



605 Erie Avenue, Suite 101  
Sheboygan, Wisconsin 53081  
(920) 783-6303  
info@legacy-architecture.com  
www.legacy-architecture.com

August 22, 2017

Amy Loewenstein Scanlon, Registered Architect  
Preservation Planner  
Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development  
Planning Division  
Neighborhood Planning, Preservation and Design Section  
P.O. Box 2985  
Madison, Wisconsin 53701-2985

Re: Madison Historic Preservation Plan  
August 14, 2017 Landmarks Commission Meeting Outcomes & Findings

To whom it may concern:

Members of the Madison Historic Preservation Plan consultant team attended the Landmarks Commission meeting held on Monday, August 14, 2017. The consultant team was introduced to the commission and performed the following tasks:

1. Present the draft Public Engagement Strategy and gather feedback
2. Discuss the issues with the existing ordinance Standards for Review in each of the historic district sections.

### **Draft Public Engagement Strategy**

Carolyn Esswein led a presentation of the draft Public Engagement Strategy for all three components of the Madison Historic Preservation Plan project. An electronic copy of the presentation was shared with the commission. The following points were made in a brief discussion following the presentation:

- The commission asked for clarification regarding the number of total public meetings planned for the entire project: 32 public meetings.
- The commission sought a more detailed description of the project kick-off meeting, tentatively scheduled for September 26, 2017, at a location yet to be confirmed. The meeting will consist of a public introduction of the project and the consultant team followed by three approximately 15-minute presentations to the public providing further detail about each of the three project components: Revision to Ordinance Standards for Review, Collection of Historic Resource Data, and Preparation of a City-Wide Historic Preservation Plan. Future opportunities for public participation will be announced; and there will be a call for information, histories, and documentation regarding the history of underrepresented communities. The kick-off meeting will conclude with break-out sessions corresponding to each of the three project components for small group questions-and-answers and one-on-one discussions between the public and consultant team. With this format, the members of the public can direct their attention to components of the project to which they desire to have input and involvement.
- The commission sought clarification about the Historic Resource Data component. The component will include an intensive survey of resources associated with six underrepresented communities: African American, First Nation, Hmong, Latino, LGBTQ, and women. A final survey report will update or create historic contexts for each of the six communities within Madison, identify extant properties associated with each of the six communities, evaluate the identified properties for

possible local landmarking and for potential listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and make recommendations concerning the preservation of the identified resources.

- The consultant team requested that commission members share the names and contact information for potential project partners with Amy Scanlon.
- The commission expressed an interest in a more graphic final draft of the Public Engagement Strategy for public distribution as suggested by the consultant team.
- The commission advised the consultant team that the outlined timeline for the ordinance revision component may take longer than the proposed timeline (ending in Late Fall or Winter of 2018, rather than ending in Fall 2017) based on the processes for reviews of the historic preservation ordinance undertaken by the City in the past.

### **Existing Ordinance Standards for Review**

Jennifer L. Lehrke and Jason Tish sought input from the commission concerning the issues with the existing ordinance Standards for Review and related ordinance sections. The following comments and questions were made by the commission during the discussion:

- National Register district boundaries are not co-terminus with the local historic district boundaries. Because all of the Third Lake Ridge is not all NR, they can't suggest that all building owners to use the historic tax credits as an incentive, whereas they can suggest that in other local historic districts.
- Major differences between current standards in the Mansion Hill and Third Lake Ridge districts
- Requirements of the current standards for new construction that are not required for alterations
- The area of visual compatibility (200' off of the property line) in the current standards is the same in all districts; however, in areas with mixed uses, the standards for the specific use are applied to the building (residential to residential and commercial to commercial)
- Vagueness or difficulty to understand the current standards requirements for new construction – mass, rhythm, solid to void, height issues
- Standards should apply across all historic districts because it can be confusing to the public and commissioners when certain standards only apply to some districts and not others.
- Lack of definition in the current standards for University Heights regarding the visibility of facades from the street - Is it facing the street? From the street in front of the building or from 5 blocks away?
- Requirements for primary façades vs. secondary façades
- The use of other new construction or development in a district as a precedent and an argument against having to follow standards.
- There should be some commonalities between the districts.
- Current historic district standards contradict/do not dovetail with zoning, particularly in Third Lake Ridge where because zoning allows for taller buildings that the HP ordinance does.
- There's too much range between the districts on what is allowed and what is not allowed.
- Follow NPS standards to coincide with historic tax credits? When they do have tax credits as an option, they want to uphold those standards
- Additions – siding and roof may be different than the windows, yet they ask that the additions to differentiate from the original
- The current standards are largely silent on removing features, such as shutters or chimneys. Does taking a chimney down need a permit? What needs a permit?
- There is overwhelming consensus to have some uniform general standards for all the districts and then some specific standards that get at the character of each district.
- The use of the terms “contributing” and “non-contributing” vs. “in the period of significance” or “outside the period of significance”

