



MEETING NOTES

Historic Dublin Task Force

Tuesday, September 29, 2020 | 4:30 - 6:30 pm

Historic Dublin Task Force Members Present: Mr. Way (Chair), Kathy Lannan (Vice Chair), Carol Matune, Alan and Marylou Szuter, Lynn Long, Sally Van Horn, Clay Rose, Paula Yonnotti-Ansel.

HDTF Members Absent: Jay Nordenbrock, Becky Brightman, Rick Weber, Craig Price, Enas Lanham, Ed Ostrowski, Burt Dowden, Garrick Daft, Olivia Wirth, and Rohan Madan.

City Council and Dublin Staff: Council Member Jane Fox; Jennifer Rauch, Planning Director; Tammy Noble, Senior Planner; Sara O'Malley, Economic Development Administrator; Kyle McKee (moderator); and Laurie Wright, Administrative Support II.

Ms. Rauch welcomed everyone to the meeting and said they would continue from where they left off from the last meeting with reviewing and editing out draft recommendations.

Ms. Rauch shared she had captured the main topic comments in the draft recommendations. Mr. Way clarified this is a working document so ongoing changes can be made anywhere within the document until it is ready to present to City Council.

Ms. Noble said this group is about mid-way through the recommendations for City Council. The meeting ended shortly after the 'S. High Street Vitality' recommendation, therefore, this meeting will begin with Recommendation G – Diversity of Uses (page 3). She brought members up-to-date on the process, especially benefiting those that may have missed some meetings.

7. DIVERSITY OF USES: ENCOURAGE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT THAT PROMOTES PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT WITH A FOCUS ON RETAIL AND LESS RELIANCE ON VEHICULAR TRAVEL.

Ms. Noble began reading this part as it was written in the 2007 Area Plan. Mr. Szuter said he thought it captured the Task Force's ideas for the most part. They want uses that will bring people in to the Historic District, keep the district at a higher level of vitality on the lower levels of structures and law offices and insurance company-type businesses on the upper levels. He asked how this could be promoted. Ms. Noble said bringing the idea for the diversity of uses forward and suggesting what might be lacking could help guide our Economic Development Department to attract the right businesses and ensure they are in the best type of locations. Currently, there is an abundance of restaurants in the Historic District in general. Mr. Way said there are some areas that are strictly residential. Ms. Rauch asked Mr. Szuter if he was beginning to concentrate on the recommendation to investigate incentives or methods to promote. Mr. Szuter said we obviously



cannot dictate what a property owner does with their property so he wondered if there were mechanisms the City can use to encourage more retail kind of activities on the lower levels but not constrain the landlords on leasing space. Mr. Way thought that would come into the management section of the document to support this and suggested they wait to examine that further. Mr. Rose agreed. Mr. Way said he thought this recommendation could be left in this section and depending on the type of building that is being considered, the uses would work themselves out. He projected that the whole meaning of retail is going to change. He stated that offices do not engage people at the street level like other uses could. The following are the recommendations settled upon:

- a. Focus on development opportunities that utilize active uses at the ground floor level and encourage retail uses that support local businesses that are unique to the District.
- b. Encourage service, commercial and office uses (i.e. law offices, insurance agencies, real estate agents, etc.) on the upper levels.
- c. Investigate incentives or methods to promote/encourage retail uses.

8. PRESERVATION: HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION AS DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES CONTINUE WITHIN THE DISTRICT.

Ms. Noble read through the recommendations compiled from previous discussions. She asked, at what level this group thinks the City should pursue preservation. She said this was a large topic with Heritage Ohio and thought guidance should be given to the Boards and Commission as well as to City Council. Mr. Rose spoke on behalf of the Historical Society. He said that is one of the big issues and preservation is the right word to keep the same character on S. High Street. Mr. Way said he had heard Mr. Rose and say that they do not want properties to be demolished unless they truly do not contribute to the District. He continued to say these decisions should be based on a case-by-case basis as to whether it is capable of being restored and renovated. Mr. Szuter agreed. He noted an old property that was just demolished; another one that was approved for demolition; and yet another that is about to be demolished. Therefore, preservation is an important issue or we will lose all the character of the Historic District. Ms. Lannan said stronger language is necessary for preservation. She suggested having someone in the City dedicated to helping people find funding, national grants and programs for maintaining the historic structures.

