

**MINUTES
CITY OF AMES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Date: December 13, 2021	Ted Grevstad-Nordbrock	2022
	Edith Hunter	2023
Call to Order: 6:00PM	Barry Snell*	2023
Place: Council Chambers	Susan Minks	2024
	Angie Kolz	2024
Adjournment: 7:09PM.	Mary Jo Winder	2024
	Matt Oakley	2023

[*Absent]

CALL TO ORDER: Ted Grevstad-Nordbrock called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION: (Minks /Kolz) to approve the Agenda for the meeting of December 13, 2021.

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AUGUST 9, 2021:

MOTION: (Winder/Oakley) to approve the Minutes of the meeting of August 9, 2021, with edits as noted by Ms. Winder.

Ms. Winder noted that on CLG Grant Application it should say Ridgewood district and Chautauqua Park.

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

PUBLIC FORUM: There were no public comments.

DISCUSSION OF CHAPTER 31, HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Ray Anderson began by saying that this item is on the Workplan for the Commission as part of the Annual Report for the Certified Local Government Program. He said there was a complete update of Chapter 31 in January 2015, when the new ordinance was approved. The original ordinance was adopted in 1988. The 2015 version of Chapter 31 was a completely new version, as there were many changes that were needed to the regulations. City staff are most interested in things the Commission finds to be problematic in the ordinance and should be changed.

Mr. Anderson said the most frequent request is from customers who are wanting to put in new windows. New windows must be composed of wood to meet the Design Guidelines. Metal clad windows are allowed on additions to the original structure. The use of materials other than wood

as siding is also a frequent request since wood siding is required on the original structure. Cement based siding is allowed on additions and on detached garages. Regulations for garages were adopted in 2015 as part of the update to Chapter 31. Garages subject to the Design Guidelines are those that were identified as "contributing" in the 2003 survey of structure in the Old Town Historic District.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock asked if what Mr. Anderson was talking about was written into the code as far as staff approving low level items. Mr. Anderson replied that City staff has the authority to approve alterations to the exterior of structures, which includes windows and siding. Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock asked if City staff has had pushback on the garage requirements from property owners. Mr. Anderson said requirements for garages only comes up if a property owner is interested in demolishing the existing garage and/or constructing a new garage.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock asked the Commission how they thought they should best go through Chapter 31. He noted the design guidelines are the main thing they end up dealing with, and it is the main thing that affects property owners.

Ms. Winder said she would like to see the National Registered properties in Ames automatically become a Local Landmark. She noted that the process to get on the National Register is different than the local registration process.

Mr. Anderson asked Ms. Winder if she was aware of any other communities that have done that. Ms. Winder said she was not aware of many.

Ms. Winder said in Pasadena, California the local guidelines were applied to Local and National Register properties. She said it didn't make sense that they would not protect what is on the National Register. Any big change they proposed would go to City Council and the public would be able to comment.

Mr. Anderson said the City Council would have to approve any proposed changes and they would want to know the benefits and drawbacks for homeowners.

Mr. Anderson asked if it would be retroactive so properties currently listed on the National Register would be included? Ms. Winder said they would be included.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock went on to say that Chapter 31 drones on in a way it doesn't need to. He said he didn't think the definitions and rules of construction need to be in Chapter 31.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock said that Section 31.3(2) says no member who has served two full consecutive terms is eligible for reappointment. He asked if that meant they can never re-apply or if it meant one term needed to go by before someone can reapply.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock believes they could cut the document in half by linking documents to each section to explain things in greater detail rather than laying out everything in Chapter 31. Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock asked if there was anything legally that would be an issue with that.

Ms. Winder said she thinks design guidelines should be a separate document so they could include photos and more details. She said the guidelines in the ordinance make it cumbersome.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock asked if they could say that the owner needs to adhere to the guidelines as established in a specific document. He said he thought the design standards for landmarks should be removed and they should instead refer people back to the guidelines.

Mr. Oakley asked if there had ever been an attempt for the ordinance to be simplified in such a way to make it easier for owners to read it.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock said another comment he had was that in a couple sections in Chapter 31 it talks about architectural style. He said he thought listing styles that are accepted in the district might create a false sense of history. He said he wondered if they need to be freer as to what they can and can't build. He said he does not think it is a problem right now, but it could be down the road. He said the standards are guidelines and they should be flexible.

Mr. Anderson said most zoning districts in Ames do not have any kind of design regulations. Property owners have more flexibility as to the design of homes outside the historic district since they are not limited by design standards. Without standards for design in historic districts, the homes would look much like, or the same as, homes built elsewhere in the community. It is the design standards that set the historic district apart from other neighborhoods in Ames.

Mr. Oakley asked how often the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, as stated in Section 31.12, are changed. Ms. Winder said they are rarely changed.

Ms. Winder suggested they get examples from other communities of things they might want to change and incorporate into Chapter 31.

Ms. Minks said she thinks Ames is on the brink of expanding and has been on the same pace. They need to prepare for change with a more flexible document. Streamlining Chapter 31 would help us to be prepared for change.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock asked if they do link to other documents, who would create those documents? He suggested Iowa State University students could help assist with building a document from the ground up. Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock asked Mr. Anderson if they are in a cycle where changes are due soon and if there is a time limit. Mr. Anderson said there is not a timeline, but after seven years it is time to address items in the Code that are problematic.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock suggested that Commission members send any comments on changes to Chapter 31, they feel are relevant to Mr. Anderson for further discussion at the next meeting.

Ms. Kolz said, as a homeowner, using the standards and design guidelines were important. Definitions were very helpful, and she thought putting those into a separate document would be good. We need to maintain clarity on what is legally required.

She suggested the Commission update guidelines on roofing as well as old and modern safety codes. She suggested they clarify what constructing something safely means and if safety overrules design.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock said he thinks the document focuses on residential architecture. There should be more attention to non-residential structures. He noted that at the recent walkthrough of the building Downtown, they had a map that showed contributing and noncontributing structures. He said he thought the map should be online for everyone to have access to for any proposed building projects.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock asked if anyone else had thoughts. Ms. Winder asked if they wanted more recent copies of other cities ordinances. Ms. Winder suggested Dubuque and Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock suggested Iowa City as well as Pasadena, CA and Manhattan, KS.

Mr. Anderson said if Commission members send him links to what they find, he can send those out to everyone on the Commission.

COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Ms. Winder asked about the status of the CLG Grant. Mr. Anderson said he has not heard anything but hopefully will be notified by the State Historic Preservation Office by the end of the month.

Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock said he wanted to discuss the walkthrough in November. He noted they had 25-27 people. Most in attendance were business owners and property owners. Ms. Winder suggested that Ms. Sahlstrom have the video she took of the event edited so they can get it to the Downtown Historic District property owners.

Mr. Oakley suggested some follow up for the people that attended. Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock asked if there is a place on the City of Ames website where they could put the video. Mr. Grevstad-Nordbrock asked if they wanted to try and have a follow up event in spring, and if they had funds to do that again. Mr. Anderson said that funds are available.

STAFF COMMENTS


Mr. Anderson said they were waiting to hear from the State on the CLG Grant Application, and he would let the Commission know if he heard anything.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

MOTION: (Winder/Kolz) to adjourn the meeting at 7:09PM.

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

The meeting adjourned at 7:09PM.


Ted Grevstad-Nordbrock, Chairperson
Historic Preservation Commission


Laura Colebrooke, Recording Secretary
Department of Planning & Housing