

**MINUTES
CITY OF AMES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Date: August 8th, 2022	Edith Hunter*	2023
	Susan Minks	2024
Call to Order: 6:00PM	Angie Kolz	2024
Place: Council Chambers	Mary Jo Winder	2024
	Matt Oakley	2023
Adjournment: 7:44PM	Jesse David Chariton	2023
	Rosemary Dale	2025

[*Absent]

CALL TO ORDER: Susan Minks, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION: (Winder/Oakley) to approve the agenda for the meeting of August 8, 2022.

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JULY 11, 2022:

MOTION: (Winder/Dale) to approve the Minutes of the meeting of JULY 11, 2022.

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

PUBLIC FORUM: There were no public comments.

REVIEW OF CHAPTER 31, SECTIONS 31.10

Susan Minks, Commission Chair, began the discussion on Chapter 31 section 10, item one. She noted Planning staff provided their comments along with the Commission's proposed changes. Building permit and historic resource was discussed. COA process was discussed.

Ray Anderson, City Planner, explained that the first paragraph should be left in for clarity, since not everyone would be applying for a building permit along with a Certificate of Appropriateness application.

Mary Jo Winder, Commission Member, asked how it is determined when a Building Permit is required. Mr. Anderson explained staff goes by the design guidelines to determine if an applicant needs a Certificate of Appropriateness. Mr. Anderson stated that we encourage

property owners to check with the Planning Department before installing a fence, which does not require a permit. He said staff encourages people to check with Planning and utilize the code that is available on the city website. He said the Planning Department has placed information on the city website.

Ms. Winder said the concern is that the Historic District must comply with standards everyone else is not held to. Mr. Anderson agreed the district is more restrictive so that architectural character can be maintained.

Ms. Winder said the concern was the Commission might be requiring more from owners than is necessary. She questioned how much of an impact something such as fence would have. Mr. Anderson said as an example, concrete work that is done in the Historic District does not have separate regulations than the rest of Ames. There are a wide range of materials and designs allowed for fences. Ms. Winder said she wanted to make Chapter 31 less restrictive for homeowners, and the Commission wants to protect Historic Buildings from having elements such as vinyl siding. She thought adding a fence to a back yard should not require review by the Commission.

Matt Oakley, Commission Member, asked if the Commission removed the first paragraph, what would that impact besides fences. Mr. Anderson said he said he would need to find out what other items Planning has design guidelines for that would not require a building permit. He said he would also check with the Inspections Department regarding what things they require permits for. Ms. Winder said she thought they should get the answer to that before deciding if the paragraph should be removed. Mr. Anderson said the point he was trying to make was there may be cases when a building permit is not required, but a Certificate of Appropriateness would still be required. Removing the first paragraph could lead the reader to conclude that if a building permit is not required, a Certificate of Appropriateness is not required.

Mr. Anderson suggested the Commission discuss further the new terminology they are proposing before they continue reviewing the next section of Chapter 31 at the next meeting. He gave a few examples of the proposed definition changes. Ms. Winder said the definition of structure did not seem clear, so the term "historic resource" was suggested to replace it. Mr. Anderson said Planning staff is concerned that historic resource might include things beyond buildings such as objects or landscaping.

Ms. Minks said the Commission was looking at broadening definitions so landscape could be a contributing factor. She said the next time the Commission meets they should discuss the definitions.

Angie Kolz, Commission Member, asked Mr. Anderson if things such as an awning over the door, a chicken coop, or an outdoor fireplace would require a Certificate of Appropriateness. Mr. Anderson said the awning would and the chicken coop might depend on how it was designed. An outdoor fireplace may be subject to zoning regulations but may not need a Certificate of Appropriateness. He said if what is proposed on an application is unusual, whether it needs a Certificate of Appropriateness it is determined on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Anderson said he wanted to be sure the Commission understood the implications of any changes they might make to Chapter 31.

Ms. Minks moved on to Chapter 31.10, item two, which was about the first sentence and the definition of the word, "alteration." She said the suggestion is to move the definition of "alteration" to the definition section of Chapter 31. The change would be for clarification purposes. She discussed suggested edits to items A through D under item two.

Ms. Winder asked Mr. Anderson about Planning staff comments for this section. She said the thought was the review starts with staff and there should be things staff can just review and approve without it going to the Commission. She thought some of the wording could be made clearer in the section. She questioned whether the wording implied that if staff did not approve it, that it would automatically go to the Commission for approval. She thought making changes would make room for allowing more options and allowing flexibility. She went on to say she thought it would be a good idea to have staff meet with the sub-committee to review Chapter 31 before discussing it at the next Commission meetings.

Rosemary Dale, Commission Member, said as a new member to the Commission, she thought it was helpful to understand what the big picture and purpose was for the regulations. She said when a member of the public starts the process to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness, and they presumably do not know the federal standards, using the term, "Historic resource" makes less sense than using the word structure.

Mr. Oakley said he thought going through the process of review together with staff made more sense, rather than the Commission continuing to report back every month to staff without input.

