

TO: Historic Preservation Committee Members

FROM: Lyn Myers, HPC President

DATE: July 23, 2025

SUBJECT: PROPOSED PROJECT TO TRANSFER HPC RECORDS TO DIGITAL STORAGE

As you may be aware, in 2014, the Village of Lombard completed the first official historic survey of 106 significant buildings. The Lombard Board of Trustees voted at its Nov. 6 regular board meeting to recognize the survey of sites as the official survey of sites for the Village of Lombard. A previous survey was conducted in 1991 and updated in 2006, but without the assistance of an architect. The Commission received bids and hired Architect Douglas Gilbert. This was the first official historic survey for the Village of Lombard.

Properties were surveyed on the historic aspects of structures, how much original material is still used and intact, and how multiple structures on one property (if applicable) fit together. For example, a property with a new garage may contain a garage in excellent condition but the integrity would be considered poor since the garage is new, therefore not historic.

Additional surveys were completed by Douglas Gilbert in 2015 and 2016 and formally accepted by the Village Board. For reference purposes, you can access the formal survey by clicking on this link:

<https://www.villageoflombard.org/DocumentCenter/View/843/2016-Complete-Survey-PDF?bidId=>

A copies of two of the property survey records are attached for reference purposes.

At present, the formal survey found on-line at the Village's website provides a two page summary of each property. In addition to the property survey information, there is also a large amount of files related to the Main Street Cemetery which is being held by the Village which should be considered in this discussion as well.

While this form of record keeping may suffice for now, "best practices" in the historic preservation field recommend consideration of digitized storage of information for many reasons, including but not limited to the following:

- Potential risks due to natural aging conditions or outside threats including fire or water damage;

- Ease of access for future research and documentation purposes; and
- Sharing of information through integrated mapping and catalog software

Based upon the above, there has been some discussion in past meetings of whether or not the HPC should undertake a project to transfer the hard copy records to a more secure and accessible form of digital storage. At present, there are no funds budgeted for this purpose. However, in recent discussions with Village Staff, including the Village Manager and Finance Director, there was support for consideration of such a project. However, it was noted that current Village staff did not have the specific expertise or time to absorb this project. However, it was noted that past practice included the engagement of outside architects/consultants to assist in the creation of the existing surveys.

Prior to presenting anything for future budget discussions, a number of questions were identified that should be included in any preliminary research. Those questions included the following:

1. Is there a formal industry standard for the digitization of historical records? If so, can the HPC assist in identifying it via survey of comparable historic preservation groups?
2. Is there an estimate on how many records would need to be digitized?
3. Is there a model scope of services that can be used to obtain price estimates based upon volume?
4. Are there any qualified architects/consultants in the area who can assist with this kind of work? If so, it would be ideal to obtain multiple quotes to ensure competitive pricing?
5. What is a realistic timeline for completing a records digitization process of this kind?

Through this discussion, there was general consensus that this kind of project did have merit and would be a natural evolution of the purpose of the HPC as it relates to the preservation of historic records for properties within the Village. As such, it was suggested that a proposed project be discussed at a future HPC meeting to determine if the Commission agreed and would assist in gathering information to answer the questions noted above. As such, I indicated that I would bring this up at our meeting scheduled for July 29.

Action Requested – Commission discussion on whether or not to undertake efforts to provide information on the costs and timing of a records digitization project as a preliminary step to making a formal ask of funding before the Village Board for future fiscal years.

SN:cb

Attachment

SN HPC proposed project to transfer HPC records to digital storage 07232025