

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**Minutes**  
**September 19, 2006**  
***DRAFT***

City Commission Chambers  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, City Hall  
241 W. South Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Members Present: Lisa Poole-Woldring, Chair; Fred Decker, Vice Chair; Linda DeYoung; Nelson Nave, Bill Snyder, James Tribu

Members Excused: Bob Oudsema

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Poole-Woldring called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF ABSENCES**

Mr. Oudsema advised city staff that he would not be present for the September HDC meeting.

**Mr. Snyder, supported by Mr. Decker, moved approval of Mr. Oudsema's absence from the September 19, 2006 HDC meeting. With a voice vote the motion carried unanimously.**

**AGENDA (September 19, 2006)**

Ms. Ferraro stated that the Catholic Diocese requested that the presentation on 531 Eleanor be moved to the next HDC agenda. Ms. Ferraro requested that 531 Eleanor be moved to the end of the September HDC agenda for further discussion.

**Mr. Snyder, supported by Mr. Nave, moved approval of the September 19, 2006 HDC agenda as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

None

**DISCLAIMER**

Ms. Ferraro read the disclaimer into the record.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**730 W. Kalamazoo (Case #: IHA 06-00018)**

No one was present to represent the property. The application proposes a remedy for the east side basement windows, and requests that the owner be allowed to apply for the tax credit and then restore the original wooden basement windows.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**211 Rose Place (Case #: IHV 06-0098)**

No one was present to represent the property. The application requests replacement of five windows. The commission proceeded to the next agenda item to allow time for the applicant to arrive.

**729 W. South (Case #: IHA 06-0137)**

Chris Roussi, owner, was present to discuss the application. The application requests the installation of a fence along the west property line.

Mr. Roussi advised that he would like to put in a fence along the west property line to match the existing fencing on the other two sides of the property. Sixteen feet of the fence is in the front yard and Mr. Roussi is hoping for a waiver of the 4' rule so that he can have the 6' fence taper to the 4' height of the brick wall. The posts are 4' 10".

Mr. Nave inquired as to the details of the gate. Mr. Roussi advised that he didn't apply for a gate at this time because he hasn't settled on a design. He's considering having a 4' tall wrought iron gate, possibly peaked in the middle.

Mr. Snyder requested more details about the fence. Mr. Roussi stated that the fence will be in 8' sections and will be custom built. He stated that the fence would travel 12' and drop 2' over 4'. Mr. Nave inquired if that would be a variance from normal. Mr. Roussi stated that the fence is a little taller than usual, and that he thought it should not be very noticeable even in the winter months. Mr. Nave inquired if it would have a grand piano curve, and Mr. Roussi stated that it would be an ogee. Mr. Nave commented that it would go well with the details of the house.

**Mr. Snyder, supported by Mr. Decker, moved approval of the proposed changes to the fence at 729 W. South Street. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Roussi inquired if he would need a permit to proceed with the proposed work. Ms. Ferraro stated that only fences over 8' tall need a building permit.

Mr. Nave referred to the house next door and commented that the barbed wire had not been used correctly. There is a 6' fence with barbed wire, which has been there for a long time, and there is a section between the two yards that someone has filled in with barbed wire. Ms. Ferraro advised that she would pass this information on to Nancy Hess, who is the quality of life inspector for that area.

**916 Osborn (Case #: IHA 06-0148)**

Steve Senesi, the applicant, was present to discuss the application. The application requests that the missing front porch be rebuilt.

Mr. Senesi stated that the property owner wants to add a front porch roof at this address. The porch decking is already there. He is proposing to add 4" x 4" square columns clad with 3/4" cedar. Capitals and bases would be made out of 2x cedar material. A 2" by 8" header would be added at the top and it would extend around the porch. A hip roof would be added to match the hip above it.

Mr. Nave inquired if the design of the porch is original to the house. Ms. Ferraro advised that it is similar to other porches in the area. This house probably had a full width porch when it was new, but the original came off quite a while ago.

