



KIRKWOOD LANDMARKS COMMISSION MINUTES

Wednesday, March 11, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.
Kirkwood City Hall, City Council Chambers

Present: Commissioners Catherine Enslin, Andrew Raimist, Robert Rubright, Walter Smith, Judy Ward, Council Liaison Paul Ward and Staff Liaison Amy Lowry

Guests: Mike Sallee and Trysh Brown of 836 Culloden Road; Ross Bradley and Mary Huxhold of 2424 Trossock Lane; Corrina Vratny of 718 Culloden Road; Tony Schmidt of 709 Cheviot Court; Jessica Worley of 817 Cheviot Court; Spencer and Sylvia Bach of 969 Nancy Carol Lane; Theresa Geurs of 2410 St Giles Road; Kathy and Andrew Mullins of 742 Culloden Road; Deb LaMartina of 2418 St Giles Road; Paul Reiter of 841 Culloden Road; Clare and Rich Pennington of 801 Cheviot Court.

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

1. **Approval of Minutes:** Motion to approve the February 11, 2015 Meeting Minutes as is by Comr. Raimist, seconded by Comr. Smith, and unanimously approved.
2. **Public Hearings**
 - a. **Case #14-12, 12231 Old Big Bend Road** (Landmark #43, William Bach House) – Request to Delist Home as a Landmark
 - i. Staff presentation to provide background and findings of fact – Ms. Lowry presented a PowerPoint presentation on the history of the Bach House and the request to take it off the rolls of Kirkwood Landmarks. The property is one property with two homes built on it: the Landmark Home built in the 1860s and a second home built in the 1920s. Of the 95 designated landmarks in the city, 1 was delisted because of changes to the property, 7 have been razed. The present owner's mother requested the property be made a Landmark and it was approved as such on April 28, 1983. The property has been in the Bach family since that time.
 - ii. Public Comment – Ms. Lowry read into the record the e-mailed comments of J.L. Husky: "I live on S. Ballas Rd and have always admired the William Bach House. I am against removing it from the Kirkwood Landmark Registry. I think someone has a business venture in mind and therefore I would like it to stay as is to protect it." The property is zoned residential, and in response to Comr. Raimist's question, Ms. Lowry responded that the home would need to go before Planning and Zoning to be rezoned.
 - iii. Petitioner Statement – In response to Comr. Ward's question, Mr. Bach stated that he was unsure of where the sewer lines run and that plumbers would have to use a camera to map the lines. Ms. Bach stated that the property was put up for sale June 13, 2013 and only two walkthroughs have taken place with no offers for purchase. Mr. Bach says the one potential buyer said that there are too many

houses, they do not want to go through the property division process, and the Landmark status scares them. The real estate agents have had open houses, but no feedback from those walking through the homes. Mr. Bach thinks that if the property were divided, it would be more appealing. In response to Comr. Raimist's question, Mr. Bach says that he has no potential buyer if the delisting is approved. In response to Comr. Rubright's question as to whether the delisting would make it more convenient to offer either house for sale, Mr. Bach stated he feels that there is enough ground for each house to survive as the property has 187 feet of frontage on Old Big Bend Road and 190 feet on Barby Lane. Mr. Bach would prefer to sell the land as one property rather than subdividing it.

- iv. Commission Discussion/Determination – The Commissioners discussed the fact that the same family that nominated the Bach house as a Landmark was asking for it to be removed as a Landmark. Comr. Ward made a motion to delist the property as a Landmark. Comr. Rubright seconded the motion. The Commission discussed the sewer issue for the home on East Argonne (location of old Deaf Church) that rendered the property unbuildable, but did not think that this applied to the Bach House. The Commission discussed options of splitting the lot and of demolishing the homes and selling the lot. The vote was called for on the motion to delist and it passed unanimously.

