

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
Minutes  
July 15, 2008  
*DRAFT*

City Commission Chambers  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall  
241 W. South St., Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Members Present: Jay Bonsignore, Chair; Lisa Poole-Woldring, Vice Chair; Robert Cinabro; Nelson Nave; James Tribu

Members Excused: Linda DeYoung; Bob Oudsema

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Bonsignore called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF ABSENCES**

Mr. Oudsema and Ms. DeYoung advised city staff that they would not be present for the July HDC meeting.

**Ms. Poole-Woldring, supported by Mr. Tribu, moved approval of the absences of Mr. Oudsema and Ms. DeYoung. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**AGENDA (July 15, 2008)**

Ms. Ferraro advised that the applicant for 813 W. South Street made a written request that review of the property be postponed. Ms. Ferraro requested that a short discussion of 161 E. Michigan be added to the end of the agenda. Also add, under approval of Minutes, a discussion regarding the motion from the April Minutes pertaining to 813 W. South Street.

**Ms. Poole-Woldring, supported by Mr. Nave, moved approval of the July 15, 2008 HDC agenda as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

William Coombs, 806 W. South Street, was present to discuss his concerns regarding the sign for Spaman Jewelers at 813 W. South Street. He advised that he'd had a conversation with Ms. Ferraro last month, and that he appreciates the work she has done to get the owner of this property to put the sign in the correct place. He mentioned that she had also persuaded the property owner to lower the sign. The property is looking

good and the paint has improved it a great deal. Mr. Coombs stated that he is still opposed to the sign. The word "open" has been added to the sign and that was not part of the original sign. Also, the sign does not harmonize well with the color of the building. Mr. Coombs expressed concern that once a decision is made by the HDC, the decision stands even though objections may be made later. Accordingly, this gives applicants an advantage over people in the neighborhood. Mr. Coombs commented that he understood the need to balance the rights of the residents and the developers.

Mr. Coombs stated that in June of 2007 the owner of 813 W. South St. submitted an application for the sign. The HDC approved the sign, but the sign that currently exists does not conform to what was originally requested. The ZBA (Zoning Board of Appeals) met in November 2007 regarding the legal status of this building. The ZBA decided this was not a retail business.

Mr. Coombs suggested to Ms. Ferraro that it would be a good idea to have a couple of weeks to inform people in the historic district when these issues occur. This may have provided an opportunity to change the minds of people who voted to approve the sign. He commented that the appeal is tied up with historic district laws at the state level, and the local HDC must operate under those rules. However, the people in the immediate area should be notified of impending changes in the neighborhood. Applications are reviewed by the HDC within a couple of weeks of the time they are submitted so that property owners can begin work as soon as possible. This gives the applicants an advantage.

### **DISCLAIMER**

Ms. Ferraro read the disclaimer into the record.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **302 W. Walnut (Case #: 08-0188)**

Chris Moore was present to discuss the application. The application requests the addition of a rear, second floor deck. The door already exists.

Mr. Moore distributed revised plans to the HDC. Mr. Moore stated that he has been working to address violations generated at the rental housing inspection. There is a door opening leading onto the deck, but there is no railing around the deck so it is unsafe. There have been discussions about the possibility of installing a window where the door is, or installing a deck to meet historic district standards. The home owners consulted with their architect and with Mr. Nave regarding possible options.

Mr. Nave confirmed that he spoke with the owners, and Architect Larry Bishop provided the concept drawing for the deck. Mr. Bishop's daughter is part of the housing cooperative that lives at this address. Mr. Nave stated that the deck is required to support a minimum of 100 pounds per square foot. The owners are now considering removing the old addition and building a new one with a new roof to support the deck. The siding and trim should match. They will try to recycle the existing siding; they don't think it will be possible to find matching siding.

There are 10 people in the cooperative, and there are 10 bedrooms in the house. They would like to have more common areas and space to share outside. The proposed addition will have the same footprint as the old addition. Mr. Nave stated that the roof will slope in the same direction. Notes on the drawing provide more information.

Mr. Cinabro inquired about the pictures that were presented. Mr. Moore stated that the pictures are of sites in the neighborhood which are similar to the subject property. There was a prior discussion about the proposed project setting a precedent. Mr. Nave advised that the pictures show similar decks approved in the historic district.

Mr. Bonsignore inquired if the new proposal eliminates the posts outside the structure that were in the original proposal. Mr. Moore responded in the affirmative.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Oudsema, moved approval to rebuild the addition at 302 W. Walnut to match the original. The siding and trim should match the existing. The existing window and door are to be used. The deck rails should conform to historic district guidelines. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Ferraro recommended building the rail to match the one at 315 Stuart. Further details will be provided when the applicant applies for the building permit. Ms. Ferraro offered to assist the applicant regarding the details of the railing.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

No one was present to represent 717-19 West South St. or 934 S. Park and the HDC proceeded to the next agenda item.