Ms. Fox specifically asked the group to discuss demolitions. She said historic structures are being reviewed on a case-by-case basis, currently. Many times people come in and buy these small properties, but don't want to live in small houses. They do not want to preserve what is there because they want something that is a little more updated. They gravitate towards demolition because that is a preferable route. This becomes the struggle the Architectural Review Board is faced with as there is very little in the Code for which to base these decisions.

Mr. Way suggested that instead of 'should' be preserved the Code should state the structure 'will' be preserved. He said he hears the following sentiment: The residents in the Historic District do not want to continue to lose the historic properties because they provide the character and quality of the place. He indicated people buy up these structures, let them go into disrepair and then state they cannot afford to renovate because the structure is so far gone. He wants the Task Force to come out and state the following: If it is a building that contributes to the district, it will be preserved.

Ms. Fox asked if the language should be so strong that it states structures will be preserved and demolition is the very last resort. She asked the Task force to characterize the regulation exactly so there is no doubt to the understanding and intent. Mr. Szuter provided an example of what the City could possibly do to improve this process. He suggested interior and exterior Code inspections, as part of the transfer of a historic property from the current owner to the new owner, with one of them having to take ownership of correcting any Code violations that had to be repaired, even like a chip in a window. This was based on his past experience in a different area of Ohio. This might help with some of these properties that go from one developer to another over the years with no improvements being made. Mr. Rose said that was appropriate.

Ms. Noble asked if the Force would be comfortable stating the following: Until a structure becomes a safety issue, demolition would be discouraged. Mr. Way said that is what it always comes down to now. Ms. Lannan said an owner just lets the structure fall into disrepair and noted the properties on N. Riverview Street. Property owners say they are too far gone to do anything with but they have just been ignored. She said disrepair is not a reason to allow demolition. Owners state the renovation/preservation of property would reach a point of economic hardship; the owner says it would cost too much to fix it up so they just want to tear it down. At some point, we have to stop holding a 200-year-old building up to the standards of 2020. Foundations and other components are different. It is a struggle to keep them livable, but we cannot say they do not match 2020 standards so it can be torn down. We need to figure out how important preservation is. Mr. Way thought they had come up with four points that address Ms. Lannan's concerns - four points identify resolution to uphold preservation: 1) If there is financial hardship, the City will help with finding funding programs to assist with renovation/preservation; 2) With rigorous on-going Code Enforcement, properties would not fall into such disrepair; 3) Properties will simply not be allowed to become dilapidated; and 4) If a property reaches the worst case scenario level, the City would purchase the property to fix it up. Ms. Lannan said following each of those steps might help. Mr. Way reiterated these are just recommendations. City Council will have to agree to implement these steps. Ms. Noble suggested the verbiage should state the City will provide information regarding funding and programs or it reads like the City will pay for renovations without other avenues being first exhausted.

Ms. Fox said there needs to be public service announcements so there is a better understanding of what preservation means in the Historic District. As it is, someone comes in wanting to be in the Historic District, purchases a small 50's ranch with no intention of living in a small ranch house so they buy the property with the intention to tear down the structure(s) just because they like the area. Without previous knowledge of what is expected of properties in the Historic District, their intention is to build something, which is usually much larger, and therefore, out of character for the Historic District. The City's regulations for the Historic District need to be cemented in stone. She wants to hear stronger language to guide the public as well as future Architectural Review Board members to which Mr. Szuter agreed. Demolition needs to be addressed as part of the restrictions and anyone with a real estate license should have to divulge what is expected for the Historic District to the all potential buyers. If restrictions were put into place, it would take care of itself. Ms. Fox pointed out there are property rights, too. The regulations should not be too restrictive that properties cannot be improved but on the other hand, eliminating properties being demolished is our goal. The following are the recommendations settled upon:

- a. Identify areas where the existing development character should be preserved. Demolition should be considered as a last resort, except when health, safety and welfare is at stake.
- b. Provide information and funding for programs to assist historic home and business owners to maintain the integrity and character of their properties.
- c. Conduct rigorous and strict code enforcement on absentee landlords and property owners.
- d. Purchase derelict historic properties to condemn and renovate at a market rate purchase price.

9. PROPER SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT: ENSURE THE PROPER HEIGHT, SCALE AND MASSING OF BUILDINGS WITHIN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT TO ENSURE THE QUAIN T NATURE OF THE AREA.

