



**VILLAGE OF RIVERSIDE
PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
Minutes**

1. Call to Order: The Regular Meeting of the Village of Riverside Preservation Commission was held via Zoom on Thursday, April 8, 2021. Chairperson Pipal called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Village Manager Frances to read the required statement regarding meeting electronically pursuant to Governor Pritzker’s various executive orders issued in response to public health concerns associated with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Roll Call:

Present: Chairperson Charles Pipal
Commissioner Aberdeen Marsh-Ozga
Commissioner Michael Leary
Commissioner Kimber Coombes
Commissioner Sander Kaplan
Commissioner Matt Seymour
Commissioner Thomas Walsh

Absent: None

Also Present: Interim Planner Nathan Parch, Village Manager Jessica Frances, Village Trustee Alex Gallegos, David Pollard, Stephanus Greeff, Father Luke Wetzel, Steven Olderr and members of the public

3. Approval of the Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes:

3.1 Minutes of the February 11, 2021 Preservation Commission Meeting
Commissioner Coombes proposed that the minutes be amended to reflect her request that the Groveland Floodwall Section 106 Review appear on all Preservation Commission agendas going forward under Old Business so the Commission continues to receive updates until the process has been completed.

Commissioner Coombes made a motion to amend the minutes as noted and approve the minutes as amended. **Commissioner Marsh-Ozga seconded** the motion.

AYES: Marsh-Ozga, Walsh, Kaplan, Coombes, Seymour & Pipal.

ABSTAIN: Leary

NAYS: None.

Motion passed.

Chairperson Pipal proposed taking Item 8.1 out of order without objection.

ITEM TAKEN OUT OF ORDER

8.1 Review proposed park bench donation at Coonley Road and Scottswood Road
Chairperson Pipal noted that petitioner Stephanus Greeff was in attendance. He

confirmed that the commissioners had all reviewed the materials related to the proposed Memorial Bench honoring John Farneda to be located in the triangle park across from the Coonley Estate.

Commissioner Kaplan made a motion to approve. **Commissioner Walsh seconded** the motion.

AYES: Chairperson Pipal, Marsh-Ozga, Walsh, Kaplan, Leary, Coombes, Seymour.

NAYS: None.

Motion Passed.

Chairperson Pipal thanked Mr. Greeff for his donation and extended his condolences.

4. *Public Comment:*

Chairperson Pipal noted that Public Comment is usually provided later on the agenda; however, the commission is happy to recognize anyone in attendance who would like to comment now. It was also noted that the commission has received letters from resident Dale Yates, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and the National Association for Olmsted Parks. He asked Manager Frances to explain the process for public comment. Manager Frances noted that Mr. Yates is participating in the Zoom meeting and she invited him to address the commission in lieu of having Staff read the letter he submitted; however, Mr. Yates remained muted. Interim Planner Nathan Parch read Mr. Yates email, sent April 8, 2021, regarding his floodwall concerns, specifically, the cost of the project, continued use of the concrete walkway along the existing Groveland levy, the use of stonework on the Park Place section of the floodwall and the use of stonework on both sides of the proposed floodwall.

5. *Demolitions:*

5.1 60 E. Quincy Street – Consideration of request to demolish single family home

Chairperson Pipal stated that all residential demolition requests must be reviewed by the Preservation Commission for a determination regarding the architectural significance of the structure. Per village ordinance, the Commission can freeze the demolition process to allow time for a landmark application to be submitted, if appropriate. The demolition application for 60 E. Quincy Street was submitted by Crunch, Inc.

Commissioner Marsh-Ozga noted that typically, as part of the demolition review process, the Preservation Commission receives information from the Historical Commission regarding the structure being considered for demolition, but there does not appear to be any Historical Commission input on this structure. Chairperson Pipal acknowledged that this omission was likely an oversight by village staff but reminded the commissioners that the ordinance only gives the commission the authority to freeze a demolition if a structure is architecturally significant. He also noted that the ordinance does not mandate Historical Commission input; however, this has been the past practice. Commissioner Marsh-Ozga stated that there is concern at the IHPA regarding the demolition of “contributing structures” in the village, which is why the date of construction might be a relevant detail. Chairperson Pipal noted that IHPA has deemed any largely intact structure over 50 years old to be a contributing structure and that is a low threshold. Chairperson Pipal estimated that the building was constructed in the 1880-1890s and asked Manager Frances to elaborate on the condition of the building. Manager Frances stated that there are expired building permits in the window dating to 2013

for a rehab that was never completed. There are code enforcement issues at the location. Chairperson Pipal stated that the exterior of the structure lacks architectural integrity.

Commissioner Walsh made a motion that the building does not merit designation as a landmark due to architectural significance. **Commissioner Leary seconded** the motion.

