

October 12, 2020

To the honorable chair and commissioners:

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While the Milwaukee Preservation Alliance does not take a position related to the specific COA in question, we do believe it speaks to a continued need for outreach to homeowners within local historic districts to raise awareness of their properties' inclusion within a district and the benefits and responsibilities that go along with it. The need is one we hear often in our interactions with homeowners and neighborhood associations.

Our organization has been working toward this end – including a webinar from this summer that is still available on our website explaining the state residential historic tax credit program – but the need is greater than our capacity. We are aware of and applaud the City's efforts to develop such outreach tools that reduce opportunities for miscommunication.

One recommendation that has been suggested to us by homeowners as a helpful means of communicating is a notation on annual tax assessments alerting and reminding homeowners that they live in a historic district and providing more information about what that designation means, or simply a link to the HPC website where more information could be found. This simple act would ensure a regular annual notice for homeowners of the requirement to obtain COAs for exterior alterations.

Related to the specific COA in question, we would recommend that the homeowner investigate the use of historic tax credits for any required work and would be happy to connect with them to provide resources.

Thank you as always for your hard work on behalf of the people and places of Milwaukee.

Respectfully,

Jeremy Ebersole  
Executive Director  
Milwaukee Preservation Alliance