Ms. Minks said she thought they needed to keep in mind that they started this process six months ago, and most of the comments are the same as what they originally discussed in January. She said the Commission might need to find a new format for tracking the proposed changes, since upcoming sections are long and detailed. Ms. Winder said she did not see a rush to set a deadline to have a new ordinance. She said it might be appropriate to get public comments during the editing process, as well.

Ms. Minks suggested the sub-committee meet with Planning staff at least two weeks before the next Commission meeting. Mr. Anderson said that would be helpful as Planning staff may have difficulty providing input back to the Commission in just a few days.

Ms. Minks then discussed Chapter 31.10, item three, regarding new construction. She said this section involved a lot of word editing. She said the phrase, "Accessory building over 120 square feet" was added but Planning staff commented that the word, "over" should be omitted. Ms. Minks asked Mr. Anderson to confirm Planning staff thoughts on where to place the wording about Architectural Styles and Design Guidelines. Mr. Anderson said he thought it should be moved up since they apply to more than just new construction.

Ms. Dale brought up the comment made by Planning staff about not changing "principal structure" to "historic resource" because of the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Anderson said staff's opinion was leaving the first paragraph in made it easier to understand what things would require a permit.

Ms. Minks asked about the purpose of adding language to section A.

Ms. Winder asked what the definition of “principal structure” is. Mr. Anderson said “principal” is defined in the code as any building, structure, or portion thereof which is used for, or a use which is conducted for, the primary purpose of the lot on which it is located. A house would be the primary structure, and the garage would be the accessory.

Ms. Winder commented that this part would apply to a vacant lot in a Historic district, but she could not think of an instance when it would apply anywhere outside a Historic district. She said she thought the added language would allow for clarification for a homeowner.

Ms. Minks discussed Chapter 31.10, items four and five regarding demolition of existing principal structures and garages that are contributing. Mr. Anderson commented that the Commission does not decide if a garage is contributing. That was determined in the survey of Old Town. Ms. Winder said she was questioning if this section should be moved to the section that applies to the Old Town District specifically.

Mr. Anderson said the current ordinance addresses the demolition of contributing or principal structures. The owner would need to prove economic hardship to demolish one of those types of structures.

Ms. Minks discussed Chapter 31.10, item six regarding relocation of a Historic landmark. She said the situations listed are rare, but they do occur.

Mr. Chariton asked about historic landmarks that are not in historic districts. Moving a structure into a Historic district is part of the language that the City of Ames wants to retain. There were three choices for relocation in the section. Ms. Winder asked why staff wants to leave it the way it is. She thought the suggested edits were more inclusive.

Ms. Minks discussed Chapter 31.10, item 7, regarding Ordinary Maintenance Permitted and Public Safety. Mr. Oakley asked if there were guidelines for disability ramps that are required for someone living in a home in a Historic district. Mr. Anderson confirmed they are.

Ms. Minks suggested the subcommittee contact Planning staff to review 31.11 for appropriateness, and possibly review section 12.

Mr. Anderson suggested the Commission discuss definitions at next meeting before going any further.

REVIEW OF WORK PLAN 2022

Ms. Minks said she asked to have this item on the agenda. She said the Commission typically look at the Work Plan towards the end of each year. She said there are four areas included in the plan. Under the goals in the plan, there were various activities the Commission proposed to work. Several of the goals have been accomplished or are currently in process.

Ms. Minks commented if the Commission meets with residents of the Chautauqua Park survey this fall, which could be an opportunity to discuss tax credits for historic properties.

Ms. Winder commented they did not apply for a grant for this grant cycle, but she thought they should try for a more intensive survey in an area of Ames. She thought that could be a good thing to discuss putting on the Work Plan for 2023.

Ms. Dale commented that designing the guidelines would naturally flow from the Chapter 31 discussion.

Ms. Winder suggested working with Iowa State students on making a visual aide for the Design Guidelines. Mr. Anderson said they could certainly discuss that. Ms. Minks suggested discussing Work Plan ideas at the next Commission meeting.

CLG GRANT UPDATE

Ms. Winder said the project is going well. The two students that were hired have finished taking photos of all the buildings and are gathering information on historic context. She said there is a three-page inventory form for each building which includes writing a description for each property. She said there will be a neighborhood meeting in September. Eloise Sahlstrom, City Planner, was going to look for locations for the neighborhood meeting.

COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Ms. Minks said the Commission is now a member of the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions.

She said if any Commission members had ideas for things to do this fall, to bring those to the next meeting.

Ms. Dale commented that the Downtown Ames organization got a grant to get tables and chairs. She noticed that they are in use more each week. She said the City of Ames is going to put the benches back in the Plaza area after they are restored.

Mr. Oakley asked about the proposed pool going into Brookside and how that would impact the project on which they are working. Ms. Dale commented that Brookside Park was not seriously being considered due to the area being hilly and small.

STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Anderson said he was glad to be back after being on an extended leave. He praised Ms. Sahlstrom for all she had done in his absence.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

MOTION: (Chariton/Oakley) to adjourn the meeting at 7:44PM.

MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

The meeting adjourned at 7:44PM.

Susan Minks

Susan Minks, Chairperson
Historic Preservation Commission

Laura Colebrooke

Laura Colebrooke, Recording Secretary
Department of Planning & Housing