b. Public hearing for proposed local Historic District of Barrett Brae

- i. Staff presentation to provide background on proposal – Ms. Lowry presented a PowerPoint presentation on the history of the Landmarks Commission; the implications of the creation of a local historic district; the protections the district enabled; the objectives for creation of the district that were met, including meetings and public information disseminated and the drafting of design guidelines; the public notices of the hearing that were made; the statement of 85% owner consensus to create the district (45 out of 53 properties voting yes; 4 “no” votes, 4 declined to vote or unavailable); and the results of the property survey concluding that most of the homes were contributors to the district. Ms. Lowry read into the record the comments of property owners who could not attend the hearing: Amy and Josh Foley of 809 Cheviot Court wrote that they are strongly in favor of Barrett Brae becoming a historic district, that they believe this pocket of mid-century homes is a true gem in the Kirkwood community as it stays consistent with mid-century design by being built into the landscape as opposed to taking it over; and of Tiffany Shell of 737 Cheviot Court who is in full support of the Historical Designation for Barrett Brae. In response to Comr. Rubright's question, the St Louis County/Kirkwood City split on the subdivision is 50/50. The Commission discussed the neighborhood split with 2 different governments, 2 different school districts, 2 different Boards of Trustees, but 1 neighborhood picnic.
- ii. Testimonials from property owners who initiated the proposal – Corrina Vratny, Member of the Barrett Brae Resident Pride and Preservation Committee, made a statement regarding the process for enacting the district. She said that they were here because they believed their neighborhood was worth preserving with unique homes and inherent value as it was designed. Ms. Vratny stated that there are

large tree-filled lots and rolling hills that offer privacy; the original homes suit that environment by settling into the landscape – turned and fit into the land; the homes are sized to honor the shape of the lot and the land; the larger two story homes are almost all on the downslope of the neighborhood so that they are not a different height from the one-story homes next to them. She presented the history of Barrett Brae written in 1999 and the process that the Pride Committee undertook to get out the information on the historic district. She said that the goal was to make sure that every homeowner understood what a historic district means and that everyone’s decision was to be heard – they did not want the historic district to be a surprised to anyone. Ms. Vratny said that the Committee spoke to all but one owner – such home is owned by a bank – at a public event or one-to-one in the Committee’s door-to-door campaign. In response to a question from Comr. Smith regarding any owner’s plans for changes to their home that would make them reluctant to sign the petition, the Committee had no examples. Ms. Vratny said one “no” vote was a family that wanted to leave the home to their children and were not in favor of the district after talking to their attorneys, and another “no” vote was an owner concerned that the proposed Design Guidelines would not enable owners to make changes to the homes to combat global climate change. Comr. Ward commented on the way the homes fit the landscape and asked whether new homes have disrupted the appearance of the neighborhood. Ms. Vratny replied that some new homes had changed the look of the neighborhood, but the idea for the district was started before some of these changes took place.

- iii. Public Comment – Owner Clare Pennington wants to preserve to preserve the neighborhood gem, “the Western Hills of Kirkwood.” In response to Comr. Raimist’s question, Ms. Vratny replied that the homes were originally built with external HVAC ductwork. Ms. Vratny referenced the www.barrettbrae.com website with the history and photos of the neighborhood. In response to Comr. Rubright’s question, Ms. Vratny said that all the homes were built by Fischer and Frichtel and were featured in a 1959 Better Homes and Gardens magazine. Owners Jessica Worley, Tony Schmidt, Claire Pennington, Paul Reiter (also Barrett Brae Trustee and 14-year resident), Ross Bradley, Mike Sallee and Kathy Mullins each spoke in favor of the proposed district.
- iv. Commission Discussion/Determination – Comr. Rubright made a motion to accept the Barrett Brae as the next Historic District. Comr. Smith seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Comr. Enslin thanked the owners for their time. Ms. Lowry reminded the Commission that the proposed Design Guidelines would need to be enacted concurrently with the Historic District. The Commissioners discussed that they had previously reviewed the Design Guidelines. Comr. Raimist made a motion to accept the Design Guidelines for the Barrett Brae Historic District. Comr. Ward seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. Old Business

- a. **Design Guidelines for Kirkwood Landmarks & Historic Districts** – The Commissioners discussed completing these to be adopted by the June meeting. Comr. Enslin has been

instrumental in the drafting of the Design Guidelines and her second term on the Landmarks Commission ends in May.

4. **New Business**

- a. **Citizens Comments/Seeking advice** to preserve their historic properties – none.
- b. **Favorite Building Awards 2015** – Ms. Lowry reminded the Commissioners that nominations will be due in mid-April for the awards to be given out at the May 13 meeting at the Train Station.

5. **Adjourn**– Motion to adjourn at 7:30 p.m. made by Comr. Ward, seconded by Comr. Raimist and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted by Amy Lowry, Landmarks Liaison