AYES: Marsh-Ozga, Walsh, Kaplan, Leary, Coombes, Seymour, Pipal.

NAYS: None.

Motion Passed.

6. Certifications of Appropriateness:

- 6.1 213 Bloomingbank Road – (Cabrera residence) Rebuild rear first floor porch and enclose for use as an entry and mudroom with new foundation wall and footings, wood framing, and HardiePanel siding painted to match existing residence. Install new double hung and transom windows to match existing. Replace rear entry door with French door. *Change in scope of project since presented to Commission on December 10, 2020.*

Chairperson Pipal noted that a Certificate of Appropriateness was previously approved; however, there has been a change in the scope of the project since it was presented to the Commission at the December 10, 2020 meeting. Project architect David Pollard explained that the owners have decided they needed more space. It was noted that the project is at the back of the home and no exterior alternations will be visible from the public right of way. The Commissioners had no questions for the petitioner.

Commissioner Kaplan made a motion to approve the drawings as submitted. **Commissioner Marsh-Ozga seconded.**

AYES: Marsh-Ozga, Walsh, Kaplan, Leary, Coombes, Seymour, Pipal.

NAYS: None.

Motion Passed.

- 6.2 150 Nuttall Road – Tomek House (Ozga Residence) – Chimney cap replacement with associated stucco and roof work, and addition of custom stainless steel chimney cap assembly.

Commissioner Marsh-Ozga recused herself as she is the property owner. Commissioner Kaplan also recused himself as he is the project architect. Mr. Kaplan then provided a brief description of the chimney restoration project. He noted that the chimney has been modified several times over the years and this project will return the chimney to its original appearance. The Commissioners had no questions for the petitioners.

Commissioner Walsh made a motion to accept the project. **Commissioner Leary seconded.**

AYES: Walsh, Leary, Coombes, Seymour, Pipal.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Kaplan, Marsh-Ozga

Motion Passed.

Chairperson Pipal inquired as to the composition of the chimney cap. He noted that there is a product that integrates fiber that might be suitable. Commissioner Kaplan thanked him for the suggestion.

- 6.3 60 Akenside Road – Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church – Replace entire roof; cover wood soffits and fascia with aluminum; install aluminum gutters; and reside dormers.

Chairperson Pipal noted that petitioners Father Luke Wetzel and Steven Olderr are in attendance; however, roofing contractor John Komperda is not. It was noted that the intent is to replace the existing wood with cement board and aluminum which will reduce maintenance costs. Commissioners discussed various concerns regarding the use of aluminum for the fascia and how that might alter the appearance of the structure. Mr. Olderr stated that he completed a similar project at his home in Oak Park and he was able to maintain the exterior appearance of the home. Chairperson Pipal expressed confidence that Mr. Komperda would be sensitive to the historic preservation aspects of the project. Manager Frances stated that Staff will meet with the roofing contractor prior to issuing the permit for the work to ensure that he understands the commissioners concerns.

Commissioner Kaplan made a motion to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work outlined in the submitted documents with the clarification that the existing fascia trim profile be duplicated in either wood or aluminum. **Commissioner Leary seconded** the motion.

AYES: Marsh-Ozga, Walsh, Kaplan, Leary, Coombes, Seymour, Pipal.

NAYS: None.

Motion Passed.

7. Old Business: None.

8. New Business:

- 8.1 Review proposed park bench donation at Coonley Road and Scottswood Road
ITEM TAKEN OUT OF ORDER – Discussed previously.

- 8.2 Review three options for appearance of proposed floodwalls along the Groveland Levee and West Avenue – Christopher Burke Engineering memo & photos dated March 6, 2021
Chairperson Pipal stated that the Village Board is seeking input from the Preservation Commission and other village commissions with regard to the proposed floodwall design renderings provided by Christopher B. Burke Engineering. Pipal noted that there does not appear to be anyone from the engineering firm in attendance at the meeting. The Commission has previously stated that they would like to see pictures of wall sections and commissioners would like to know if it will be possible to access the river with the floodwall in place. They do not support a sheer, stark, straight wall and would also like more detail regarding how the existing Groveland Berm would be topped.

Manager Frances states that the Commission’s feedback will be forwarded to Burke for consideration. She noted that there is no river access currently; that the cap on the existing Groveland berm would employ the same design as whatever is decided upon for the entire wall, and that the commission’s desire for an undulating design is challenging because of how the concrete molds are formed. Pipal noted that based on the material presented this evening, it does not appear that any of the feedback previously provided by the commission has been incorporated into the design.

Commissioner Leary inquired as to the composition of the floodwall, specifically if any natural materials would be used or if it would be all formed concrete. Manager Frances states that the structural material is concrete but natural stones can be incorporated. Chairperson Pipal noted that the Rockery design incorporates natural stone similar to the rip rap that lines the river elsewhere. Pipal shared his screen to show a conceptualized view looking north from the railroad trestle.

