

City of Erie  
Historic Preservation Task Force  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
September 9, 2020

A regular meeting of the Erie Historic Preservation Task Force was held Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 3:30 pm via a virtual meeting from the City of Erie Municipal Building, 626 State Street, Erie, PA 16501

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

<i>Member</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Emily Aloiz	X	
Dave Brennan	X	
Melissa Hake	X	
Melinda Meyer	X	
Chuck Scalise	X	
Mark Steg	X	

Advisory Committee: Kathy Wyrosdick, Mayor David Mitchell, Jake Welsh, Megan Bennett, Bill Callahan

Chairman Brennan called the meeting to order at 3:35pm

2. Approval of Minutes from regular meeting of May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020

M. Steg made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by M. Hake. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. New Business

- a. None

4. Old Business

- a. Design Guidelines:
  - i. update on Keystone grant

Keystone grant awards were announced September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Twenty four were awarded across the state including:

- Erie Downtown Partnership - \$22,500
- Union City Borough - \$25,000

M. Meyer was instrumental in Erie Downtown Partnership's application for the creation of Design Guidelines in the area of their footprint. This was the third time the application was submitted. The task force will coordinate with the Erie Downtown Partnership as the project moves forward and a project team develops.

- i. Other options for design standards, pull together models from other communities – Open Discussion

While the Union City Borough award is outside Erie City and therefore outside the scope of the task force, the historic preservation initiatives can be used as a template for communities within Erie County as a whole, including the City. Both downtown Union City (guidelines 1 year ago), and downtown Girard (will finish at the end of May) created design guidelines for commercial corridors that may be applicable to small commercial corridors in the City of Erie.

B. Callahan stressed that the public engagement process was as important as the guidelines themselves.

- b. Update on neighborhood toolkit designed to help neighborhood groups understand and plan for historic preservation – M Meyer/K Wyrosdick  
<https://www.design.upenn.edu/pennpraxis/work/neighborhood-preservation-toolkit-0>

Members of the task force and City staff reached out to Lorraine Gomez and Donna of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee in Philadelphia about the use of the Neighborhood Preservation Toolkit. In Philadelphia the toolkit is used for much more than just Historic Preservation Planning. Block captains use it to create asset maps of more than just historic sites. This helps to define the story each community wants to tell. It is also a part of the training for the Citizens Planning Institute.

Questions remain if this type of toolkit is right tool for historic preservation in Erie and if an investment to create a toolkit should be a goal. If so, how much would it cost?

Taskforce members presented the toolkit to the City's neighborhood groups. It was warmly received, but the length of the document and the effort required to advertise it are challenges. In Philadelphia tool kit ambassadors needed to be hired. This is additional funding that the City of Erie would have to find.

Funding for a toolkit and all other initiatives will be helped significantly if/when the City of Erie obtains its Certified Local Government Status.

- c. Creation of Historic Preservation program
  - i. Draft Ordinance for Historic Preservation using Pittsburgh and City of Bethlehem as a model – K Wyrosdick

B. Callahan noted that Pittsburgh's ordinance is very technical, for example, specifying who can nominate historic properties. Bethlehem's ordinance was also done through their zoning and may be a good model for the City of Erie to follow.

K. Wyrosdick will create a first draft with the City's solicitor and zoning office. Something to be determined is whether the existing code can be adapted or must be repealed and replaced. C. Scalise, D. Brennan and M. Steg want to read the draft ordinance. The timeline is two weeks (September 23<sup>rd</sup>).

ii. Staff Coordinator – D Brennan

D Brennan will discuss the creation of a staff person to work in the City's Planning Department to forward historic preservation initiatives. A job description and timeline are needed. Funding for the position would need to be applied for through a CLG grant.

d. Status and timing of CLG application – B Callahan

The CLG Project Grant Application is due October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. B Callahan said that we could apply, but the timeline would be aggressive. The funds would be released April 2021 and CLG status must be achieved by then to receive the funds.

A post-pandemic timeline is needed. This would include the formation of a Historic Preservation Review Board by the end of calendar year 2020.

e. Discuss Final Report to Council and next steps for HP Taskforce – D Brennan

Task force is scheduled to end in July 2021. The task force owes City Council and the Mayor a report of the findings of the Historic Preservation Task Force to follow up on the draft of findings from the City Council Study Session.

Another City Council Study session will be scheduled with materials distributed to City Council members ahead of time.

Toolkit: M. Meyer and M. Hake will coordinate with Donna in Philadelphia and M. Bennett will organize.

5. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:32 pm