Mr. Snyder inquired if the proposal includes a porch skirt. Mr. Senesi commented that the drawing indicates there is a lot of room between the deck and the grading, but there actually isn't that much room. The steps will be replaced. Mr. Snyder stated that he would normally ask for skirting, but the porch is low and there are already plants in front. The addition of skirting would create additional maintenance issues.

**Mr. Decker, supported by Mr. Nave, moved approval of the replacement of the missing front porch as proposed for 916 Osborn. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**730 W. Kalamazoo (Case #: IHA 06-00018)**

Mr. Snyder inquired if this matter was on the HDC agenda again because it is a violation. Ms. Ferraro responded in the affirmative, and stated that the judge in Lansing requested that the HDC review the proposed remedy for the violation. Historic District Commission review of this case can take place without the applicant present. Mr. Swift (the property owner) is asking to replace the glass block after he gets the tax credit, and it will take about a year for the property owner to receive the tax credit.

Mr. Snyder advised that his decision would be based on the previous minutes regarding the time limit. He noted that placing deadlines on proposed remedies sometimes doesn't

work. Ms. Ferraro commented that if Mr. Swift doesn't comply with the decision made by the HDC, this case will proceed back through the appeal process

**628 S. Park St.**

Mr. Nave mentioned that mentioned that 628 S. Park St. (Willis & Willis Law Office) is for sale. Ms. Ferraro advised that the violation (front porch decking) goes with the building. Mr. Snyder suggested putting the details in writing and giving the information to the realtor so that the new owner will know about the violation. Mr. Nave mentioned that a realtor who doesn't disclose the violation could lose their license. Ms. Ferraro advised that she would send Willis & Willis a letter and copy their realtor. She recalled that the minutes said the violation should be remedied by the end of the building season 2006, and the building season will end in about a month. Ms. Ferraro stated that she would check with the City Attorney before sending the letter.

**530 W. South St.**

Ms. Ferraro advised that she would find out if the violation had been remedied at this address and, if not, proceed to send \$70.00 enforcement letters to the owners.

**730 W. Kalamazoo**

Ms. Poole-Woldring stated that she didn't want to allow the tax credit until the work is completed. Mr. Snyder agreed and commented that allowing the tax credit at this point would go against what the HDC stands for. However, if a deadline were imposed it might provide some measure of reassurance that the work would be done. Ms. Ferraro stated that if the property owner applies for the tax credit between now and November 1<sup>st</sup>, he should have the tax credit by August or September of 2007. This would allow enough time for the work to be completed before the end of the construction season next year. The windows need to match the windows at the front of the house. Ms. Ferraro commented that it should cost approximately \$800 to repair the windows, and the tax credit should provide Mr. Swift with over \$2,000.

**Mr. Snyder, supported by Mr. Nave, moved to allow the restoration of the wooden basement windows on the east side of 730 W. Kalamazoo Avenue with details to be worked out with the Historic Preservation Coordinator. Restoration of the windows is to be completed by November 1, 2007. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**211 Rose Place**

The applicant had not arrived and the commission proceeded with discussion on this matter.

Ms. Ferraro advised that the applicant replaced 5 windows; the original windows are gone. The trim doesn't match but it's close. The trim on the upper and lower floors is the same but it looks smaller because you don't see the frame.

Mr. Snyder commented that it seems to be advantageous for applicants/property owners to proceed with changes and then ask for forgiveness later. He inquired if the HDC could ask for a fine to be imposed. Ms. Ferraro stated that PA 169 allows fines up to \$5,000, but she needs to find out if the courts impose the fine or if it is to be imposed by the HDC. Mr. Snyder suggested asking the City Attorney if it would be possible to impose an application fee for retroactive approval. Ms. Ferraro stated that she would explore that option and report back to the HDC.

**Mr. Decker, supported by Mr. Tribu, moved approval to replace the five non-repairable windows at 211 Rose St. as installed. With a roll call vote, the motion carried by a majority vote.**

**Ayes: Nave, DeYoung, Decker, Tribu**

**Nays: Snyder, Poole-Woldring**

## **MINUTES**

### **July 18, 2006**

Mr. Snyder referred to page 2, under 733 Axtell, the next to the last paragraph, change "rout" to "router."

