

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Minutes
March 18, 2008
DRAFT

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

Members Present: Lisa Poole-Woldring, Chair; Fred Decker, Vice Chair; Jay Bonsignore; Linda DeYoung; Nelson Nave; 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 5:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

Mr. Oudsema's absence was approved by unanimous voice vote.

AGENDA (March 18, 2008)

The March 18, 2008 HDC agenda was approved by unanimous voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

DISCLAIMER

The disclaimer is stated on the HDC agenda.

OLD BUSINESS

161 E. Michigan (Case #: IHA 08-0002)

Fritz Brown was present to discuss the application. The commission issued a CIOA with approval in concept at their January meeting. The application requests that a new door be opened in the west wall of the alley on the east side of the building and approval of a sidewalk café on the alley and along Michigan Ave.

Ms. Ferraro inquired about the lighting fixtures, and Mr. Brown advised that a decision has not yet been made. They are looking at sconces that will be appropriate for the style of the building. Mr. Brown stated that he would provide more information to Ms. Ferraro as soon as a decision is made.

Mr. Nave advised inquired if the brick around the proposed new door openings will be toothed in with salvaged bricks and how the frames will be mounted. Mr. Brown advised they are planning on saving the old bricks and filling in with mortar to match the original work on the front façade. Mr. Nave advised that the mortar should match what is there.

Mr. Bonsignore inquired if there will be double doors onto the deck, and Mr. Brown responded in the affirmative. There will be a double door in the front on the east wall and a ¾ lite, single door toward the middle of the building on the east wall. Mr. Bonsignore urged the applicants to match the existing doors as closely as possible.

Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Bonsignore, moved approval of the proposal for the new door openings on the east side of the building at 161 E. Michigan Ave., with the following details to be reviewed and approved administratively: lighting, signage, details around the new door opening, and the position of the new frames in the opening. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. DeYoung inquired if people would be able to walk past the outdoor dining area. Mr. Brown responded in the affirmative. Ms. Ferraro stated that there will be seven and one half feet from the curb at the narrowest point, and eight feet at the widest point. Mr. Brown added that Fred Nagler in Public Works addressed the sidewalk crossing where the dip is because there are safety concerns.

Ms. Poole-Woldring inquired as to the location of the drain. Mr. Brown advised that there is a downspout at the side of the Haymarket building where the alley is located. The drain in that alley will go straight down into the sewer line.

While waiting for the next applicant to arrive, the HDC proceeded with approval of the February minutes.

MINUTES (February 19, 2008)

Ms. DeYoung referred to page 6, paragraph 4, line 2, “an” metal spacer should be “a” metal spacer.

Mr. Bonsignore, supported by Mr. Nave, moved approval of the February 19, 2008 HDC minutes as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried by a majority vote. Ms. Poole-Woldring was not present at the February meeting and, therefore, abstained from voting on the minutes.

230 S. Kalamazoo Mall (Case #: IHA 08-0036)

Ms. Ferraro advised that Scott Gordon, the applicant, may not be able to attend the meeting tonight. The application requests rehabilitation of the storefront.

Mr. Nave expressed interest in seeing a plan for the store front elevation. Also, more details are needed regarding the wall. Ms. Ferraro advised that complete drawings will be required before the building permits can be issued.

Mr. Bonsignore questioned the applicant's commitment to the project because he has not appeared for the last two meetings. Ms. Ferraro commented that the applicant is not working on the upper section of the building at this time. He may be receiving a façade grant from the DKI (Downtown Kalamazoo, Inc.) Project Review Committee

Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Tribu, moved to postpone the decision regarding the application for 230 S. Kalamazoo Mall until further information is provided by the applicant. With a roll call vote, the motion carried by a majority vote. Mr. Bonsignore provided the only dissenting vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Ferraro advised that she sent a renewed Certificate of Appropriateness to the owners of 530 W. South St. to rebuild the wall to HDC specifications. She plans to send a letter every month until progress is made with regard to the violation involving the wall/fence. The City Attorney's office is ready to issue an appearance ticket if the violation is not resolved.

Ms. Ferraro advised that the Grand Rapids Historic District Commission is holding a short conference to review green technology such as solar panels and wind turbines in historic districts. Ms. Ferraro advised that applications for such technology would need to be considered on a case by case basis. Staff from the State Historic Preservation Office will also be at the conference. This will be an opportunity to meet commissioners from Grand Rapids and surrounding areas, and to gain knowledge about green technology that can be used in the historic district.

Mr. Decker stated that a new chain-link fence is being installed around Woodward School. He suggested that decorative fencing be used instead. Ms. Ferraro advised that the State Board of Education controls all the public schools in Michigan and is not subject to historic district rules.

Ms. Ferraro discussed developments regarding the house at 531 Eleanor St.