Commissioner Marsh-Ozga expressed disappointment that the feedback provided by the commission in December has not been incorporated and reiterated her desire for a more naturalistic appearance to the wall. She again expressed support for exploring the possibility of a berm along West Avenue as opposed to a wall or interspersing berm and wall sections and finding ways to incorporate river access. She shared a photo from Grand Rapids, MI, that incorporates a more natural looking wall with steps to access the water. Commissioner Marsh-Ozga also expressed support for exploring a removable floodwall. She noted that the USACE has approved this type of installation in other locations. Marsh-Ozga also noted that several entities, not just the State Historic Preservation Organization (SHPO) will be involved in the Section 106 review and all of these entities should be on the distribution list to receive the commission's feedback. These entities include: the USACE, the National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

Chairperson Pipal reiterated the Commission's desire to see an on-site demonstration of the proposed wall height in situ, perhaps done with a string line. Village Manager Frances stated that this will be done in the future, but property owners must first agree to permit access to their properties so this can be facilitated. She further stated that the area on West Avenue where the commission is interested in seeing river access is private property. Chairperson Pipal posited that the wall might not be on private property, but would be in an easement or public property and asked if a walkway could be incorporated into the wall itself. Manager Frances stated that the wall will be in people's backyards and they may not be receptive to such a design.

Commissioner Walsh expressed concern that a walking path on the wall might present too great a liability. Pipal clarified that he was envisioning a walking path half way down the berm on the river side, not the private property side. He acknowledged that it would likely flood occasionally. He noted that a walking path along the river would be a great convenience for students from the First Division walking to school at RBHS. Commissioner Leary suggested a terraced structure with walkway behind it.

A discussion of native plants ensued and Manager Frances noted that native plants will be incorporated into the design, even though trees are not permitted in the area of the wall. Commissioner Kaplan noted that plantings will be critical to achieving a more natural appearance. All of the Commissioners agreed that their preference is a more natural appearance with native plants and an undulating wall.

Commissioner Seymour stated that he is new to the commission and he feels he needs

more time to review the proposal before commenting.

Commissioner Walsh expressed concern regarding the prospect of installing a large man made element in front of natural elements and noted that it seems unlikely that the national Olmsted organizations would be in favor of the proposed wall as it currently appears.

Commissioner Coombes expressed concern regarding the stark contrast between the curvilinear nature of Olmsted's design and meandering river and the linear wall. She expressed concern that the Commission's input is not being incorporated into the design.

Chairperson Pipal thought it might be helpful to provide the USACE with an updated list of concerns and a request that they address them. He noted that the Olmsted Society's letter references the USACE publication *Engineering with Nature*. Manager Frances stated that she was copied on the letter sent by the Olmsted Society and reached out to Jeff Zuercher for comment. She read the email received from Mr. Zuercher stating that the approaches outlined in *Engineering with Nature* are not viable in Riverside because there is not enough land available. The solutions outlined in *Engineering with Nature* are appropriate for coastal areas that are not developed, not urban landscapes. The USACE will incorporate native plantings as much as possible and soften the appearance of the floodwall as much as possible.

Commissioner Leary stated that despite Mr. Zuercher's response, he would support further exploration of the flood mitigation strategies outlined in the *Engineering with Nature* publication. He feels the wall is just too harsh.

Commissioner Marsh-Ozga inquired if the commission was being asked to weigh in on these three specific designs as if they were submittals for Certificates of Appropriateness and whether the designs might have a negative impact on the village's National Historic Landmark designation. Chairperson Pipal stated that he did not view that as the commission's task this evening. He views this as a continuation of a conversation regarding the design of the proposed.

Commissioner Kaplan stated that he would like to see the information that was originally submitted to get the floodwall approved during the Section 106 Review in 2015. He is unclear as to how the project was approved in the first place. Chairperson Pipal stated that it took a bit of sleuthing to obtain information regarding the original approval. Several of the people involved in the previous process have since retired or moved on. Commissioner Kaplan noted that the Preservation Commission is the local authority that should have reviewed the previous Section 106 submission, but the commission never saw it. Chairperson Pipal concurred and stated that perhaps there was not Preservation Commission review because this particular area was not executed according to Olmsted's plan, but Commissioner Marsh-Ozga stated that the area is part of the plan and important to the landmark designation. Kaplan noted that Olmsted's plan called for the area to be a park.

