

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Minutes

March 15, 2005

City Commission Chambers
2nd Floor, City Hall
241 W. South Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Members Present: Bill Snyder, Chair; Lisa Poole-Woldring, Vice Chair; Rob Chamberlin; Linda DeYoung; Nelson Nave

Members Excused: Bob Oudsema, James Tribu

City Staff: Sharon Ferraro, Historic Preservation Coordinator; Maggi Smith, Housing Inspector; Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Snyder called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

Mr. Oudsema and Mr. Tribu were unanimously excused by voice vote.

AGENDA (March 15, 2005)

There were no changes to the agenda.

Ms. Poole-Woldring supported by Mr. Nave, moved approval of the March 15, 2005 Historic District Commission Agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Pam O'Connor, 471 W. South Street (Marlborough Apartments), was present to discuss replacement of the window glass at the Marlborough Apartments. Consideration is being given to obtaining local historic district designation for the Marlborough Apartments and there will be a vote from the condominium board on this topic in mid-April. An investment of ½ to ¾ of a million dollars worth of improvements is being contemplated. Ms. O'Connor advised that the 20-year old storm windows are in need of replacement. The proposed shallow profile windows won't extend out further than the current windows. Ms. O'Connor stated that low-e glass would be preferred. She brought examples of low-e glass and regular storm glass for the Commission to review. The storm window frames will match the brown color of the building.

Mr. Snyder advised that he could see very little difference between the two types of glass. Accordingly, there should be no problem with having it approved. Mr. Snyder inquired if any of the other commissioners had a problem with the proposed low-e glass being installed at the Marlboro Apartments. There were no objections from the other commissioners.

Ms. O'Connor stated that there are 842 windows to be replaced at the Marlboro Apartments. The plan is to replace them over a four-year period while working on three facades at a time.

DISCLAIMER

Ms. Ferraro read the disclaimer into the record.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Ferraro introduced members of the historic preservation class who were attending the meeting. She then referred to the folders that had been provided to the commissioners. In the folders were staff comments she had provided with regard to each of the agenda items.

701 W. Walnut (Case #: IHA 05-0039)

Bob Miller appeared to represent the property. The application presents a new proposal for the front of the building based on a conference with Robb McKay, historic architect at the State Historic Preservation Office. The proposal includes work on the following: 1. Storefront and windows, 2. Second floor front, 3. Reconfigure roof at rear SW corner concrete block garage to facilitate decent drainage and eliminate flat roof.

Mr. Miller advised that he went to Lansing two weeks ago and met with Robb McKay at the State Historic Preservation Office. Mr. Miller stated that, in order to receive the historic tax credit, he would need to keep the 1950 commercial storefront addition with the second floor residential space intact. Mr. Miller advised that he also would like to change the siding on the front second story addition to 4" siding to blend in with the original 3" siding instead of the current 7" reveal. This would maintain the difference between the original 1909 building and the 1950.

Mr. Snyder inquired if the Commission would allow for reinstallation of the commercial storefront windows. He mentioned that Mr. Oudsema had been against the reinstallation of the commercial storefront windows in the first floor front addition. Mr. Snyder stated that he would like to find out if the Commission was willing to proceed with the application before discussing further details of the project. The other commissioners expressed an interest in proceeding with the proposed work in the application.

Mr. Snyder mentioned that the Historic District Commission had agreed to allow the applicant to use the lot across the street on the southeast corner of Oak and West Walnut for a parking lot only if he were willing to remove the front addition at 701 W. Walnut. Accordingly, Mr. Snyder stated that he was not in favor of the new proposal.

Mr. Nave advised that he did not have a problem with the proposed commercial front for 701 W. Walnut. He inquired if the drawings had been redone. Mr. Miller advised that the drawings had been redone in order to satisfy the requirements of the tax credit.

Mr. Chamberlin advised that he had no strong opinion one way or the other regarding the proposed changes.

Discussion followed with regard to the fact that the Historic District Commission had previously ruled in favor of having the 1950's addition removed at their January 2003 meeting. Allowing the vacant lot across the street to be used as parking was contingent upon removal of the '50's addition. Mr. McKay has advised that the '50's addition is historic and should be restored in order for the property to be eligible for the tax credit.

Ms. Ferraro mentioned that the Historic District Commission doesn't rule on the use of the building, only the appearance. She commented that 701 W. Walnut was built in 1909 with a retail space on the first floor. Mr. Snyder questioned if the original use had been commercial. Ms. Ferraro gave several examples of similar buildings in Kalamazoo that had been constructed with a combination commercial and residential use.

Mr. Snyder advised that he would not be voting in favor of the new proposal because of the prior commitment made by the Historic District Commission. Ms. Ferraro mentioned that the motions made by the Commission in January of 2003 had lapsed due to the amount of time that has passed with no action being taken. Ms. Ferraro read The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation #4 which states as follows: "Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved."

Mr. Chamberlin, supported by Mr. Nave, moved approval in concept of the proposed changes for 701 W. Walnut which include the restoration of the 1950's addition. With a roll call vote, the motion carried by a majority vote.

Ayes: Nave, DeYoung, Poole-Woldring, Chamberlin

Nays: Snyder

Discussion followed with regard to the details of the proposed changes. The Commission requested that Mr. Miller provide further information with regard to the following details:

1. The overhang on the garage roof should match the overhang on the second floor front. This is the concrete block addition at the southwest corner of the first floor.

2. The trim detail around the second floor front windows should be similar to the trim around the rest of the windows in the house. This should be easy to do when the new narrower clapboards are installed.
3. How will the sill at the bottom of the windows transition from the window to the stucco for the display windows?

