

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Minutes
February 21, 2006
DRAFT

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

Members Present: Lisa Poole-Woldring, Vice Chair (Acting Chair); Fred Decker;
Linda DeYoung; Nelson Nave; Bob Oudsema; James Tribu

Members Excused: Bill Snyder, Chair

City Staff: Sharon Ferraro, Historic Preservation Coordinator; Amy Thomas,
Recording Secretary

Guests: Pam O'Connor and Kristine Kidorf

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Poole-Woldring called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m.

AGENDA (February 21, 2006)

There were no changes to the agenda.

Ms. DeYoung, supported by Mr. Nave, moved approval of the February 21, 2006 Historic District Commission Agenda as presented. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

DISCLAIMER

Ms. Ferraro read the disclaimer into the record.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

The applicant for 609 Elm was not present and the board proceeded to approval of the Minutes of the December 2005 HDC meeting. There was no meeting in January due to a lack of applications.

MINUTES (December 20, 2005)

There were no corrections to the minutes.

Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Decker, moved approval of the December 20, 2005 Historic District Commission Minutes as presented. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

(5:10 p.m. – Mr. Oudsema arrived.)

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Ferraro provided an updated HDC roster to the commissioners who were present, and inquired if there were any changes. Ms. Poole-Woldring provided her new phone number (353-1768) to Ms. Ferraro and requested that it be added to the HDC roster.

Ms. Ferraro advised that the Old House Expo went well. Next year the expo will begin with day-long workshops, including a free program on lead-safe work practices. Blair Bates has agreed to do a day-long presentation on masonry repair; the presentation will likely be free of charge. The Historic Preservation Commission wants to do a realtors training course, but the fee has not yet been determined. There will likely be a charge next year for the lunch that is served. The workshops will be held on January 19, 2007 and the Expo will be held on January 20, 2007.

The Great Unveiling will be held on May 6, 2006 when the siding will be removed from the house at 914 S. Westnedge (about 3 doors down from Martini's Restaurant). The Great Unveiling banners will go up at the project site. This should be good publicity for preservation in the Vine Neighborhood. Steve Senesi and Tom Phillips from Habitat for Humanity will be the crew chiefs.

Mr. Nave mentioned that Martini's looks nothing like it was designed to be. It has a sloped roof instead of a flat roof and plywood on the back walls rather than cement board. Ms. Ferraro advised that the plywood is an underlayment. Mr. Nave advised that the original contractor is no longer working on this project, and the owner hired someone else to finish the job. Apparently, the second contractor made some changes. Mr. Nave mentioned that the HDC can only deal with the structural changes. The windows on the second floor are different than what was presented.

Ms. Ferraro advised that she would look into the situation at Martini's. Mr. Nave requested that Ms. Ferraro urge the contractor to put the brackets on the building. He also advised that the skylights are different than what was originally proposed. However, you can't see them from the street. Also, you would have to be in the block across the street to see the sloped roof.

609 Elm (Case #: IHA 06-0012)

The applicant was not present. The application requests repair of the existing porch and the addition of a deck.

Discussion followed with regard to the application and the lack of detail provided with regard to the repairs on the porch and windows, etc. Ms. Ferraro advised that it was her understanding that the existing porch and windows would remain and would be fixed. Most of the problem is with the roof.

Mr. Decker inquired if stair #1 will replace the stairs that are currently there, and Ms. Ferraro responded in the affirmative. She stated that one stairway will extend from the new deck in the direction of the cement walk and the other stairs will lead into the back yard. Ms. Ferraro advised that she thought the stairs would be free-standing and would be set out in front of the existing porch. She also pointed out that the application doesn't provide information on how far off the ground the new construction will be. A railing will not be required if the deck is less than 29" in height.

Mr. Oudsema inquired if stair #2 is the existing stair coming off the porch; the general consensus was no. Discussion followed with regard to which direction the house was facing. Ms. Ferraro advised that the north arrow on the maps was incorrect, but had been redrawn by hand on one of the maps. Mr. Nave pointed out that no information had been provided on how the deck would be attached. Mr. Oudsema inquired as to what rationale there might be for denying the deck, and Mr. Nave commented that the deck would not be historic. Mr. Oudsema mentioned that several decks have been constructed in the historic district over the past few years.

