

**CITY OF KALAMAZOO
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
ANNUAL REPORT
2008**

Introduction

In 2008, the Kalamazoo Historic District Commission (HDC) received 569 project applications for the 2,075 historic resources located in Kalamazoo's six locally designated historic districts. This represented an increase of about 5% over the applications of the previous year. Meetings take place every third Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers.

History and Purpose

Chapter 16 Section 22 of the City of Kalamazoo Code of Ordinances, outlines the responsibilities of the HDC as follows:

- (a) The Kalamazoo Historic District Commission is empowered to regulate work on the exterior of historic resources and non-historic resources in historic districts in the City of Kalamazoo and shall otherwise have all powers invested in historic district commissions pursuant to the Local Historic Districts Act, MCL 399.201 et. seq. 1970 P.A. 169, as amended. (Adm. Code § A229.2)
- (b) To regulate work on resources which, by city ordinance, are historic or non-historic resources located within local historic districts, including but not limited to the moving of any structure into or out of, or the building of any structure in, a historic district.

Meetings

To fulfill its charge, the HDC convened 12 regular meetings in 2008. Altogether, 64 applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness were reviewed. Of these, 53 were approved and 11 were denied. In the case of the denials, two were proposed demolitions and two were asking for retroactive approval of completed work.

In addition to the HDC's 64 application reviews, the Historic Preservation Coordinator reviewed and administratively approved 505 applications for a total of 569 applications reviewed. Almost 70% of the applications came from the Vine Area - South Street historic district, 12% from the Stuart area and 4% from the new historic district on West Main Hill. The HDC and the Coordinator approved over 98% of the applications submitted which compares well with the national average of 95%.

Membership

The HDC enjoyed a full roster of members throughout 2008:

<u>Member</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Term</u>
Jay Bonsignore	Chair	First full term
Linda DeYoung		Second full term

Nelson Nave	Licensed architect	Second full term
Bob Oudsema		Second full term
Bob Cinabro		First full term (appointed in July 2008)
James Tribu		Second full term
Lisa Poole-Woldring		Resigned in Dec 2008

Newsletter

For the third year, the HDC published its newsletter covering historic district information and emphasizing the availability of the Michigan Historic Preservation Income Tax Credit. This year, two issues of the newsletter were mailed to almost 1,400 property owners in the six districts, including the new West Main Hill local historic district and owners of 4 new single resource historic districts. The newsletter has been an immensely successful tool for increasing awareness of the historic districts and encouraging compliance.

Training

Several members of the Historic District Commission attended a joint training session with the Grand Rapids Historic District Commission to review and plan for proposals involving “green” materials and installations. The meeting, held in Grand Rapids, covered a review of possible green technology including wind turbines and solar installations, and the appropriate way to consider the applications to comply with the Secretary of the Interior standards and the commission standards and guidelines.

Tax Credit Information Sessions

In 2007, the HDC provided monthly informational sessions on the Michigan Historic Preservation Income Tax Credit. The sessions were held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at The Development Center. The number of tax credit applications originating with Kalamazoo ranks second only to Detroit in Michigan. Since 1999, property owners in the Stuart, Haymarket and Vine historic districts have earned well over a million dollars in tax credits representing over four million dollars of investment in the districts. Property owners were given free tickets to the annual Old House Expo in January 2008, to allow them to consult with State Tax Credit Coordinator Bryan Lijewski.

New Initiatives Undertaken

At three meetings in 2008, the commission welcomed contractors and suppliers to present new materials and services available for historic buildings. These included two replacement window companies and a window rehabilitation company that is also building traditional wooden screens with storm window inserts. The contractors and suppliers are given 20 minutes at the end of the meeting, after all the applications have been reviewed.

Summary

2009 was a busy and successful year for the HDC. Staff expects that 2009 will be similarly busy.