

RESOLUTION 15-15

URGING THE BLOOMINGTON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION TO INITIATE THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING THE COURTHOUSE SQUARE AS A HISTORIC DISTRICT

WHEREAS, Bloomington's Courthouse Square is an iconic representation of our community, the heart of our city, and an anchor of our shared sense of place:

- It is a place of governance and law – the place where we collectively define how we wish to constitute ourselves as a community;
- It is place of celebration and a place of protest open to all residents in our community;
- It is a centralized space for economic and social activity;
- It is a space of deep and rich cultural history marked by a cohesive group of architecturally-diverse, predominantly civic and commercial structures – many from the turn of the last century – that represent our community's roots in the limestone industry;

WHEREAS, roughly bounded by 7th Street, Walnut Street, 4th Street and College Avenue, the distinctive historic nature of the Courthouse Square has long been recognized:

- In 1990, the U.S. Department of Interior recommended the Courthouse Square for listing on the *National Register of Historic Places*;
- In 1998, the *1998 Preservation Plan for Downtown Bloomington and the Courthouse Square* ("1998 Plan") advised that historic preservation "protects the sense of place associated with the city" and that historic context "offers a sense of identity and cultural continuity to visitors and, most importantly, to the citizens of Bloomington." The *Plan* encouraged local historic designation of the Courthouse Square;
- In 2005, the City further committed to the protection of our Downtown by commissioning the *Downtown Vision and Infill Strategy Plan* – a document that outlined strategies to foster a compact, walkable and architecturally-distinctive area. In speaking to the character of the Courthouse Square, the *Plan* pointed out that many structures in this area are of historic significance and that "preservation of historic properties within this area is a high priority," further highlighting that "[m]uch of the area is eligible for local historic district designation;"
- Also in 2005, an independent team assembled by the Center for Historic Preservation College of Architecture and Planning at Ball State developed a set of context-sensitive, advisory design guidelines for the Downtown, entitled, *Common Issues and Options for Treating Older Buildings in Downtown Bloomington*. The guidelines were exclusively devoted to strengthening the historic character of the Downtown;
- In 2012, the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission Updated the *1998 Plan* by way of the *Preservation Plan for Historic Bloomington*. Once again, this plan echoed and strengthened the call for local designation of the Courthouse Square finding that:

The most significant part of Bloomington's historic building inventory – the Courthouse Square – is unprotected by local designation. We must work with downtown businesses, building owners, and civic leaders to preserve this historic commercial and governmental core for future generations. (p. 2)

WHEREAS, the Bloomington Common Council adopted Ordinance 95-20 which created a Historic Preservation Commission and established procedures for designating historic districts in the City of Bloomington; and

WHEREAS, Bloomington Municipal Code Section §8.02.020 defines a historic district as a “single building, structure, object, or site or a concentration of buildings, structures, objects, spaces, or sites designed by ordinance adopted under this title” and

WHEREAS, the historic nature of the Courthouse Square represents our community’s past, informs our shared community life in the present, and promises to continue to shape economic vibrancy and community character in years to come. Twenty-five years after nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, local historic designation and protection of this community resource is long overdue.

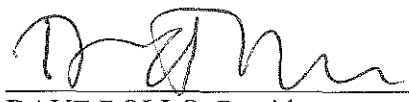
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON, MONROE COUNTY, INDIANA, THAT:

SECTION 1. The Common Council urges the City of Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission to initiate the process of historic designation of the Courthouse Square.


SECTION 2. The Council encourages the Commission to hold more than one public information session on local designation of the Courthouse Square in the interest of fully engaging all stakeholders and community members.

SECTION 3. This resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage by the Common Council and approval by the Mayor.

PASSED by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this 6TH day of MAY, 2015.

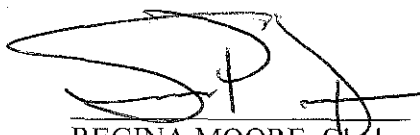


DAVE ROLLO, President
Bloomington Common Council

ATTEST:


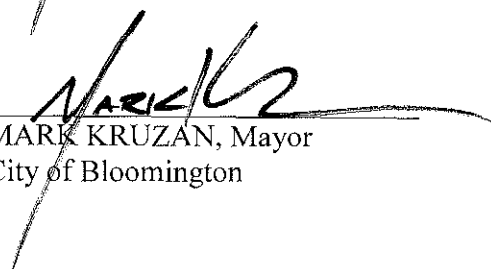
~~REGINA MOORE, Clerk~~ SUSAN P. WANZER
City of Bloomington

PRESENTED by me to the Mayor of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this 7TH day of MAY, 2015.



~~REGINA MOORE, Clerk~~ SUSAN P. WANZER
City of Bloomington DEPUTY CLERK

SIGNED and APPROVED by me upon this 10th day of MAY, 2015.


MARK KRUZAN, Mayor
City of Bloomington

SYNOPSIS

This resolution is sponsored by Councilmembers Sturbaum and Rollo and documents twenty-five years of work to recognize and protect the historic and architecturally-worthy nature of the Courthouse Square. The resolution points out, in light of this steady recognition of the value of the Square, it's designation as a Historic District is long overdue. The resolution encourages the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission to take steps toward designating the Downtown Square as a local Historic District and requests that the Commission hold more than one public information session to solicit stakeholder feedback on the matter.