

Discussion

Mr. Taylor: Currently the city owns the building/property?

Ms. Funk: Yes.

Mr. Chaplin: It is vacant as far as you know?

Mrs. Funk: Yes, Correct.

Mr. Taylor: Any plan for what the city will do with the land after it is demolished?

Mrs. Raber: City owns multiple parcels in that area for possible economic development purposes. If demolished it would be green spaced for now.

Mr. Taylor: Ok.

Mr. Chaplin: In the report, in 2008, an audit recognized that it was a historically recognized structure. Only mentions a Greek revival style architecture. What took place in 2008 that it was recognized and what changed now?

Mrs. Hussing: In 2008 there was a large audit done on historic structures. That is when they were all identified in our RHS book. They had multiple criteria at that time. The condition is marked as a three. The only thing recognized is the Greek revival architecture. There was no historic story behind it. No historic person attached to the build. Just due to the architecture.

Mr. Chaplin: What is the three?

Mrs. Hussing: It is a 3/5. It was on the cusp of not being included.

Mr. Taylor: That is the physical condition?

Mrs. Hussing: Yes

Mr. Chaplin: Not a rate system based on its importance?

Mrs. Hussing: It was also importance.

Mr. Chaplin: The three only takes into account the physical condition, or does that encompass whatever?

Mrs. Hussing: Everything. Multiple criteria.

Mr. Chaplin: Ok.

Mrs. Hussing: That includes if it has some history to it, architectural features, or an event took place there. Multiple criteria. Three is the cut off. It was close to not being.

Mr. Taylor: Are there economic incentives or avenues that owners of buildings like this can access to help maintain or not fall into that type of condition?

Mrs. Hussing: Regrettably currently we do not have that. We are in process right now. We started a new audit of all the structures and are planning on creating a committee. Talking about it, seeing if we can find a resource. But the city does not have anything. Maybe

working with the historic society, state, or federal group. It will take a little time and we maybe be asking for volunteers for this committee.

Mr. Donovan: Did the previous owner try to have this removed?

Mrs. Hussing: I believe so. Yes.

Mr. Donovan: At that time what was the reasoning it could not be removed but now its ok to tear it down?

Mrs. Funk: I read through the minutes, they also had 16 South removed. At that time, they were requesting both. It appears, in the very long meeting, that they were giving them a compromise to remove one and not the other. They felt this building was more historic looking than 16. They stated it was a beautiful building at that point.

Mr. Donovan: I have been in there multiple times through the years and have had the same structural problems 10-20 years ago.

Mrs. Hussing: I would interject there. That was a long time ago and was before this board and council.

Mr. Donovan: I am asking why it was savable then? The City owns it and now its lets get rid of it.

Mrs. Knapp: Is it fair to say that the mold is now the big impetus for it being recommended again to be removed the heritage list?

Mrs. Raber: I think the mold precipitated the immediate need to vacate the property. Then that precipitated a further review of the property. When we had the engineering review it also came back with all the structural issues. While it may have been in bad shape 10 or 20 years ago, it has been 10 or 20 years more deterioration of the structure. To be clear, it was not the city owned it and immediately applied for this. The city owned it, maintained it, and took care of it for a period.

Mr. Taylor: How long has it been vacant?

Mrs. Raber: About 1 year. Summer of last year.

Mr. Chaplin: A lot of this predates then someone moving out. This is not a year worth of deterioration.

Mr. Donovan: I do not want the appearance of hassling people about taking their property off and giving them reasons and turn around and the city owns it, and it is a different situation. Suddenly, we are judging differently because it is in a different interest. Even at that while it has been under the City's care it was up to the City to maintain it. If it has not been maintained there is a flaw. Granted 20 years ago was different. I do not want to give the appearance of its different for you as an individual then if we own it.

Mrs. Hussing: At the time they were before the Heritage Commission and council they also did not have the reports as we do now. They did not do any engineer structure reports. Maybe if they had presented those at the time then there may have been a better argument to remove both buildings. We did not see any previous reports in our records.

Mr. Chaplin: There is no report done on the neighbor structure that was removed?

Mrs. Hussing: I did not see that in the file.

Mrs. Knapp: It is a shame. As an architectural historian I can see the historic nature, the form of the Greek revival that happened in this area. At the same time, we know you cannot save them all and when it gets to the point of structural issues and is not safe. The mold... water is the absolute worst enemy of a historic structure, 100%. At this point I am not seeing any other option.

The following motion was made by Mrs. Knapp and seconded by Mr. Chaplin:

I move recommend to council to approve the application for exclusion for recognized heritage structures for case ARB 25-2 applicant/owner City of Tallmadge for 12 Southwest Avenue based on the application and reports submitted and dated March 10, 2025 to the Planning and Zoning Department and a determination that the structure no longer satisfies the criteria for designation under Tallmadge zoning code section 1109.04.

Mr. Donovan: I hope the Committee and City will look at this the same way when an individual brings a structure to you. That things change over the years or should be carefully reviewed or explained what someone may need to bring to get a property removed. I am not in favor of saving every old building by any means, but you need to stick with guideline of yes we will save it or no we will not and not flip flop on properties.

Mr. Chaplin: How often do we get a request that a property be removed? In general, does that happen a lot?

Mrs. Hussing: No. We had the one that imploded and one before covid that came before you. In the next year you will be getting a whole list.

Mr. Chaplin: Because they are hitting the threshold?

Mrs. Hussing: Because we are doing this audit. Reviewing the criteria and regulations. Keeping what Mr. Donovan has mentioned in mind as well as what Mrs. Knapp mentioned.

Mrs. Knapp: To build on what Mr. Donovan mentioned and revisiting the comment of having some resource for owners of structures needing help. I think that would be an excellent initiative. I think a lot of maintenance is deferred because there is no choice. Its cost prohibitive. Water is the number one enemy of historic structures. If it is not addressed immediately that is when we get structural issues, mold issues. I think it would be helpful and important to delve further into that initiative.

Mr. Chaplin: Might go so far as to say may be there is a letter or small packet put together that you can send to the folks. Especially the ones that are coming up. Information or lists of what they need to do over and above a normal house.

Mrs. Knapp: An excellent time to do that, to provide that information would be when this new audit is completed. Especially since new houses are going to be included. Sending something out to all the people who are still on that list. Saying here are resources for you to help maintain this building and help it stay on the list.

Mrs. Hussing: All great feedback. We will be contacting you (Mrs. Knapp) for that committee.

Mrs. Knapp: Please do.

Mrs. Hussing: Let us know if you are interested.

Mrs. Knapp: I am letting you know.

All members present voted in favor. (4-0)

ADJOURNMENT


A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Chaplin and seconded by Mrs. Knapp.

All members present voted in favor. (4-0)

Meeting adjourned at 1:14 pm

Respectfully submitted,


Heather Badgley, Secretary


Greg Chaplin, Chair

Full audio recording of meeting is hereby incorporated as part of meeting record.