Ms. Noble read from the draft recommendations. Ms. Lannan confirmed the Bridge Street District is being taken out of the Historic District and it would have its own Zoning Code. Ms. Rauch said the Historic District Code will align with the Guidelines. The Zoning Code is being changed but it has not been finalized and adopted yet, so in the meantime, development that was approved before at different standards are allowed to move forward. That is why the 4,000-square-foot building being constructed in the Historic District right now is permitted. Ms. Szuter stated she was concerned about lawyers in the future arguing that since this building was allowed here, than another huge building should be permitted also. She wanted to know how forceful the Task Force can be to get this type of building stopped in the future. Ms. Rauch answered the Code will address that problem but in the interim, there are not any feasible solutions. Ms. Noble asked the members to state what should or should not continue in the District. The word "encourage" was changed to "enforce". Ms. Yonnotti-Ansel agreed that if the Code is enforced, the Historic District will not see

a irregular design pattern. Mr. Way clarified that the recommendations should align with the Architectural Review Board, the Bridge Street District Zoning Code, and the Historic District Development Guidelines. Ms. Lannan suggested this Task Force provide the Architectural Review Board with concise regulations and for the Boards that come after, for consistency. Ms. Fox asked if the Task Force wanted to limit each structure to a percentage that it can be increased to because every lot is a different size and there is a variety of different architectural styles and sizes of structures.

Ms. Lannan said she always liked standards that stated any additions had to be subordinate to the main structure. Ms. Szuter gave an example of a house that looks small from the front but is permitted to be built a long way back on the property, which limits or eliminates the vistas the current next door neighbors have. Maybe the neighbors should be considered when deciding to approve a huge house and how that would impact the neighbor's lifestyle compared to always having a smaller-scale and more appropriate sized home. Ms. Fox reported that has been the struggle for the Architectural Review Board when they currently base the decision strictly by setbacks, lot coverage, and height of what is proposed.

Mr. Way reiterated that these are just recommendations, not guidelines and at some point, they will be translated and made more specific. He said massing is a huge component. Ms. Noble said square footage can be attained many different ways; a structure just needs to be designed so it is appropriate. She said it is important that the Task Force articulate what the intentions are (rather than exact dimensions or percentages desired) so that will guide the "decision-makers" that will devise the actual standards.

Ms. Rauch said maybe more specificity is required such as what "appropriate" means. She said she would recommend that the Architectural Review Board listen to this meeting so they get a good understanding of what the Task Force wants. The following are the recommendations settled upon:

- a. Enforce design standards that reinforce the established character of the Historic District including building height, scale, massing and materials.
- b. Recommend activities proposed through the Architectural Review Board, Historic District Zoning Code, Historic Design Guidelines, and Historic District Area Plan all align that guide development in the area.

10. CONNECTING THE DISTRICT: ENSURE ADEQUATE TRANSITION FROM THE EAST SIDE TO THE WEST SIDE OF THE SCIOTO RIVER AND EMBRACE THE DIFFERENT AMENITIES THAT EACH HAS TO OFFER.

Ms. Noble noted this recommendation is about connecting the north and the south sides of the district. Mr. Way added the importance of connections in all directions using existing streets and

the Scioto River. He said the Historic District is not an isolated place and should be connected. Mr. Szuter agreed. He said to encourage more connectivity and there should be more access, not less. Ms. Noble said engineering is focusing more on crossings that are prominent than less and safety is always the concern. The following are the recommendations settled upon:

- a. Identify opportunities for synergy throughout the District, connecting and leveraging the development patterns and activities between the northern and southern end of the District.
- b. Focus on opportunities to provide an anchor in the southern portion of the district to strengthen the connections.
- c. Encourage pedestrian connections and movements crossing Bridge Street.
- d. Encourage continuous riverfront open space connections as well as along existing north/south streets.
- e. Reinforce connections from the Historic District to: the Bridge Park Development; the West Bridge Street Commercial District and Metro Center; the East Bridge Street Commercial Corridor and Sawmill Road; and the adjoining residential neighborhoods of Indian Run Estates, Corbins Mill, Waterford Village, and Longview and River Highlands.

11. WAYFINDING: ENSURE THAT BOTH PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICULAR MOVEMENT IS EASILY ACCESSIBLE THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT THROUGH APPROPRIATE SIGNAGE AND LAND MARKING.

No discussion beyond the following recommendation:

- a. Explore application-based technology to enhance wayfinding and provide historic and cultural information, as well as on-going events and other helpful information.

12. ARTS AND CULTURE: EMBRACE OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE ART AND CULTURAL ARTIFACTS THAT REPRESENT THE HISTORY AND VITALITY OF THE DISTRICT.

