



2020 CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT ANNUAL REPORT
TO THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD AND ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION



SPRINGFIELD HISTORIC SITES COMISSION

Office of Planning and Economic Development

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The Springfield Historic Sites Commission (HSC) reports annually to the City of Springfield and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Historic Preservation Division. The annual report describes commission accomplishments and other activities related to preservation issues, recognition programs, public awareness campaigns and collaborative efforts with other conservation and redevelopment groups.

Protecting historic assets, the foundation of the city's cultural and historical past, ensures a continued understanding of community life and how it has evolved over time. Springfield has a rich and reaching history with local, regional and national importance. Promoting the care and revitalization of historic assets, such as neighborhoods, buildings and sites, is a priority for the City of Springfield and the Springfield Historic Sites Commission.

Fulfilling the mission of the Commission during 2020 was challenged by the worldwide COVID pandemic. The commission made a number of administrative and operational adjustments in order to comply with national, state and local mandates implemented to slow the spread of the virus. The most prominent change was the move from in-person meeting to meeting on-line. On-line or Zoom meetings effectively allowed the Commission to continue meeting its responsibilities. As we transition from the COVID restrictions it is a pleasure for this Commission to report its activities during 2020.

Early in 2020 the commission began exploring ways to better utilize the talents and resources it had available. With a focus on increasing utilization of technology, enhancing public participation and keeping the commission informed a review of the commission's committee structure was undertaken. The Education and Web committee was eliminated and restructuring of remaining committees is ongoing. The Historic Sites Commission ended year 2020 with three standing committees making recommendations to the full commission. Those committees are:

Committee Name & Functions

Design Review Committee

Where property is landmarked by the City or is a historic district designated by the City, any plans for external alteration, construction or demolition shall be reviewed and approved by the Design Review Committee's Springfield Historic Sites Commission before the City may issue any permit or other license.

Registry, Landmarking & Zoning Committee

The committee evaluates and assist with land-marking applications and paperwork to the IL DNR Historic Preservation Division. In addition, it collaborates with the City of Springfield Building and Zoning Department to evaluate zoning petitions and related issues to bring relevant information forward to the Historic Sites Commission. The committee also explores historic preservation funding opportunities and works with DNR as the Certified Local Government representatives.



Community Relations & Education Committee

The committee manages preservation workshops and is responsible for the activities, nominations and presentations of Historic Preservation Awards from historical stakeholders. The Committee also encourages community events to have a presence, particularly those related to historical sites.

Resources

Springfield has a great wealth of history, not just in its people and events but in its structures as well. A total of 75 local landmark applications have been approved by the Historic Sites Commission to date, including private residences, apartment buildings, commercial structures, tourism sites and a theatrical marquee. 43 of these and 29 other structures are also listed in the National Register.

There are three Springfield Historic Zoning Districts (H-1, H-2 & H-3), one Springfield National Register Historic District (Downtown) and one Federal Historic District (Lincoln Home National Historic Site) all of which are located within blocks of downtown Springfield; click [here](#) for Historic Zoning Districts Map.

Architectural Surveys

The Historic Sites Commission performed several surveys to properly catalog the historic buildings surrounding Springfield. These surveys identified key historical structures that possess potential landmark status within the city. To date, the following surveys were completed:

- Architectural Survey of Springfield's Central Business District. (June 1991 by Fever River Research)
- Architectural Resources of the Enos Park Neighborhood. (June-1997 by Fever River Research)
- Architectural Resources of the West Side of Capitol Neighborhood. (March-1998 by Fever River Research)
- Architectural/Historical Survey of the East Part of the Central Business District. (January-1995 by C. Kirchner & Assoc.)
- Catalogue of Marked & Unmarked Historical and Architecturally Significant Buildings in Springfield. (1998 by Leadership Springfield Team)
- Architectural Resources Survey of Aristocracy Hill and Neighboring Area. (September 2003 by Fever River Research)
- Central Springfield National Register Historic District Boundary Expansion. (February 2015 by The Lakota Group)
- National Register of Historic Places Thematic Survey of Springfield's African-American Community, and The Central East Neighborhood, Springfield, Illinois. (October, 2018 by Fever River Research).



Copies of all surveys are located at the Sangamon Valley Collection at the Lincoln Library. It is the intent of the Historic Sites Commission to continue to apply for grants to conduct surveys as appropriate within the city.

The most recent architectural survey was undertaken by Fever River Research. The study entitled "National Register of Historic Places Thematic Survey of the African-American Community of Springfield, and Central East Neighborhood, Springfield, Illinois," found 37 architecturally significant properties within City Limits. The Historic Sites Commission Unanimously voted in September 2020 to list 26 African American Heritage properties that were surveyed by Fever River Research to the Demolition Delay list. Now, all 37 architecturally significant properties identified in the study have additional protection.

