

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY  
PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

**APPEARANCE COMMISSION**

**Special Meeting  
Friday, September 9, 2011  
Mayor's Conference Room, City Hall  
505 Butler Place  
Park Ridge, Illinois**

**MINUTES**

Chairman Kidd called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m.

**DRAFT**

**A. ROLL CALL**

Present

Brian Kidd, Chairman  
Randall Derifield  
Kim Kuhlman  
Nick Norman  
Ellen Upton

Staff

Jon Branham  
Cathy Doczekalski  
Sophie Tidd

City Council

Alderman Smith, Council Liaison

Others Present

Approximately 21 citizens

**B. APPEARANCE COMMISSION PROCEDURES REVIEW/DISCUSSION**

Chairman Kidd thanked Commissioner Kuhlman for the General Outline/Discussion items for the Appearance Commission Special Meeting. He asked her to further describe each item. Commissioner Kuhlman went over the points of her outline as follows:

**I. What is the value provided by the Appearance Commission?**

For the individual applicants (design, sense of supporting the community...)  
For the community as a whole (cohesion, character...)

Commissioner Kuhlman acknowledged the value of the Appearance Commission to the individual and the community and discussed the individual value versus the value to the community. The benefit is community cohesion and the maintenance of the character of the community. The goal is to obtain a win-win situation without an undue burden, while still allowing individual expression.

Commissioner Upton stated that she had firsthand experience. Appearing before the Appearance Commission gives the applicant an advantage when there are neighbor issues, adding credence to what may be a difficult situation.

Chairman Kidd stated that individuality is still being expressed. He added there were many misconceptions about the Appearance Commission.

The Commission discussed the costs and benefits, addressing Alderman Smith's comments that the Appearance process adds a month or so to the overall timeline without a cost benefit. Commissioner Derifield went over the history of the Appearance Commission and requirements, which urges applicants to come in at the beginning of the design process. Chairman Kidd stated that architects make the review part of their process, adding that the more time and effort is put into the design process, the quicker and smoother the process can actually go. He stated designs are often rolling, and often changes are requested during the design process and into the permit process.

Commissioner Derifield stated that Appearance Commissions exist all over the northwest suburbs. Chairman Kidd stated that people moving to communities appreciate it. He stated that the value is to the community rather than the individual, but that the individual reaps the benefits.

## **II. How can we increase the value provided to individuals and the community? (overlap)**

Individual -- improving the permit process

Time it takes to get the permit/approvals\*

Ease of understanding the requirements

Respect and fairness (somewhat subjective) shown during process

\*Is info available already for various categories of applicants?

Community -- improving awareness of the commission goals/mission

Comparison of before/after review

Conducting award program (a concrete example, in progress)

Commissioner Kuhlman stated that data might already be available on project timelines eliminating the need for an expensive survey. The Commissioners discussed the need to review the entire permit process, rather than just the Appearance Commission review. Commissioner Norman brought up the topic of other items potentially slowing the permit process, not just the Appearance Commission review portion. Commissioner Derifield stated the survey could turn into a permit process questionnaire.

Commissioner Kuhlman stated that the general public might not be aware of the goals and mission of the Appearance Commission, for instance, the proposed awards program. If people understood more, they would appreciate the burden of time.

## **III. What is the process? Is there more than one process at issue?**

Applicant or rep:

Obtains packet of information at City Hall

Becomes familiar with requirements through reading, attending pre-app

Meets with staff

Prepares application

Attends various commission meetings (In what order? How quickly? How many total?)

Commissioner Kuhlman suggested that if there is a survey, that it be dispensed with the Certificate of Occupancy. Commissioner Upton stated that a survey needs to be specific about what is broken and why, so it could be more qualitative.

**IV. Setting goals/standards--SPECIFICS**

- What are the expected outcomes from Appearance Review? (design)
- What is the expected time frame for completion of each step
- How do we treat applicants with respect and fairness?
- How can these be measured/quantified/tracked?

Commissioner Kuhlman suggested the timing issue be part of question 8 or 9. Alderman Smith stated that time is money. He discussed the total cost to the applicants in terms of reproduction time, cost of attending meetings, surveys.

Commissioner Derifield asked Alderman Smith to submit an email with specific questions. He added that both the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning and Zoning Commission have application fees. The city could make the copies, etc, but at what cost to the city.

Chairman Kidd stated as long as the architects take the time to understand the process, there are rarely problems or huge factors are far as the applicant is concerned. He compared the process to the architectural review exam. If you are prepared, you pass, if not, you will have to pay the fee, and take the time to retake the exam. It's based on the effort involved. He did not feel a survey was necessary.

**V. How much time can be committed to this issue?**

The Commission discussed how much additional time should be committed to the issue.

Joan Sandrick stated that nothing was broken with the Appearance Commission of which to fix.

Judy Barclay stated she disliked the survey idea as it was not a mandate of the City Council.

Missy Langan stated she had concerns about the entire process and why it was being conducted.

**C. CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

**D. ADJOURNMENT** – The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 a.m.

**APPEARANCE COMMISSION**

\_\_\_\_\_
Date

\_\_\_\_\_
Chairman

Sophie Tidd
Recording Secretary

These minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting but a summary of the proceedings.