

### **Objective of Discussion**

- Commission to review and comment on the by-law draft regarding a plaquing program.

### **Summary of By-Law Draft**

- Details of this draft can be found within the file, CCFN 130422, under “HPC Bylaws Basic (Discussion Draft) 12-30-13”.
- Eligibility
  - One criteria presently listed in the City’s historic preservation ordinance would have to be met.
  - There should be no negative connotations associated with the buildings, structures, or sites being considered.
- Administration
  - Designees & non-designees may apply for plaques followed by staff review and recommendation before being forwarded for determination by the Commission.
  - There would be no cost to the City as requesters and applicants would be responsible for payment of all charges for landmark plaques.
- Contains input from Ald. Terry Witkowski
  - Non-designees to be eligible
  - No mention of limiting the number of plaques given

### **Supplemental Information Discussed**

Comparison table of plaquing programs among cities, states, and counties

- Not finalized
- Can be provided by LRB

County programs

- Societies to administer, place, and maintain plaques (for the most part)

Covington, Kentucky

- Most similar to Milwaukee
- Has a municipal program
- Has no outside historic society to administer the program.
- Application process is a two part process - a fairly detailed process.
- First part - determining whether or not undesignated structures would meet the required criteria
- Second part - determining the technical aspects of a plaque such as wording, design, and placement.
- Applicants could write down what they wanted on a plaque.
- Visuals of plaques were looked at.

District Naming

- District names on street signs above existing street signs.
  - Has passed through Common Council
  - Idea came out of the plaquing program discussion
  - Neighborhoods would have to pay for the signs.

Number of applications received by other cities w/ plaquing programs

- Info not available
- Mostly applicant driven, especially ones promoted by historic societies.

### **Concerns of Commissioners**

- Research responsibility is not clear
- Increased workload for staff
- Dilution or damage to historic designation or historic buildings, properties, and sites
  - Owners or applicants may seek plaques instead of historic designation for recognition
  - Historic designation = destination for getting tax credit only and not recognition
  - May result from a program w/:
  - Plaques given at any time with no limits
  - Lighter requirements and restrictions as opposed to the criteria and restrictions for historic designation
- Plaquing program may be unnecessary -anyone can put up their own plaques
- Too many applications to review – a possibility
- City plaques vs. private plaques – what would distinguish the plaques?

### **Concerns from Milwaukee Preservation Alliance**

- Allowing eligibility for non-designees would cause unnecessary problems
  - Costs to the City
  - Not support the role of the Commission
  - Not protect historic properties
  - Increase staff and commission responsibilities
  - Not prevent anyone from putting up their own plaques
  - A disservice for those willing to have the restrictions under designation.
- No appeal process addressed
- Owners or applicants may seek plaques instead of historic designation for recognition

### **Suggestions, Opinions, and Comments of Commissioners and Staff**

Aesthetics of plaques

- A trademark or specific approval language on the plaques (distinguish from others)

Application

- Staff to create electronic and physical application to request for required info.

Application Process

- Commission do decide
- Two step process:
  - Determining the criteria
  - Commission review and determination.
- Perhaps applications accepted on first come first served basis
- Have a submittal deadline
- Perhaps a staggered roll-out of the program w/ limited time period for submittals; period may be expanded gradually in subsequent years
  - i.e. 90 days first year, 6 months the second year, etc.
- Perhaps limit the number of submittals accepted

- i.e. 100 applications

#### Costs (Administrative)

- To be determined by the City or the Commission.
- All applicants to pay
- Not the City
- Perhaps waive cost to applicants already designated

#### Costs (Plaques)

- Available under page 18 and 19 of the “LRB Report - Oct. 2013,” in CCFN 130422
- All applicants to pay
- Not the City

#### Eligibility

- Designated structures automatically eligible
- Wide open - Both designated and non-designated structures

#### Interest in Plaques

- Uncertainty by staff and commissioners
- Perhaps a low number or not many
- Only those who want official recognition will apply (may be low)
- Less/limited interest from people if costs were the responsibility of the applicant

#### Issuance of plaques

- May perhaps be a fairly low number
  - Majority of other cities have 20 or fewer plaques issued per year
- Throughout the year as applications come in
- Only during a certain time period, such as the preservation awards, alternatively
- Limit the amount issued
  - i.e. 25

#### Marketing of the program

- Simply by public announcement or through press release.
- Mass mailing to current designees not recommended; not effective
- Electronically to designees

#### Material of plaques

- May be of wood, metal, steel, etc.

#### Placement of plaques

- Plaques mainly on buildings, some way on a post, wall, or structure
- Should not be on a street sign
- Commission to determine

#### Recognition

- Formally recognize awardees in mass at the preservation awards

#### Research

- Responsibility lies with the applicant, not staff

- Staff to direct applicants to do their own research
- Amend by-law draft to make it clear that applicant bears the responsibility

#### Review

- By both staff and the Commission
- Both designees and non-designees would come before the commission

#### **Concluding Opinions, Suggestions, or Requests**

- Commission to find a balance without damaging or diluting historic designation and historic properties.
- Commission to further consider program and revisit intent.
- Perhaps alternatively consider a narrowly tailored and prestigious program approach, similar to the Cream of the Cream City Awards, that caps the amount of plaques given and period when plaques are given.
- Gain input from fellow commissioner, Ald. Robert Bauman.
- Revisit basic intent and discuss concerns with Ald. Witkowski, Bauman, and Kovac.
- LRB to provide info on:
  - the plaquing program application process and visuals of plaques of Covington, Kentucky
  - amount of applications received by other cities with plaquing programs
  - amend by-law draft to add language requiring that the applicant be responsible for research
  - amend by-law draft to add language stating that the number of applications accepted and plaques issued each year be limited to a certain number
- Clerk staff to provide bullet points of the discussions made at the meeting.
- Reschedule matter