

Alton Historical Commission To Hold Hearing To Review Protected Brick Street Ordinance

by Bianca Jackson

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ALTON - The Alton Historical Commission will hold a hearing at 7 p.m. on March 7 in the city council chambers to review the protected brick street ordinance. The ordinance was initially adopted in 1974. Many streets have been added to the list over the years. There are currently over 50 streets on the protected list.

The Commission has been compiling a list of all of the brick streets in Alton. Currently, the Commission has a list of over 80 streets and alleys totaling over 10 miles of brick streets.

The expansion of the Middletown Historic District to include most of downtown Alton has been one of the catalysts to review the list as there are many brick streets near or/in downtown that are not on the protected list.

In addition, it is important to review the list periodically. One of the most important reasons to be included on the list is to require utilities to repair any excavations in a brick street with brick. Otherwise, the utility can make the repair with concrete leaving ugly scars on the street. Some of the streets at risk for this are Market between Broadway and 3rd, State between 3rd and 4th, 4th between Belle and State, 15th street, 11th street, 7th and 8th streets between Henry and Liberty, Mills, Bostwick, Maple, Franklin, Langdon between Broadway and 5th, Spring, Salu and Cliff among many others.

The economic advantages of brick streets are numerous and well-known. Brick streets last a very long time in comparison to asphalt and concrete. Most of Alton's brick streets are over 100 years old and may well last another 50 to 100 years. That is over ten miles of streets that have not had to have been repaved every 20 years over the last century.

Thus, the city of Alton has been able to pave streets more often on the same budget. Brick streets don't develop potholes, so the street department doesn't have to expend men and material patching ten miles of streets every spring. Brick streets are traffic calming increasing safety for pedestrians and bicyclists and reducing speeding in residential areas. They also reduce stormwater runoff as some of the rainwater soaks into the ground beneath the streets.

But, what may be most important to many residents of Alton is how the brick streets contribute to the charm of Alton's many historic homes and neighborhoods.

At the meeting on March 7, the Commission will decide whether it should recommend to the City Council that an additional street be added to the protected brick street ordinance. The Commission encourages those interested in preserving Alton's brick streets to attend the meeting.

For a list of all of the brick streets and those on the protected list, please visit the [Historical Commission - City of Alton \(CityOfAltonIL.com\)](http://CityOfAltonIL.com)

City of Alton Historic Commission

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