### **410 Park Place (IHA 08-0263)**

Tom Kelley was present to represent the property. The application requests removal of a chimney at the rear of the house.

Mr. Kelley advised that there is a lot of unused attic space and he would like to have a bathroom in that location. In order to proceed with the proposed plan, the chimney

would have to be removed to provide access to the bathroom. The chimney is deteriorated. There are three bedrooms upstairs but no bathroom.

Mr. Tribu inquired if the chimney is an important architectural detail that should not be removed. Ms. Ferraro advised that there are other more significant architectural details on this house. Mr. Tribu commented that the top part of the chimney doesn't appear to be original and Ms. Ferraro concurred. The chimney was missing the appropriate flashing, and the tar on the roof appears to have contributed to the deterioration.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. Poole-Woldring, moved approval of the application as submitted for 410 Park Place. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**824 Village Court (Case #: IHA 08-0277)**

Gerald Kinsey was present to represent the property. The application requests demolition of a deteriorated garage.

Mr. Kinsey advised that the garage is beyond repair and he wants permission to tear it down. Mr. Nave suggested recycling the siding. Ms. Ferraro advised that this is the type of siding many people look for. The garage appears to have been built around the same time as the house, but the garage has been altered.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Tribu, moved approval of the garage demolition at 824 Village Court, with the request that the siding be salvaged. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Ferraro advised the applicant that he will need to obtain a demolition permit before the garage can be taken down. The demolition permit will also trigger the removal of the garage from the tax rolls.

**717-19 W. South Street (Case #: IHV 08-0021)**

No one was present to represent the property. The application requests rebuilding of the deteriorated front porch steps.

The wooden porch rests on what appears to be a concrete block base, which was probably an alteration from the 1920's. The concrete base is deteriorated and the concrete steps are an integral part of that base. Ideally, the roof should be supported so the concrete structure can be torn out to the basement floor and then rebuilt. However, that would be expensive. Another option would be to construct a new set of steps with the appropriate rise and run to be code compliant. Accordingly, a new set of steps should be built independent of the existing concrete steps. The first step should be at the level of the

porch deck. The new steps can be built over the old ones or the old ones can be removed first.

Mr. Tribu expressed concern about the distribution of weight from the upper porch, which is resting on supports connected to the cement structure. Without proper support the front porch may be at risk when the alterations are made to the steps/base. Ms. Ferraro advised that there is a room under the porch and she has been told that a 4' x 4" framework has been constructed inside that location to provide support. She added that she would rather see a resolution which would preserve the historic character, rather than a temporary fix. However, that may not be economically feasible at this point.

Mr. Nave inquired if this affected only the east corner. Ms. Ferraro stated that the west corner is also out of plumb, but not as bad. Mr. Nave suggested putting concrete block underneath to take care of that. Ms. Ferraro advised that concrete block would be acceptable to use underneath in that location; it is the entry to the downstairs unit. She suggested working with the Building Official to make sure the structure is code compliant, and then making sure that the historic details are correct.

Mr. Cinabro inquired as to what the applicant is requesting the HDC approve. Ms. Ferraro advised that the applicant wants approval for the work detailed in the drawings he submitted. He inquired about the concept of wood over concrete. Ms. Ferraro advised that configuration of materials would not be code compliant. Mr. Tribu stated that cracks are visible on the other side of the wall by the window. He indicated that the structure is probably moving due to deterioration and it should be removed. Ms. Ferraro commented that the HDC would likely allow an extended period of time for the applicant to address problems with the entire structure, not just the steps.

Mr. Nave suggested consulting with Tom Nehill for engineering advice on this project. If concrete block will be used, it should be covered with the same stucco as the west side. Ms. Ferraro advised that if the HDC denies the application, she could assist the applicant with the details of the project.

Mr. Bonsignore requested clarification regarding information on the application. Ms. Ferraro stated that the information referenced was her note to the applicant advising that the steps could remain on a temporary basis until she had a chance to look at them. At that point, the hope was that the steps should be rebuilt by 8-31-08.

Mr. Nave questioned if the code would require a handrail on the inside of the stairs. Ms. Ferraro advised that the steps will likely be less than 30" and, therefore, a second handrail would not be required.

**Mr. Tribu, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved to deny the application for 717-19 West South St. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Ferraro advised that the applicants should have more historically appropriate and solid construction.

Mr. Tribu inquired at what point this property would be referred to the Dangerous Building Board. Ms. Ferraro stated that it might happen pretty soon if no action is taken.

**934 S. Park (Case #: IHA 08-0261)**

No one was present to represent the property. The application requests replacement of both front doors with matching front doors without windows.

Ms. Ferraro advised that the front door on the left is not original but it is very old. There is a flat door behind the storm door to the right. The applicants are proposing to have matching wood doors compatible with the era of the house. Usually, the doors would not have been solid so the proposed doors are not appropriate. Replacing the two, tall narrow panels in the doors with glass would be acceptable.