**The July 18, 2006 HDC minutes, as amended, were approved by unanimous voice vote.**

### **August 15, 2006**

Mr. Snyder referred to middle of page 8, the last sentence should read, "Mr. Snyder suggested using stucco infill." Page 9, after the motion, but before the applicants left, add, "Ms. Ferraro advised that she would lift the stop work order tomorrow and that the applicant could remove the sign. Mr. Snyder asked if the applicant was happy with the roofing material they had chosen. This material – metal shaped to look like split cedar shakes - was approved in part so the commission could see how it looked when it was applied and how it held up. The applicant replied that he was comfortable with the material itself, but that the flashing had been problematic and that material had been applied and removed several times to get a system that worked. The applicants left the meeting."

Ms. DeYoung referred to page 9, paragraph 2, "so" something should be "do" something.

**The August 15, 2006 HDC minutes, as amended, were approved by unanimous voice vote.**

**1418 S. Westnedge**

No one was present to represent the property.

**531 Eleanor**

Ms. Ferraro advised that the Roman Catholic diocese contacted city staff. City staff met yesterday with the diocese's lawyers. The lawyers left out one page of the 3-page report from Nehill Sivak, and there was a request from city staff that the missing page be provided for staff review. The city will have a contractor who regularly rehabs old homes do an cost estimate before the next HDC meeting. A site visit will be arranged and the HDC members will have a chance to see the property including the interior. Representatives from the diocese will make a presentation at the next HDC meeting.

Mr. Decker stated that he thought this matter had been settled a year ago. Ms. Ferraro advised that the diocese has submitted a new application. The new application requests demolition of 531 Eleanor and the installation of a prayer garden in that location. The previous application requested demolition and reconstruction.

Ms. Ferraro stated that the estimate from the DBB is \$10,000 to \$15,000 to fix the outside of the house. There is a lot of wood that needs to be fixed and windows need to be installed. Mr. Nave commented that the DBB estimate is considerably less than the other estimate of \$500,000. The church doesn't want an empty/abandoned building on their property and they don't want to spend the money to fix it. Ms. Ferraro stated that the damage to the sill plate is becoming more obvious. The property has been listed for about 3 months with O'Brien Realty for \$50,000. The property at 527 Eleanor is in good shape and church is trying to find a use for it. The property at 531 Eleanor is in rough shape, not just because of the fire but also due to years of neglect. One of the load-bearing walls on the first floor was removed many years ago, and the area is supported with 2 x 6's. Some of the foundation is failing and most of the mortar needs to be replaced. The report doesn't say that the whole foundation needs to be replaced, but it does state that it needs to be repointed/repared.

Mr. Nave mentioned that in the past people would do repair/restoration work over time, but there doesn't seem to be a lot of people who want to take on that kind of work anymore. Ms. Ferraro stated that repairs on this house might be very daunting even for the most determined person due to the fire damage and years of neglect. What little work was done on the house was done poorly. Mr. Nave referred to downtown Indianapolis where he used to work, and commented that there had been 4 square blocks of condemned buildings in that area. People gradually bought those houses and fixed them up, and now it is a beautiful historic district.

Mr. Snyder mentioned that he and Mr. Oudsema discussed that Kalamazoo is unique in a number of ways. For instance, there are so many historic structures in different areas of the city that you don't get the additive effect of seeing the entire transformation in a shorter period of time.

Ms. DeYoung inquired if the house at 531 Eleanor always had 2 front doors. Ms. Ferraro stated that she would check the Sanborn maps, but she thought the house had been converted in the mid-1900's. Mike Tustin bought the house right after the fire and he thought it was repairable.

Ms. Ferraro stated that the stairs have been removed so there is no access to the second floor of the house. Mr. Tribu advised that he would bring a ladder to the site visit. Ms. Ferraro will mail the full report (2003) to the HDC members.

Mr. Ferraro advised that the roof is new. The church has kept the lawn mowed and the house closed to casual entry. Ms. Ferraro stated that she would coordinate with the diocese and the HDC regarding a date for the site visit. This property is near the area designated for the proposed arena and the decision will be precedent setting.

