

EAST AURORA PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING

October 16, 2012

6:30 PM

PRESENT:

Anne Redmond  
Lowell Dewey, Vice Chairman  
Allen Ott Jr.  
Alternate Bud Babcock

ABSENT:

Dan Castle, Chairman  
Frank Mesi  
Kristin Cameron  
Stacy Oar

Also Present:

Catherine Wood, Deputy Village Clerk & Secretary for the Planning Commission

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**Review of Design Guidelines Progress**

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Lowell Dewey, Vice Chairman opened the meeting at 6:36 PM and noted that a quorum was present.

Allen Ott made a motion to accept the minutes from September 4, 2012 as written, seconded by Bud Babcock with a unanimous vote to follow.

Anne Redmond presented an update to the Planning Commission of her continued work on the Village's compilation of Design Guidelines. It was noted that the Planning Commission's role in the Design Guidelines is to focus only on commercial structures, while the Historic Preservation Committee is currently drafting Design Guidelines that are more relevant to residential structures. Annie explained that there are four basic areas to be covered: the historic context, the regulatory process, an overview of historic preservation, and basic building design principles.

- Historic Context:
  - "meaty" section
  - what historic preservation is and how it applies to commercial structures
  - relevant to East Aurora because many structures here are 50 years or older even in the commercial districts; relevant to preservation issues
  - applies to rehabilitations and renovations to existing structures
  - a focus especially on the West End
  - includes information on the Secretary of Interior standards
  - Question: Does the Planning Commission want this much detail in this section, or to keep it simpler and place some of the background information in an appendix?
- Regulatory Process:
  - the Village Board has relayed a need for a more simplified application process
  - Annie plans to create a process flow chart which provides a visual understanding of the regulatory process for applicants

- Overview of Historic Preservation
- Basic Building Design Principles:
  - overarching set of guidelines
  - applicable to new builds
  - applicable to most districts
  - exceptions are flushed out when looking at specific district guidelines

Annie asked for the Planning Commission to please help with the graphics inventory for the Design Guidelines, as images of what we would like to encourage and what we would like to discourage are needed from comparable communities. She asked for the Planning Commission to please jot down addresses of encouraging and discouraging properties so that we can get some graphic examples to include:

- Façade
- Form, massing and orientation
- Storefronts
- Entrances
- Roof styles and treatments
- Fenestration
- Signs
- Site lighting

Bud Babcock noted that there were some good examples in the Rochester area, including Fairport and Pittsford. Annie indicated it would be a worth a drive there in order to get some images from those communities.

It was noted that any negative or discouraging images or examples should be from outside of the Village of East Aurora.

She also asked the Planning Commission to think of any examples of complimentary renovations or alterations, such as the dry cleaners on Main Street in which the façade was nicely restored to its original character. Images of before and after the alteration are needed for Design Guideline examples. Other mentioned examples that fit well into the neighborhood were Aurora Optical's addition to the back of their building, the audiologist building on Hamburg Street, Citizen's bank when renovated from McNeil's, and Reed's Liquor Store. In regard to negative examples of alterations or renovations, Vice Chairman Lowell Dewey added that the magazine "Old House Journal", which is in the library, has a section at the end called "Remuddling". The last page contains before and after photographs of a building which has been "remuddled", which by the magazine's definition is when remodeling changed the building in a very negative fashion rather than a positive one. Annie noted that she could possibly look into this and scan in some of those images.

In addition to images, Annie asked the Planning Commission to discuss at the November meeting issues and opportunities within the following three areas, and come to consensus:

1. How would you like the East End to look in 20 years?
2. How would you like the Mid-Main District to appear in 20 years?
3. What would you change about the West End? What would you like to see remain the same?

General guidelines of discussion on three topics to include:

- what types of businesses?
- think big picture: can be physical, social, economic etc
- guidelines should adhere to the feel and function of each of these individual commercial districts
- determining if three separate “looks” are desired from the mid, east and west end sections or if one look is appropriate for all three districts?

Design Guidelines should correlate to the Zoning Code regulations. In preparation of the Design Guidelines, the zoning ordinances need to be examined for any gaps or overregulation, and possibly updated to fit the new Design Guidelines if necessary.

Bud Babcock noted that there was a great deal of inconsistency amongst the Planning Commission members when discussing question three about a year ago, in regard to the West End. There were difficult issues such as traffic, pedestrian capabilities, and commercial visibility that hindered the implementation of a broad picture. Annie explained that for this purpose, we only are looking to identify the tone for the West End through a visionary process, and to understand *why* certain things would want to be changed, not just what.

Vice Chairman Lowell Dewey offered the perspective of what a developer would be looking for from the document. He explained that the developer’s focus is to determine what is required and what the developer needs to do. The first thing he would do as developer would be to skim the document and then go directly to the flow chart. From there he would review the site plan checklist and the Zoning Code to make sure setbacks and the footprint was properly in place. Finally he would then want to know the submittal requirements and where he needs to go so that he is sure he can get the project done in three months for example. It was agreed that having this information in an appendix that a developer would flip to could be helpful.

Annie Redmond requested two volunteers from the Planning Commission for review of the draft circulation.

Allen Ott made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 PM, seconded by Bud Babcock and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Wood  
Deputy Village Clerk  
Secretary, Planning Commission