Landmarking

The Springfield Historic Sites Commission continues to promote participation, interest and public awareness, as well as the benefits of landmarking properties. The Commission continually seeks ways to increase the number of properties on the local register.

One Landmarking petition was presented to the Commission in 2020 from Capital Ready-Mix Inc., but consent from the property owner was denied to proceed with Landmarking due to oversight of exterior rehab limitation.

Design Review

As required by City Ordinance, the Design Review Committee approved one change to the exterior design of properties that was located within Historic Zoning District 2 or H-2. The associated property with the permit review was located at 517 South 4th Street (Loukinen's on 4th, a restaurant) which was approved for installation of an exterior sign.

Zoning

The Commission also works with the City's Building & Zoning Department to review petitions for rezoning or conditional permitted uses for properties in the City's three Historic Zoning Districts.

The commission acted on one zoning petition in 2020 for a property in the H-3 Historic Zoning District. The request was for property located at 724 E. Edwards which sought a Conditional Permitted Use pursuant to Section 155.273 of the City's zoning ordinance to allow operation of (a) restaurant with the service of alcoholic beverages. The commission approved the request.

Community Involvement

It is one of the Commission's primary goals to get more involved with Springfield communities to learn, educate and preserve the history of Springfield, IL. A survey was distributed to assess community



involvement in 2020. Despite the limitation of COVID-19, at least 22% of the commissioners were involved in either online seminar or in-person event related to history and/or historic preservation workshops. Examples of the events include Illinois Historic Preservation Tax Credit workshop and a Zoom meeting regarding the Springfield Project and Lindsey Memorial Bridge – a discussion of the creation of Lake Springfield which provided a detailed history of the building of Spaulding Dam which held the lake waters once completed.

Summary of Commission Activities/Accomplishments:

- Provided design review for structures that are locally landmarked or located in one of the City's three historic zoning districts
- Maintained the SHSC website to include image and narrative of every landmarked property in the community
- An additional 26 structures with potential architectural significance from Springfield's African American Community, have been added to Demolition Delay List
- Collaborated with Springfield's Department of Building & Zoning to protect historic and potentially eligible historic structures
- Coordinated with the Sangamon County Historic Preservation Commission on potential impact to historic properties that are NOT within City Corporate Limits

Website

The Springfield Historic Sites Commission's website is maintained through the City's Office of Planning & Economic Development. The website currently offers Landmarking application, Map of Springfield Historic Districts, Historic Sites Gallery, as well as financial assistance and incentives for rehabilitating and restoring Springfield's architectural treasures. The Commission is in the process of creating an interactive historic sites map for all properties that have historic significance.

Community Relations

Public Input. The Commission values input by groups with common interests and has welcomed volunteers to assist in our projects. The Mayor and the Aldermen are always welcome to participate as guests of the Commission to help further the message of historic preservation.

The demolition delay list is updated annually by the Office of Planning & Economic Development. The eligibility requirements for the properties on this list include:

- City of Springfield designated landmark;
- Properties within the City of Springfield on the Illinois Historic Landmark Survey list;
- Properties within the City of Springfield on the National Register;
- Historically significant buildings or structure identified by other lists and inventories that are conducted under the auspices of the federal, state or City of Springfield governments.



- Historically significant buildings or structure identified by other lists and inventories that use a methodology approved and certified by the Historic Sites Commission and/or the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency; and
- Historically significant buildings or structure identified by other lists and inventories that specifically identifies buildings and structures eligible for landmarking under local, state and federal law.

Current Historic Sites Commission Members and Staff

The Commission consists of eleven voting members appointed by the Executive Assistant to the Mayor, subject to City Council approval.

David Steckel, Chairman (*IL Registered Architect*)
Myrel Simmons, Vice Chairman (*General Public*)
Aaron Schroeder (*General Public*)
Molly Berns (*Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission*)
Craig Colbrook, J.D. (*General Public*)
Stephanie Do (*Realtor/Broker*)
Lindsay Evans (*Attorney*)
Peggi Gant (*General Public*)
Robert Immel (*General Public*)
Ernie Slottag (*Historical Society Member*)
Don Walton (*IL Registered Architect*)

Staff

Mesfin Lenth, City of Springfield Liaison to the Historic Sites Commission

Commission members have had the privilege of representing the City of Springfield in 2020. We appreciate the Mayor and the City Council for their support and interest in the Historic Sites Commission activities.

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