Mr. Nave suggested that the church could call on volunteers for some of the work that needs to be done on the house. Ms. Ferraro stated that the big question with 531 Eleanor is whether or not it is worth saving and is it sound enough to rehab. She stated that City Attorney John Kneas will be at the next meeting, and a representative from Nehil-Sivak may also be present. Ms. Ferraro advised that Building Inspector Lee Larson said it would probably cost about \$125,000 (\$56.00 per square foot) to rehab 531 Eleanor if it is sound enough. She advised the HDC members to keep their September packets for future reference.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1418 S. Westnedge**

Thomas Carson was present to discuss the application. The application requests: 1. The extension of the rear porch roof and the addition of an entry porch; 2. The addition of a skylight; 3. Restoration/repair of the storm windows and door; 4. Rebuilding the front steps.

Mr. Carson advised that he intends to take out the inappropriate metal combination storm windows and door and re-enclose the front porch with wood framed windows. It will be an unheated entryway. Ms. Ferraro suggested that a simple, wood frame and screen door would look good. The current windows are an old violation. Mr. Carson stated that he hopes wants at least two of the windows to open.

Mr. Snyder commented that it would take some time to study the situation and figure out what would be the most aesthetically pleasing option. He stated that the applicant is asking for something different and the HDC needs to make sure it is appropriate. He suggested a site visit at 1418 S. Westnedge.

### **Skylight**

Ms. Ferraro suggested discussing the impact on the roof since the DBB set a November 1, 2006 deadline for repairs to be made. Mr. Nave inquired as to the proposed location for the skylight. Mr. Carson stated that he wants the skylight to be close to the west side of the dormer on the south face of the roof; there's room on the second floor. Mr. Nave cautioned against installing the skylight too close to the dormer because it might leak. He advised keeping it at least one rafter space away from the dormer.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Snyder, moved approval of the proposed skylight for 418 S. Westnedge. The low profile (less than 6") skylight is to be at least one rafter space away from the dormer on the south facing roof. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

### **Rear Porch Roof**

Mr. Snyder inquired as to the supports to be used for the porch roof. Ms. Ferraro stated that the supports would be consistent with the existing knee braces. Mr. Carson provided a further explanation at the dais.

Ms. Ferraro mentioned that the back steps were cited and the applicant needs to paint them. He has about six weeks before the building season ends this year. She suggested approving details for Mr. Carson to work on right away and having a site visit to discuss other matters.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Snyder, moved approval of the rear porch deck and steps as proposed for 1418 S. Westnedge. The porch and steps are to conform to historic district guidelines and the details are to be approved by Sharon Ferraro. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Ferraro stated that she could approve the steps to be built to historic district standards. Mr. Nave suggested using Trex decking since the steps are exposed to the weather. Ms. Ferraro advised that she would put that information in the COA (Certificate of Approval). She suggested amending the motion to include that information.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Snyder, moved to amend the motion to allow the use of composite decking on the rear porch at 1418 S. Westnedge. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Ferraro stated that she would contact the HDC members to schedule the site visit.

Mr. Decker inquired about the rear porch roof. Ms. Ferraro advised that it could be handled independently. Mr. Carson is doing the roofing. She suggested discussing the roof at the site visit. Mr. Carson can proceed with repair of the items cited by the DBB.

Mr. Nave expressed concern regarding the width of the stair and whether or not it should be 3'. Ms. Ferraro advised that she would look into that. She mentioned that there is more flexibility on that issue in the Historic District.

Mr. Nave inquired as to the condition of the boarded up windows. Ms. Ferraro stated that the windows are intact; the boards are there to keep people from breaking in.

Discussion followed with regard to composite materials used for porch decking. Ms. Ferraro stated that Trex decking is not meant to be painted but the Tendura can be painted. However, Tendura is not warranted unless it's covered by a roof and the Trex decking is warranted whether it is covered or not.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Update to Standards and Guidelines**

Ms. Ferraro stated that she wanted to provide clearer pictures in the standards and guidelines. For instance, she redrew the edge of the porch deck to better illustrate that detail.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m.

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_