- Buildings from outside of the period of significance or “non-contributing” buildings should not be allowed or have to meet standards for visual compatibility.
- Requirements for buildings that were built outside of a district’s period of significance or “non-contributing”
- Changes to properties that were done before the ordinance was in affect or without the proper review and approval.
- Compatible building heights, particularly in Third Lake Ridge
- Incompatibility of tall building heights in historic districts
- There was a lengthy discussion regarding windows. Should there be uniform guidance on windows across all districts? Are windows more important in some districts or portions of districts such as University Heights or Mansion Hill than others such as along Williamson Street in Third Lake Ridge? How do building owners find contractors to repair windows? How much does it cost to repair as opposed to replace windows? Inconsistency of current standards in only regulating windows on the front façade in one district but windows around the whole building in others. Window replacement as demolition by neglect if an owner has owned it for decades; the windows have deteriorated to such an extent that they have to be replaced is the owner’s fault, whereas for a new owner, it’s a problem they inherited. Property owners with the smallest means are trying to replace them with vinyl. They should stay close to the historic materials as possible. There should be something in the ordinance that informs owners of the commission’s expectations so they can have a discussion at the first meeting instead of sending them home to come back with a window inventory the next month. Language in the current standards regarding windows and other character defining features is unclear. What is important: the actual historic window, the material type (i.e. wood), the trim, etc.? Issues such as lead paint, sound attenuation, and energy efficiency.
- Siding –vinyl siding or fibercement, details change the characteristics of a sided building, vinyl is allowed in a few districts and is having an adverse effect on those districts. This issue pertains to period of significance, too – what to do about the buildings that are not in the period of significance or non-contributing.
- Site issues, fences, parking, retaining walls, etc. - particularly in Mansion Hill
- Historic pattern of lot sizes and footprint ratios on lots, setbacks, side yards, and other visible features
- Old derelict houses being torn down and replaced with mixed use buildings on Williamson Street in Third Lake Ridge
- University Heights has a lot of new landscaping because of its topography. We need to think about the historic treatment of topography and the landscape as a natural progression of maintaining character. Third Lake Ridge is the only district has standards for review of landscape treatment. There was a lot of discussion about landscape during LORC phase one meetings, but they had to wait until now to write it into the standards. It’s difficult to control because a building permit is not required. This is a huge problem and perhaps needs to be acted upon sooner. They have the ability to review landscape treatment for Third Lake Ridge, but not the others. It’s not about the plant material selections, it’s about the hardscaping. Need to provide for grading for drainage so as to not destroy the building itself.
- Providing accessible access to buildings in historic districts, such as the construction of exterior ramps, particularly when buildings are converted from residential to commercial
- How to allow for successful accessibility changes? It’s a new element, let it be new. Standards set them up for interpretation, but don’t give a lot of clear definition.
- Adding solar electric and hot water? State Statute dictates the ability to install so historic character is not negatively affected.
- What information do property owners receive before and after they purchase a property in an historic district?
- Realtor education and professional outreach.
- Recommendation for the Historic Preservation Plan component: installation of unique signage and streetscaping to increase a sense of place and unique identity as well as announce to residents and

visitors that they are in an historic district as well as installation of interpretive signage or plaques within the districts describing the history and/or significance of the district.

Sincerely,

Legacy Architecture, Inc.

*Jennifer L. Lehrke*

Jennifer L. Lehrke, AIA, LEED AP, NCARB  
Principal Architect & Historic Preservation Consultant