEMBER SMUNT: Okay. Thank you.

12 MEMBER PRETZ: I just have a little bit in
13 response to your statements. You mentioned about
14 the labor, that you would have to hire somebody to
15 do the labor. We don't dictate how the labor is
16 done for whatever improvement or changes that you're
17 making on your home. That is strictly up to you
18 following the guidelines and whatever codes that are
19 in place by the City. So we don't dictate that in
20 any way.

21 And the other thing is that there is a
22 distinction between a district, so the historic
23 district and a landmarked home. A landmarked home
24 is a fully recognized site that is recognized by the

1 City itself, and there are benefits to that at the
2 state level for any improvements and things like
3 that that you do. So you can always go online at
4 the State of Illinois and take a look at what tax
5 benefits exist for landmarked homes.

6 But that distinction of just, again, being
7 within the district is purely to help with size, the
8 shape, and the style of your home. It helps give
9 guidance to you and an additional review session in
10 there to help you with that. Again, it's for the
11 benefit of not only you, the homeowner, but also to
12 the neighbors that surround you, the neighborhood
13 itself.

14 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Thank you, Tom.

15 Anybody else wish to speak on the
16 nomination?

17 (No response.)

18 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Seeing none, I'd like to
19 entertain a motion.

20 MEMBER MALAY: Motion to approve.

21 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: To close the hearing.

22 MEMBER MALAY: Yes, to close the hearing,
23 sorry.

24 MEMBER SMUNT: I'll second.

1 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Any other discussion? All
2 those in favor?

3 (Ayes heard.)

4 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Any opposed?

5 (No response.)

6 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: The meeting is closed.

7 Thank you. We're going to go on to the next
8 item, Item No. 7.

9 MEMBER PRETZ: For the people that are
10 getting up -- excuse me -- we're going into the
11 meeting portion. That was just the motion to close
12 the public hearing.

13 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Thank you.

14 VICE CHAIRMAN GIBSON: You can stick around
15 for the rest of the meeting.

16 MEMBER MALAY: We'll discuss whether or not
17 to move forward with the recommendation or not.

18 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Okay. Item No. 7 is
19 eligibility for the historic district designation
20 for the Millington Historic District.

21 Steve, I'll entertain a motion.

22 MEMBER SMUNT: I would just like to make a
23 comment at this time. I think all the people that
24 spoke here today brought up some very good,

1 important issues, and I know you feel passionate
2 about the issues, and you spoke up, and we did our
3 best to try and address those issues to hopefully
4 get you to like us better.

5 We realize that some of you will never buy
6 the argument that, you know, we're going to make it
7 easy for you. We are. I will admit that having to
8 obtain a certificate of appropriateness is another
9 layer of government. But we feel it's essential for
10 us to carry forward the preservation of our historic
11 resources in the city, and the evidence is supported
12 that historic districts do command a higher resale
13 value for its properties.

14 It doesn't cause your taxes to go up either.
15 Now, I know you laugh, that you could say it's an
16 arguable issue; but we do have evidence that
17 supports a good return on your investment if you are
18 in a historic district versus what it would be
19 outside of one.

20 So those arguments go on every year, and
21 they've been going on for decades. There have been
22 studies out there, the national register, I should
23 say national --

24 MEMBER PRETZ: National Trust.

1 MEMBER SMUNT: National Trust. Thank you.
2 Had done studies and put that argument to rest --
3 hopefully, put that argument to rest, and it keeps
4 on coming up.

5 There is a tax freeze available for
6 homeowners. If you were to invest 25 percent of
7 your appraised value of your house into historic
8 preservation, remodeling, addition, whatever you
9 want to call it, the State of Illinois will grant a
10 tax freeze on your property taxes for eight years,
11 with a four-year increase after that. So it freezes
12 the taxes at the current level.

13 So that is a perk. I took advantage of it.
14 I own a historical home, and then my tax rate
15 dropped, unfortunately, and so my taxes never went
16 up anyway. But I took advantage of it, and it was a
17 great deal that the state offers that is available.

18 For commercial properties, it's a tax
19 credit. So there are some tax advantages to being
20 within a history district or to be a designated
21 landmark.

22 So in summary, I heard a lot of positive
23 things said about moving forward with this historic
24 district. The arguments against it were of a very

1 personal nature. The arguments for it were of a
2 more community nature. And I tend to think that we
3 as a Commission tend to want to see positive changes
4 in this community for the greater good of all.

5 So I would support us moving forward with
6 the nomination.

7 So I would move forward with the nomination
8 here to recommend the City Council approve the
9 historic district nomination submitted by our
10 Commission and received by the City on
11 December 21st, 2016, for the Millington Historic
12 District.

13 MEMBER MALAY: Motion to second.

14 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Any other discussion?

15 MEMBER SMUNT: And I have a prepared
16 printout with a little more detail of that
17 nomination. Do you want me to read it now?

18 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Please.

19 MEMBER PRETZ: Go ahead and read it.

20 MEMBER SMUNT: Okay. This is based on
21 findings that the district meets the following
22 criteria, and it's substantiated in the historic
23 district nomination.

24 The area contains several structures that

1 meet the criteria for landmark designation, and also
2 includes other structures which, although they may
3 not qualify for individual landmark designation,
4 they contribute to the overall visual character of
5 the area and to its architectural and historic
6 significance.

7 The area is historically significant to the
8 development of St. Charles.

9 And the area has sufficient integrity to
10 convey the sense of a particular period in the
11 history of this community, specifically the period
12 from the mid-1800s to the 1930s.

13 So I'll give that to Chairman Norris.

14 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Thank you.

15 MEMBER SMUNT: My motion is to move forward.

16 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Kim.

17 MEMBER MALAY: Second.

18 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Any other discussion?

19 (No response.)

20 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: All those in favor?

21 (Ayes heard.)

22 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Any opposed?

23 (No response.)

24 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Motion carries.

1 Item No. 8 --

2 MR. COLBY: Before we move forward, if I
3 could just state this on the record. The Historic
4 Commission's recommendation is forwarded to the City
5 Council. This proposal will next be discussed by
6 the City Council's Planning and Development
7 Committee at their meeting on Monday, February
8 the 13th. So they will be reviewing the Historic
9 Commission's recommendation at that meeting.

10 MEMBER PRETZ: Russ, for that February 13th
11 meeting, will that be -- I know that there's another
12 item that is going to be on the agenda that night.
13 For the sake of the audience, will that be something
14 that will be first or second?

15 MR. COLBY: The agenda has not been set yet,
16 so I can't say at this time.

17 MEMBER PRETZ: Okay.

18 MR. COLBY: But there will be an agenda
19 posted on the City's website the Friday prior to
20 that meeting which will list the agenda order and
21 where that item falls on that agenda.

22 MEMBER PRETZ: Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN NORRIS: Thank you.

24 (Off the record at 8:06 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF SHORTHAND REPORTER

I, Joanne E. Ely, Certified Shorthand Reporter No. 84-4169, CSR, RPR, and a Notary Public in and for the County of Kane, State of Illinois, the officer before whom the foregoing proceedings were taken, do certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and correct record of the proceedings, that said proceedings were taken by me stenographically and thereafter reduced to typewriting under my supervision, and that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this case and have no interest, financial or otherwise, in its outcome.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my notarial seal this 27th day of January, 2017.

My commission expires: May 16, 2020

Joanne E. Ely



Notary Public in and for the
State of Illinois