



# City of Madison

City of Madison  
Madison, WI 53703  
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## Meeting Minutes - Approved AD HOC LANDMARKS ORDINANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

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Tuesday, February 12, 2019

5:30 PM

215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Room 111 (Madison Municipal Building)

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### CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

**Present:** 5 - Ledell Zellers; Steve King; Marsha A. Rummel; Keith Furman and Shiva Bidar-Sielaff

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Bidar-Sielaff, seconded by Rummel, to Approve the January 24, 2019 Minutes. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

None

### DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

None

1. [54447](#) Discussion of Consultant's Recommendations

*James Matson, registering neither in support nor in opposition and wishing to speak*

*Jeff Vercauteren, registering neither in support nor in opposition and available to answer questions*

*Fred Mohs, registering in support and wishing to speak*

*John Martens, registering in support and wishing to speak*

*Jim Skrentny, registering in opposition and wishing to speak*

James Matson, representing the Madison Alliance for Historic Preservation, said that it may be possible to provide some overarching standards that apply to all historic districts, but it is also important to contemplate district-specific standards that address key local issues. He said that they need to be sure that any new standards include an equivalent level of protection and are clear and enforceable. He explained that the Alliance's primary concern is that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards focus on the rehabilitation of existing properties and touch only lightly on new construction, which they have the greatest concerns about. He said that they are not as concerned with small changes such as window replacement materials so much as major new construction projects that could alter the overall character and scale of a historic district. He suggested that standards for building height, massing,

gross volume, rhythm, and open spaces, among other land development patterns, be clearly defined. He said that the Alliance will soon provide a draft of ordinance language they have written that is clear and simple, and they hope to include a draft of district-specific standards as well. King said that the Committee is specifically looking for concrete examples of district-specific standards that aren't covered by the uniform standards, and he hopes the Alliance can help with that.

Fred Mohs said that his simple issue is confidence in the ordinance. He said that if we want to have historic districts and historic preservation, we need to abide by rules. He said that the biggest risk is a well-represented developer who could push a project through and do something very destructive to a historic district. He pointed out that a lot of people living in historic districts are making a sacrifice to take on and restore older properties in order to give back to the community. He said that historic districts tell the story of our city and those who used to live here, so when old buildings are torn down to make way for new, larger buildings, it ruins the context. He ended by saying that he is impressed with those who are participating in this process who don't live in historic districts, but believe in the cause.

John Martens referenced the chart that he submitted to the Committee on February 7, and explained that it illustrates the different requirements among the historic districts, and even within some of the districts. He said that the reason why the requirements of the districts are so different is because the character of each historic district is significantly different. He pointed out that we are not just trying to preserve individual buildings, but also the character of the historic district itself. He said that the differences in the existing code are primarily in zoning type issues, which are very difficult to regulate with the standards from the National Park Service.

Jim Skrentny said that it seems the new standards raise the bar for those who own historic properties, but there has been much less time spent discussing standards for the development of new structures and the bar seems to be lower for developers. He spoke about the gross area of the front elevation and height requirements for new structures, and said that he doesn't think these requirements work for all historic districts. He pointed out that in districts like First Settlement or Mansion Hill where there are larger apartment buildings, this could allow developers to build taller, wider, and deeper, which he thinks is wrong. He said that in First Settlement, current height requirements for new construction are based on structures directly adjacent rather than within a 200' radius, the former of which he thinks is a better requirement. Zellers said that Skrentny brought up an important point because some districts have more development pressure than others, which they need to consider as they create an ordinance that makes sense for each historic district.

The Committee began discussion of the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines and how they should be incorporated into the ordinance as standards,

including whether a subset of the guidelines or the entire document should be included. Rummel asked how many of the guidelines are already incorporated into the consultant's recommendations, and Scanlon said that a lot of the guidelines have been included. Bailey said that the guidelines are a substantial document, so the consultant spent time pulling out parts of the guidelines that are more pertinent to the way preservation is done in Madison, and summarized them extensively. Scanlon said that the guidelines should remain in the ordinance as standards.

Bidar-Sielaff said that they also need to consider how the historic districts are different from one another, and mentioned that University Heights is unique because it is only residential and she doesn't see any time that it would be appropriate to build anything commercial there. Additionally, she pointed out that zoning can change, so it is important to have protections in different places.

King confirmed that there was consensus to have a set of uniform standards with an element of specificity for each historic district in the ordinance, and the group agreed. There was brief discussion on how the district-specific elements will fit into the larger document, and Scanlon pointed out that the goal of this process has been to create one place where people can easily find the information they need. She said that creating a set of uniform standards with exceptions within the text would work better than creating separate chapters for the exceptions. Bidar-Sielaff suggested that for uniformity with other city policies, they create a set of basic standards and then have overlay districts for the elements that are specific to each historic district, similar to the formatting of overlay districts in zoning. Strange said that it would depend on how many district-specific elements they end up with, but it may be clearer to incorporate those elements into the standards.

2. [54448](#)

Discussion of Next Steps and Schedule

Rummel suggested that the Committee continue their discussion of rehabilitation versus new construction and focus on the new construction part of the ordinance. Scanlon said that there are several discussion topics they will need to address in future meetings, including the definitions section, alterations language, new additions language, new construction language, "visible from the street" language, and the spectrum of review section regarding the period of significance and elevations visible from the street. Bidar-Sielaff said that she would like staff to walk them through how the ordinance will be structured, and also raised the topic of new construction as something they will need to focus on first.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:02 pm.**