Commissioner Coombes asked what the village expects the commission to do regarding

the material presented. Manager Frances stated that Village Board is seeking feedback from the Commission regarding a design preference. Commissioner Coombes asked what the commission should do if there is no preference, or the commissioners do not support any of the proposed designs. Manager Frances stated that staff will report the commission's feedback to the Board, whatever the feedback may be. She noted that this same information has also been sent to the Landscape Advisory Commission for review and comment. Frances stated that feedback from both commissions will be conveyed to the village board which will consider these options at their next meeting as a potential action item. Frances stated that without design guidance, the Village is unable to talk to the West Avenue residents about acquisition of property since there is not a consensus on moving forward with the flood wall.

Chairperson Pipal stated that he believes the commissioners have provided sufficient feedback for the board to consider and noted that the unaddressed concerns of the commissioners remain their priority, not the proposed design. Personally, he finds option three the least objectionable. Commissioner Leary concurred but reiterated the need to introduce a gentle curve. Pipal again noted that the commission would support including terraces or steps, a walking path and native plantings, and none of the renderings include any of these elements.

Village President Sells asked to comment. He stated that he and Trustee Pollock have discussed the undulation issue and what the wall will look like from the First Avenue side; however, an additional consideration that must be taken into account is what the wall will look like from the backyards on West Avenue. He noted that both the mock-up and river access issue are affected by the final wall placement and height. The Army Corp needs to complete more surveying work closer to the railroad trestle. Then they will be able to create a mock-up and do a visualization with string. Sells also noted that the existing Groveland berm will have steel sheets driven into the riverbank to provide structural integrity. Those steel sheets will then be capped with whatever final design element is selected. He asked the commission for feedback regarding the impact of the desired undulation on the West Avenue properties. Pipal agreed that West Avenue residents will only see a small section of the wall but he believes it is preferential to try to harmonize the design of the wall with the curve of the river.

Commissioner Marsh-Ozga noted that land acquisition was part of the flooding solution in Riverside Lawn and asked if options other than a floodwall might be available if property owners along the river were inclined to sell. Chairperson Pipal stated that property acquisition can be complicated because not all property owners may be willing to sell.

Manager Frances noted that in Riverside Lawn, the MWRD worked with the Cook County Land Bank to acquire flood prone properties and then gifted them to the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. Homes were then demolished and the land will be allowed to revert to greenspace. Frances noted that in Riverside, not all of the properties along the river are flood prone and stated that the USACE will not buy houses, but will only purchase the land needed to construct the floodwall. FEMA will sometimes buy out property owners, however, this is dependent on the number of claims submitted for flood relief.

Additionally, when the village experiences flooding, it is not necessarily confined to Groveland. Other residents further away from the river also flood sometimes.

Chairperson Pipal noted that the USACE's primary concern with the floodwall is to protect against flooding. The commission is more concerned with the impact the wall might have on the village National Historic Landmark designation. He noted that strategic property acquisitions might allow for a more palatable design that all parties could agree on. He believes the commission is being tasked with making a decision on minor design details when more important issues have not been addressed.

Commissioner Marsh-Ozga asked Chairperson Pipal to draft a memo to the Village Board outlining the Commissioner's concerns. Manager Frances stated that she and Mr. Parch will help chairperson Pipal with this task.

Commissioner Leary suggested that perhaps if the village went with option three which includes the rip rap, perhaps the rip rap could undulate and that would soften the appearance of the wall.

President Sells stated that the board shares all of the concerns expressed by the commissioners this evening. He supports a gently curving wall that would have less impact on West Avenue residents, who he noted, are on edge, because they have been living with a lot of uncertainty. He noted that there have already been nine meetings to discuss the project and there are many more details that still need to be discussed and agreed upon, but the design phase has to start somewhere.

Chairperson Pipal asked how much leeway the Army Corp has to do construction in the river or if the construction must occur on the shore. President Sells noted that the Des Plaines River is considered a navigable waterway per the Supreme Court. He also noted that the USACE is tasked with building the least expensive project that will achieve their flood prevention goals. Any betterments such as a more elaborate design or walking bath would have to be paid for by the village, but it was noted that this project, should it be constructed, will outlive everyone participating in tonight's meeting, so it is important to do it right.

Commissioner Marsh-Ozga asked who would pay for required betterments if the Section 106 process determines that the project as currently proposed would have an adverse impact on the village's National Historic Landmark designation. Would mitigation of the adverse impact fall to the USACE? Manager Frances stated that it would be difficult to determine responsibility at this stage, especially with the grant agreement with MWRD.

Chairperson Pipal stated that he will work with Manager Frances and Mr. Parch to draft a memo on this topic for the Village Board.

9. *Informational Items:* None.

10. *Presentations of Petitions, Communications and Citizen Requests:* No additional comments.

11. Adjourn

Commissioner Marsh-Ozga motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion.

AYES: Marsh-Ozga, Walsh, Kaplan, Leary, Coombes, Seymour, Pipal.

NAYS: None.

Motion Passed.

Chairperson Pipal thanked everyone for their participation and declared the meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Interim Director Parch

Date Approved