

Notes of the January 8, 2011
Neighborhood Information Meeting
Of the Hill Farms Architectural Review Committee
and Planning Committee

This was a joint meeting of advisory committees to the Hill Farms Neighborhood Association's Board. The Hill Farms Architectural Review Committee and Hill Farms Planning Committee each had a majority of their members present at the Westside Senior Center on January 8 from 9 - 11 AM. A total of 28 persons were present.

The Hill Farms Neighborhood Association is considering pursuing two major projects over the next couple of years. This meeting is to introduce each project. Additional meetings are anticipated on each project.

A. Announcements.

Joe Keyes announced there will be a County Executive Forum on January 27 at the Covenant Presbyterian Church at 7 PM sponsored in part by the Hill Farms Neighborhood Association. In addition, he noted there is a group concerned about traffic issues for Hamilton School students. It is anticipated there will be a Neighborhood meeting on these issues in the next few weeks to discuss potential solutions.

B. National Register of Historic Places.

The first project is to undertake the detailed steps for the possibility of seeking designation of our neighborhood on the National Register of Historic Places to permit tax credits for home rehabilitation work. If so designated, it would be optional for property owners to request tax credits or not.

Daina Penkiunas, a neighborhood resident and National Register Coordinator with the state Historical Society, presented a power point presentation on the program. She noted the Hill Farms neighborhood is a unique area as a planned neighborhood developed in the mid-1950's with a preponderance of ranch houses popular at that time. It was subject of Parade of Homes for four years from 1957 to 1960. Several older neighborhoods in the Madison area have been designated as "historic districts" which allows individual properties to be eligible for tax credits for improvements. Examples are Nakoma neighborhood, University Heights, and Shorewood Hills. Since 2005, \$9 million dollars of credits have been applied for. Projects need to spend a minimum of \$10,000 and are able to be phased over a few years and are able to bundle several improvement projects together. Tax credits of 25% of cost up to \$2500/year can be realized, but eligible projects must be approved in advance.

Daina distributed a fact sheet of "Frequently Asked Questions" on the program. There are detailed, extensive procedures that must be followed to get an historic district designated to be eligible for tax credits. This includes a detailed survey of each property including a photo, and changes that have occurred over the years on the house. A formal nomination process must be followed to assure all state and federal standards are being met. Private consultants are usually employed to prepare the detailed information required in the formal Nomination Process.

Requests to nominate an area as an historic district would be by the City of Madison request to the state Historical Society to request funding to prepare the detailed information on each property to be included. Federal grant funds from oil lease monies are available to fund the detailed property and

nomination process. If approved, the City would hire an appropriate consultant to prepare the nomination details. This would be bid; but would be expected to be less than \$20,000, with 100% reimbursement of federal funds to the City.

Process to Historic District. Neighborhood meetings to assess if there is interest to pursue an application for a grant. Neighborhood applies to City for a grant. (by June so City can include in 2012 City budget). City request grant from the state Historical Society to fund preparation of nomination details (by September for State consideration).

Boundaries of any proposed district. State will determine district boundaries after more research is done. An informal preliminary review indicated: Segoe Road (both sides) to Whitney Way (both sides); Mineral Point Road to Regent Street; plus Buffalo and Door Creek area. Unclear whether to include: Karen Arms and apartments along Sheboygan Ave; and commercial areas and State Office Building. Hilldale does not have anything historic left, but may be able to include some commercial along Vernon Blvd.

Daina noted that if historic district is approved it does not mean that people have access to private property. And then, property owners can then choose if they want to apply for tax credits for improvements to their house. It must be approved in advance and the owner must pay reimbursement of tax credits if they sell the property before five years following the improvement. If the property owner does not seek tax credits, there is no change from property rights that now exist with the property. Further questions and answers can be found on the Frequently Asked Questions page on the Hill Farms web site www.hillframs.org.

It was announced that we will schedule a follow-up Neighborhood Information Meeting on Saturday April 2 at a site to be announced which will include information on this project.

C. Neighborhood Plan preparation.

Joe Keyes noted that other neighborhoods have already completed the process of preparing a neighborhood plan. Hill Farms neighborhood should seek to prepare a plan in 2012 – 2013. He noted we should get funding in the 2012 City Budget to hire consulting assistance to prepare a plan.

Joe introduced Gary Peterson, a neighborhood resident and a planning consultant who has agreed to help on preparing a Plan. He noted it would provide a process to highlight alternatives for development in the area, and to solicit neighborhood comments and concerns. He noted a completed Neighborhood Plan can help avoid major issues and strife, when controversial development proposals are proposed. It can provide policies that can help guide growth and development for various areas of the neighborhood. He noted the Neighborhood Plan needs to be developed to be consistent with the overall City Comprehensive Plan, but it can provide more specific detailing of some areas. He noted some issues to be addressed as: Karen Arms going to condo development; redevelopment of the State Office Building site; Rennebohm Park issues; and commercial developments in the area.

Discussion included note of who should be included in the neighborhood planning process. Generally agreed to include representatives of other adjoining neighborhood associations, business representatives and residents of the area. Maybe form a Steering Committee, and plan on some neighborhood public meetings during the plan process.

Alderman Chris Schmidt noted the Westmorland/Midvale Heights Plan has been completed now. It would have been helpful when reviewing the Sequoia Commons development. He noted the City now budgets funds to hire consultants to help in the preparation of Neighborhood Plans. It is good for the neighborhood to get organized for preparation of the Plan, and to request consultant assistance from the City as part of next years 2012 budget. He noted, for example, that the new City Zoning Ordinance might include an Overlay Zone on the Hill Farms area requiring that property covenants must be followed with projects being reviewed by the HFARC.

It was noted we will discuss the Neighborhood Plan steps further at our follow-up Neighborhood Information Meeting on April 2.

Notes edited by Tom Favour