Mr. Snyder inquired about the two pairs of double-hung windows that are currently on the front of the house. The north elevation drawing shows only two single double-hung windows. Mr. Miller confirmed that the two pairs of windows would remain and that the drawing was incorrect.

Mr. Snyder mentioned that he thought the stucco had been patched with cement. He inquired if the stucco would be repaired. Mr. Miller advised that those repairs were on the west and north side of the addition. The stucco on the older portion of the building is in good condition.

Mr. Snyder advised that Mr. Miller would not be able to use the parking lot unless the Historic District Commission approved it again. Mr. Miller advised that most of the details for the parking lot had been worked out. He suggested that Vine Ventures might be interested in participating in the beautification of the parking lot and with choosing the colors for the house. Mr. Snyder expressed enthusiasm for having Mr. Miller seek neighborhood input for this project.

Ms. Ferraro advised that she would be sending a letter to Mr. Miller outlining the details of the next steps to be taken.

926 Davis (Case #: IHA 04-0424)

Ken Schaeffer was present to discuss the application. The application requests installation of a fire egress from the third floor window opening on the north/rear side of the house. The Housing Board of Appeals has approved a variance to allow the egress from this opening.

Discussion followed with regard to the details of the project. It was noted that the area of egress was virtually undetectable from the street.

Ms. Poole-Woldring, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved approval in concept of the proposed project at 926 Davis, to include a door or window for third floor egress and a staircase to be as short as possible to meet code and to meet historic district standards. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

432 Ranney (Case #IHA 05-0025)

Eric Holmes was present to discuss the application. The application requests demolition of a severely fire damaged house.

A brief discussion followed with regard to the severity of the damage. The applicant stated that the cause of the fire was undetermined.

Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. Poole-Woldring, moved to allow the demolition of the house at 432 Ranney. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Ferraro advised the applicant that he would receive a Notice to Proceed and then he could pull the demolition permit.

819 S. Westnedge (Case #IHA 05-0017)

M. Mohsin Abbas appeared to discuss the application. The application requests the addition of a sign to the canopy and relocation of the north front door from an inset position to even with the display windows.

Details were discussed with regard to the relocation of the door. Mr. Snyder stated that there should be no problem with moving the door forward but there could be issues with moving it over. He suggested a site visit in order to evaluate the impact of such a change. Mr. Snyder mentioned to the applicant that he would also need to provide more details about the sign he wants. The site visit was set up for 3:00 p.m. on April 5th. Mr. Snyder, Ms. DeYoung and Mr. Nave volunteered for the site visit. Ms. Poole-Woldring agreed to be the alternate if someone else was unable to attend.

807 Wheaton (Case # IHV 05-0003)

No one appeared to discuss the application. The application requests replacement of the front door. This is a retroactive application resulting from a violation notice. The door has already been installed.

After a brief discussion, it was decided that more details were needed before a decision could be made.

Ms. Poole-Woldring, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved to postpone the decision on 807 Wheaton until the next meeting, pending further details on the proposed project. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

1007 S. Westnedge (Case #IHA 05-0026)

No one was present to discuss the application. The application requests the addition of a barrier free ramp on the front of the house. Funding will be coming from the state and cannot be released until a building permit is issued. Accordingly, the Preservation Coordinator approved the project in concept, with the condition that the applicant would come to the HDC meeting with details on the rails. The proposed ramp is a freestanding structure, NOT attached directly to the house. The front steps will be moved forward and can be moved back into place when the ramp is removed.

After a brief discussion, it was decided that more details were needed before a decision could be made.

Ms. Poole-Woldring, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved to postpone the decision on 1007 S. Westnedge, pending further information from the applicant. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

MINUTES (January 18, 2005)

There were no changes to the minutes.

Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. Poole-Woldring, moved approval of the January 18, 2005 Historic District Commission Minutes as presented. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Ferraro mentioned that the Historic Preservation Commission would like to do a training session for the Historic District Commissions on May 11 at 244 E. Michigan Ave. They need to have at least 20 people for the session. Kristine Kidorf from the Detroit Historic District Commission is scheduled to do the presentation. Ms. Poole-Woldring and Mr. Nave expressed interest in attending the meeting.

Ms. Ferraro mentioned that three fires have occurred recently in the Historic District. The property at 733 Axtell may have been compromised enough that demolition might be necessary. The property at 305 W. Vine will likely be repaired and contractors are submitting bids for the work. The owner of the property at 809 S. Park St. will have a matching window installed since that was the only area affected on the outside of the building.

Reference was made to the open seat on the Historic District Commission. Ms. Ferraro introduced Fred Decker who was present to interview for the open seat. Mr. Decker stated that he and his wife have lived at 511 Woodward in the Historic District since 1977. He stated that he and his wife restored three houses on Elmwood. Accordingly,

Mr. Decker stated that, as a property owner in the historic district, he has been through the application process with the Historic District Commission. Mr. Snyder commented that he was familiar with the Deckers' accomplishments and inquired as to Mr. Decker's interest in being on the Historic District Commission. Mr. Decker emphasized his interest in preserving historic buildings. He also expressed enthusiasm for representing the Stuart Historic Neighborhood on the Commission.

After further discussion of Mr. Decker's application among the commissioners, the following motion was made:

Ms. Poole-Woldring, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved to recommend to the City Commission the approval of Fred Decker to the Historic District Commission. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Poole-Woldring, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved to adjourn the March 15, 2005 Historic District Commission meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Submitted by: _____ Dated: _____
(Recording Secretary)

Reviewed by: _____ Dated: _____
(Historic Preservation Coordinator)

Approved by: _____ Dated: _____
(Chair)