Presentation from Old Home Rehab

Peter Carroll and Marc Ferraro made a presentation regarding their business, Old Home Rehab. Mr. Carroll advised that the business started about a year ago with the purpose of restoring old windows and doors. He stated that, to the best of his knowledge, this is the only such facility in the Midwest aimed at homes instead of institutional buildings. They use a 4' x 8' steam cabinet large enough to hold a door or several window sash. This is a safe way to remove lead paint, which is steamed about 1 hour at 180° and it also saves old glass. Mr. Carroll advised that they always use lead safe work practices to limit lead exposure from dust.

Mr. Tribu inquired if this method puts moisture into the wood. Mr. Carroll advised the windows are coated well with paint and protects the wood from the moisture while loosening the paint. Mr. Carrol advised that he met Marc Ferraro at a window restoration seminar. They learned that steam is used on the east coast for removing paint from old windows and doors.

Mr. Tribu inquired if someone could bring in a window or door to have it stripped. Mr. Carroll responded in the affirmative. He stated that the process includes stripping, priming and the addition of a finish coat, if desired. The cost is approximately \$60 to \$100 to strip the paint, reset and re-glaze the windows, and apply two coats of primer.

Mr. Decker inquired if it would be possible to match parts of the window or door if details were missing. Mr. Carroll advised that he has been working with Jim Gallagher who is an expert woodworker and can match or replicate missing pieces. Mr. Carroll referred to page 2 of the handout and the photos from a project in Buchanan, Michigan. Mr. Carroll stated that the lower muntins had been removed at the building in Buchanan. They were able to copy one from the upper sash and install the replicas where the muntins had been removed.

Mr. Carroll advised that for wood repairs and filling they use a product called Flextech from New York which is a silicone-based epoxy that preserves architectural features. The product expands and contracts so it doesn't cause damage to the wood. This product has been in use on the east coast for about 10 years. Once sanded and painted, you can't distinguish the epoxy from the wood. Ms. Ferraro inquired if the tax credit would still be available for properties where the epoxy has been used. Mr. Carroll advised that this epoxy has been used on national historic properties.

Mr. Nave inquired about the bronze storm/screen combination used on the Long Road house. Mr. Carroll stated that there is a belief in some communities that old windows are not efficient, but there is evidence to the contrary. Sometimes the old windows are either ill-fitting or lacking weather stripping, both situations can be remedied while the sashes are rehabilitated. There is a new product called Easystop, which is a system for weather stripping double-hung windows. The system includes a hard kerf-mounted, pile felting,

which helps to cut out chatter and helps seal the windows. Mr. Carroll also talks to home owners about the benefits of screens. A unit can be created with storm windows and screens in one unit. The frame with screens stays on the building year around and the storm windows would be removable from inside the house.

Mr. Tribu inquired if a seal would be used around the storm when it sets in the opening. Mr. Ferraro advised that the windows are usually tight enough that a seal would not be required. Also, the storm windows should be loose enough for weep holes and ventilation. It is important that the painters don't paint over the vent holes.

Mr. Decker inquired as to the cost of these storm window units. Mr. Carroll stated that it would be approximately \$200 for an installed unit. They are hoping to convert people back from aluminum combination storms. Mr. Carroll added that houses built before 1920 are usually more energy efficient since they use the natural air flows with opening upper sash for warm air to escape.

Mr. Ferraro provided an example of a nine pane window showing the eight steps in the restoration process: removal of the window glass, glazing and paint, sanding, one to two coats of primer and paint.

Mr. Carroll mentioned that during the 1930's and 1940's sashes were joined with nails. The restoration process involves digging out nails and putting in hard wood dowels so the sashes will last another century. Mr. Ferraro advised that they are trying to use techniques that were used when the houses were originally built. He added that nails start to protrude and eventually inhibit the functioning of the windows.

At this point, 90% of the business is window restoration. The business is currently located in the former Gibson Guitar building. Mr. Carroll stated that they have been looking at the former Johnson Howard building; they would like to renovate a building and move their shop into it. The hope is to eventually hire people from the trades (plumbing, lath plastering, etc.) and train their own work force. They would like the business to be centrally located in Kalamazoo with a focus on restoration of historic homes for single-family use.

Ms. Ferraro suggested that there might be job retraining dollars available for this use. Mr. Carroll stated that he is working with Mattie Jordan-Woods regarding woodworking and preservation in the Northside Neighborhood. Window restoration and glazing are a lost art, and the hope is to involve young people in this process and help them establish careers in restoration.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. Decker, moved to adjourn the March 18, 2008 meeting of the Historic District Commission. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
(Recording Secretary)

Dated: _____

Reviewed by: _____
(Staff Liaison)

Dated: _____

Approved by: _____
(HDC Chair)

Dated: _____