Mr. Way said this was not included in the last draft even though there was a really good discussion in the past about the bike racks and public art. Mr. Szuter said art could be a draw of itself. Mr. Way said art is subjective. Ms. Matune said likes when artists are in the street. Local artists could also be presented in the library and it would be a good way to tie in the south. The library would be a good venue for 'Talks with the Artists'. Mr. Way suggested an App - curated Art Trail. Ms. Noble asked if the City had ever sponsored a free-standing art festival. Ms. Fox remembered when streets were closed down for art festivals. Culture highlighted in an APP might not work for everyone so additionally there could be plaques on a buildings to tell a story of a historic place or perhaps a cultural kiosk. Mr. Szuter suggested to look up descriptions and history of a place. We need to encourage exploration and inquisitiveness. Ms. Szuter agreed with Ms. Fox but suggested using photos on buildings instead of just brass plaques like what are currently found on national

monuments and places. Ms. Fox indicated with new technology, we should be able to find historical photographs to use. Ms. Matune said Indian Run Elementary could take walking trips and other schools could have field trips to the Historic District. Ms. Noble agreed the library is a great place for displays to come and go. Mr. Rose offered scripted walking tours from the Historical Society.

Ms. O'Malley said she spent time in old Delaware recently. When she saw a bronze historical sign, she stopped. If she had not seen that sign, she would have never known to stop there and learn about the historical significance. She suggested there be a good blend of generational-wise type information available along with apps. Ms. Noble reported she had taken a hybrid type of tour in Savannah, GA and that worked out well for all ages. She explained the animated tour guide was dressed in costume dress and discussed history but there were also opportunities to stop and listen to the app for additional information. She recalled the hybrid tour brought forth a very interesting mix. The following are the recommendations settled upon:

- a. Encourage art and cultural displays that celebrate the Historic District, the history and culture of Dublin and the creative resources and talents of the community.
- b. Work with the Dublin Arts Council to coordinate city-wide opportunities with Historic District opportunities.
- c. Engage with the Dublin Historical Society to ensure valuable resources and information are continually accessible and made available to the public.

II. PROPOSE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

- 1. MANAGEMENT OF THE DISTRICT:** CREATE A MANAGEMENT PROGRAM THAT OVERSEES THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICT AND COLLABORATES WITH THE EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE DISTRICT. (the Dublin Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, and the Historic District Business Association).

Ms. Noble prompted the group for a discussion regarding if things were working effectively as they could now or what should be improved and if additional resources are needed. Mr. Szuter said there should be someone in charge to execute what the Task Force wants to see. He said he was a member of another group and their agenda did not really get off the ground until they hired a full-time Executive Director to accomplish all the goals they wanted. Inspect what you expect, he said.

Mr. Way said the management of the District covers all and interfaces with the Architectural Review Board, residents and business owners in the Historic District and ensuring everything going on in the District is coordinated and done correctly. Ms. Szuter wanted to know if there was someone overseeing the Bridge Street District on the north side. Ms. O'Malley answered not particularly Bridge Park West but the Bridge Park Development as a whole. She said Crawford Hoying

Development Partners have a couple of people that specialize in events for Bridge Street that coordinate the Farmer's Market, etc. resulting in quick success. Ms. Szuter asked if we should have someone allocated from the City to cover all of the Historic District. Ms. O'Malley thought what the Task Force is wanting is a 'Main Street Director'. That person could frame all the loose ends together. Ms. O'Malley said she could serve as a liaison to that person since she attends all the pertinent meetings and her job also entails building relationships.

Ms. Fox suggested the Historical Society should be included too because historically they have been instrumental in keeping the integrity of the District. They always come to the forefront when there is an issue or conversation going on in the Historic District and they tell the story of why that particular place or structure is important to preserve.

Ms. Noble suggested more discussion is needed to determine what all the management would entail. The most important role for management will be to create alliances with existing groups. Mr. Way indicated he thought the Main Street Program focused on the historical aspects of their area but because this is not all historical; a program needs to be all encompassing. Ms. Fox indicated the Architectural Review Board is not able to keep in contact with everything that is going on to be the entity that provides education to the public. She said their reaches all come down to how they rule. Needs, changes and challenges need to be shared with the ARB. Mr. Way suggested a second person might be needed to coordinate everything.

