
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

December 11, 2012

Ald. Robert Bauman
(414) 286-2221

Ald. Terry Witkowski
(414) 286-2883

Major Revisions proposed for City's Historic Preservation Ordinance

Major revisions to the City of Milwaukee's Historic Preservation Ordinance will be presented to the Historic Preservation Commission this afternoon, and will be heard by a Common Council committee next week.

Alderman Robert J. Bauman and Alderman Terry L. Witkowski co-authored the revisions, which represent the first major overhaul of the ordinance since its enactment over 30 years ago. Following review by the Historic Preservation Commission, the file will be reviewed by the Council's Zoning & Neighborhood Development Committee. This review may occur as soon as December 18. Aldermen Bauman and Witkowski both serve on the zoning committee.

The file will be discussed in a meeting starting at **3 p.m. TODAY, Tuesday, December 11, 2012, by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) in room 301-B at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St.**

Among the major changes contained in the ordinance revisions is a complete overhaul of the procedure for obtaining a "certificate of appropriateness," or CoA, which is the permit required to perform various types of work (including demolition) on designated historic buildings, sites and buildings within historic districts. The revisions also:

- Provides the Department of Neighborhood Services with enforcement powers to prevent "demolition by neglect".

-More-

HPC/ADD ONE

- Requires that developers seeking to demolish a historic structure and develop a new building in its place prove that they have the financial resources to build that new building.
- Creates language requested by the City Attorney establishing an economic hardship standard and review procedure for the owners of historic buildings, sites and buildings in historic districts.
- Creates time frames (i.e., a maximum number of days) for various actions to occur and decisions to be made. Examples: HPC staff shall determine whether an application is complete within 10 days of receiving it, and HPC itself shall hold a public hearing on a nomination within 45 days of the date staff determines the application was complete. HPC staff shall also notify a CoA applicant of HPC's decision on the CoA application within 15 days of the Commission's action. Previously, there were many indeterminate dates in the ordinance – the changes are meant to help applicants better understand the timeline.
- Changes “interim (historic) designation” to “temporary designation,” and expands the temporary designation process to apply to sites and districts, as well as individual structures.
- Provides more details on the procedures for appealing an HPC decision-deferral action to the Common Council.
- In the case of an application for a CoA for a new construction project that also involves creation of a “planned development” (a type of zoning change), requires that HPC's consideration of the CoA be coordinated with the city Plan Commission's consideration of the zoning change.
- Creates a procedure to appeal HPCs' rejection of a historic designation nomination to the Common Council.
- Directs the HPC to establish a plaque program to identify and provide information on local historic structures, sites and districts.

After today's presentation to the HPC, the file will be heard during a special meeting of the Council's Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee on December 18. If recommended for adoption at committee, the file would then move for approval by the full Council (also on December 18).