Ms. Ferraro advised that, since that applicant was not present at the meeting, she would send him a letter stating that he needs to provide more details. Mr. Decker inquired if the deck would have to be painted. Ms. Ferraro advised that a deck attached to the house would have to be painted. She further stated that she has advised people that fences and decks in the back yard do not have to be painted; everything else on the house has to be painted. Ms. Ferraro requested that a motion be made so as to prevent the application from being approved automatically if no action is taken within 60 days.

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Decker, moved to postpone the decision regarding repair of the existing porch at 609 Elm and the addition of a deck, pending more information from the applicant including whether the deck is attached using stair #1 or stair #2 and the height of the deck off the ground. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Ferraro advised that she would request information about the back porch and windows in the letter to be sent to the applicant.

Ms. Ferraro advised that she found a photo of a barrier-free ramp from about 1903 in back of the old Borgess Hospital. It is the same thing the HDC has been recommending all along, which is a very simple pipe rail. Ms. DeYoung inquired as to which block of Portage Rd. the original hospital was located. She advised that she thought the original Borgess Hospital was a turn-of-the-century building in the first or second block of Portage Rd. Ms. O'Connor stated that the original Borgess Hospital is in "Kalamazoo: Lost and Found" and was near the northeast corner of Portage and Lovell where the recent Pfizer demolitions took place.

OTHER BUSINESS

Election of Officers

Ms. Poole-Woldring advised that the HDC needs to nominate a Chair and Vice Chair. She nominated Bill Snyder for Chair of the HDC. Ms. Ferraro stated that Mr. Snyder was serving his last term and would not be eligible for re-appointment next January. It was also mentioned that he might not be able to fulfill his last term since he may be moving to the Ann Arbor area because of his job. Further discussion followed with regard to possible candidates for Chair and Vice Chair.

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved to recommend to the City Commission the appointment of Lisa Poole-Woldring as Chair of the Historic District Commission and Fred Decker as Vice Chair of the Historic District Commission. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

628 S. Park

Ms. Ferraro advised that the applicants for 628 S. Park St. had appealed the HDC's decision to the State Historic Preservation Review Board. The applicants settled at the meeting in Lansing without a formal hearing and agreed to replace the porch deck to standards and get approval of the rear porch.

Mr. Nave advised that this issue would need to come back to the HDC for a final decision. Ms. Ferraro mentioned that she had created a timeline to put in the HDC packets for the March 21st meeting.

Mr. Oudsema inquired if the city would pursue this matter if the applicants choose to do nothing. Ms. Ferraro advised that the city does have the option of pursuing this matter. She added that another issue for the HDC to consider is whether or not the applicants would be allowed to stain the porch deck instead of painting it.

Ms. DeYoung inquired as to the issue of the extra signage and lights at that address. Ms. Ferraro advised that issue had been resolved because it was approved retroactively.

Mr. Nave expressed concern that the applicants had not strictly adhered to the decisions made by the HDC. Mr. Oudsema commented that the applicants' properties are substantially better off because of the work the applicants have done. Ms. Ferraro added that the HDC approves 96% of the applications they review.

Ms. DeYoung inquired as to what approvals the applicants received. Ms. Ferraro stated that the applicants received sign permits; the sign inspector approved the sign because the zoning allows it there. Mr. Nave mentioned that the sign could be considered light pollution because you can see it from adjacent properties. Mr. Oudsema stated that he also disliked the sign, but advised leaving the sign issue behind and moving forward.

Mr. Nave inquired if the owners of the Gazelle Sports building were trying to have the historic district status reversed. Ms. Ferraro advised that they are not trying to have it reversed at this time, but it may happen eventually. Discussion followed with regard to the Gazelle Sports façade at 214-224 S. Kalamazoo Mall and the wall that collapsed in December. Mr. Nave expressed concern about how the façade would be rebuilt. Ms. Ferraro stated that it was her understanding that the new façade would look the same as the old façade, but would be constructed of new material. She advised that any design changes would have to be reviewed by the Historic District Commission and the Downtown Design Review Committee.

Ms. Poole-Woldring advised of the need to appoint two HDC members to judge the preservation awards. The judging will be done on a Saturday morning in March, other than March 11th, since Ms. Ferraro will not be available on that date. Mr. Oudsema and Mr. Nave advised that they would be willing to be judges for this event.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

Prepared by: _____ Dated: _____
(Recording Secretary)

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

Approved by: _____ Dated: _____