Ms. Noble suggested keeping the Management recommendations general for now further discussion may be required. Ms. Rauch suggested capturing what the group envisions as this particular recommendation for City Council. More background can be added after further discussion. Mr. Way said "All Things Dublin" is what that designated person will be responsible for. She noted if a separate entity was responsible or the Economic Development Department does not matter; the right skill set is what is needed. If too much detail is dwelled upon, this group may never get there so focus should be on the right skill set required. They need to understand their role and how to influence this area. Management should have some interface with a Main Street type program. Ms. Noble asked if there were any more definitive ideas to add. Since none were brought forth, the following were the recommendations settled upon:

- a. Utilize Heritage Ohio's Main Street Program or other similar programs.
- b. Provide a business "concierge service" that would assist local business with issues associated with local entrepreneurship. In collaboration with existing services including the HDBA and the City of Dublin Economic and Development.
- c. Assemble a designated entity or appointed person to oversee, review, coordinate and collaborate on all planning, design and preservation, and development decisions in the Historic Dublin to assist residents and small businesses navigate the City of Dublin and

other available resources with the mandate to preserve and maintain the character, quality and experience of the Historic District .

III. SUPPORT EXISTING EFFORTS THAT WILL LEAD TO “SHORT-TERM” SUCCESSSES.

1. EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS: PROVIDE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TO THE DISTRICT FROM A HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE INCLUDING CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND BACKGROUND ON SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE AND LANDMARKS THAT HAVE EXISTED IN THE DISTRICT.

Mr. Clay thought the draft statement on the above issue was not specific enough. Ms. Szuter questioned this. She asked what they were talking about - virtual reality or other technology. Ms. Noble answered it could be anything from the App story or historic perspective, a kiosk with video, or plaques. Mr. Way asked about who will be responsible for this and Ms. Noble answered it would be promoted by this Task Force. Ms. Lannan made a suggestion for a short-term success, would be to roll in the Historic District into the Dublin Go App for now as it is already built and the history could be another component. For short-term successes, Mr. Way suggested enlisting the help of the City’s Communications Department. He has been amazed at what they are able to put together quickly. If they could take on creating the education piece with input from the Historical Society, they could be the set up group to this. He asked if perhaps they already have something in the works. He indicated they did that for the Bridge Park Development. Ms. Fox recalled there is a book of Dublin and that maybe a recreation icon could be added to the Go App, as Ms. Lannan suggested. Ms. Noble reiterated that is what this opportunity is for. She suggested the Task Force state they would like to enlist the assistance of ‘the City’ rather than the Communication Department being called out, specifically. Mr. Way suggested enlisting the City (Communications Department) to promote the Historic District to start.

2. PROCESSES AND REGULATIONS: ENSURE UPDATES TO THE HISTORIC DISTRICT CODE AND GUIDELINES ARE COMPATIBLE WITH THE VISION FOR THE DISTRICT AND THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS IS STREAMLINED, CLEAR AND FAIR. PLANNING STAFF SHOULD FINALIZE AND FORWARD THESE AMENDMENTS IN A TIMELY MANNER.

Mr. Szuter requested the last sentence be added, which was the extent of the discussion.

Ms. Noble complimented the members for the amazing amount of work they have generated in two meetings. The next step is to produce recommendations as well as a report to be presented to City Council.

Moving forward, Ms. Noble said she may solicit advice from Mr. Way and Ms. Lannan as she compiles the history and milestones as well as how these recommendations came to fruition. In order to finalize the components and include text as well as graphics for a final report, she asked the members how they would like to proceed. The consensus was to present the information in

an email to the Task Force for review and if there were enough questions or comments then the Task Force could meet again. She asked if three weeks was a good timeline for her to finalize recommendations and draft a report for the members. Mr. Way and Ms. Lannan may be enlisted to assist with format and content, etc. to ensure that the ideas of the members are being reflected accurately.

Mr. Way encouraged fellow members to review the recommendations and make their comments directly within that document and send to Ms. Rauch and Ms. Noble so they can incorporate them, as that process, he found, worked very well for him. Ms. Noble indicated as a result of the conversations regarding these recommendations, we have discovered that words are very important to conveying our exact intentions. She asked the members to please wordsmith this document, thoroughly.

Ms. Noble reported she has reached out to the other members to encourage them to participate. Each and every member has been receiving all the emails/information. Mr. Rose asked to share this draft document with the Historical Society Board meeting and obtain any thoughts they may have, which he could add. Ms. Noble agreed as long that it was understood this is just a draft so far.

Ms. Noble thanked everyone again for their participation and adjourned the meeting.