Mr. Nave mentioned that this house is in a rough part of Park Street and the doors were probably broken in many times. That may be why the applicant wants solid doors. Mr. Bonsignore suggested using tempered glass.

Ms. Ferraro stated that the applicant already owns these doors; she was not sure if they are exterior grade doors. Mr. Tribu advised that it would be preferable to see the doors; the jambs have been rebuilt.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Tribu, moved approval of the application for 934 S. Park Street. The approved doors would have to fit the existing openings. The trim should match the original. He suggested that the top and bottom of the doors should be sealed. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**220 Elm St. (Case #: IHA 08-0281)**

No one was present to represent the property. The application requests replacement of the beadboard/parallel board ceiling on front/west and rear/east porches with board and batten ceilings to match the side/south porch.

Mr. Nave mentioned that someone tried to match some of the details years ago, but it is not aesthetically pleasing and is now falling apart. The angular part of the front porch is coming up to meet the ceiling, which was replaced with tongue and groove board.

Ms. Ferraro advised that the front and rear porches are mostly original material. That treatment was considered stylish around 1905, but would not be allowed today. The applicant wants to install 4" x 8" sheets of the proposed material. Ms. Ferraro stated that there are problems with the roof but wood screws should pull the pieces up where they

need be; the entire porch ceiling doesn't need to come down. The applicant wants to put the new material over the existing ceiling and cover over the seams.

**Mr. Tribu, supported by Mr. Nave, moved to deny the application for 220 Elm Street. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**813 W. South St. (Case #: IHV 08-0003)**

Mr. Nave inquired about the 60-day deadline for work to be done on this property. Ms. Ferraro stated that the applicant provided a written requested for an extension; the deadline only comes into play if there is nothing in writing.

**161 E. Michigan - discussion**

Ms. Ferraro advised that she met with the owner's representative regarding some of the proposed work. On page 1 is a photo of the back of the building from the 1950's. The color photos are from July 15, 2008. Concept drawings were also provided to show how the rear of the Haymarket building could be made into a more attractive space for future tenants. That space used to be occupied by the Food Dance kitchen. The concept includes restoration of the windows which have been blocked up for the past 60 to 70 years. Many of the window openings have been changed over time. A couple of options for windows were presented, including a longer window extending almost to the ground that would be appropriate as a display window. There will likely be further discussion about this proposal at an upcoming HDC meeting.

Discussion followed with regard to the details of the windows and the changes to the back of the building.

Mr. Bonsignore inquired if there were any objections from the HDC about putting the windows back in this location. No objections were voiced.

Ms. Ferraro stated that she would advise the applicant that either option would be acceptable. With option B, the sills should be 10" to 16" above grade. If the windows are reopened, they should be toothed in to match the original, with the possibility of using salvaged bricks. The vents should be painted to match the rest of the building.

**MINUTES**

**(June 17, 2008)**

**Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. Poole-Woldring, moved to postpone approval until the next HDC meeting to allow more time for review of the minutes. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**(April 15, 2008)**

At the June 17<sup>th</sup> HDC meeting, Mr. Nave questioned the wording of a motion regarding 813 W. South St. Accordingly, he requested a review of that motion. After a brief discussion, the following motion was made:

**Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Tribu, moved approval of the motion regarding 813 W. South Street in the April 17, 2008 HDC minutes with the addition of the wording, “has different text and has a different impression.” With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Ferraro stated that she attended a conference in New Orleans. There was a discussion at the conference regarding a concept called, “The Good, the Gad and the Ugly.” This program provides opportunities for HDC commissioners to review what work approved in the previous year and how it turned out.

A yearly training is required for each of the city’s boards and commissions. Ms. Ferraro suggested that the training session for the HDC be scheduled for January or February. She requested input regarding the topics to be covered at the training. The Holland and Grand Rapids HDC has expressed interest in doing a combined training session with Kalamazoo, and sharing the cost of the training. Making good motions might be a possible topic of discussion at the training session.

Mr. Bonsignore expressed a preference for having the training session in early February. Ms. Ferraro advised that she would look into options for trainers. She suggested having a “good, bad, ugly” presentation in January in the Community Room at City Hall. The presentation will concentrate on projects approved by the HDC over the past 18 months. Mr. Bonsignore suggested that it would also be helpful to have some of the homeowners say a few words at the presentation. Ms. Ferraro mentioned that the HDC reviews approximately 90 to 100 applications per year.

Ms. Poole-Woldring advised that she would not be present for the August meeting.

Mr. Cinabro stated that he was looking forward to working with the Historic District Commission and city staff.

Ms. Ferraro advised that Erin Seaverson, who is currently serving on the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), would like to serve on the HDC. Ms. Seaverson is an Architectural Engineer.

Mr. Nave referred to the wig shop on Michigan Avenue and stated that the violations at that address have never been corrected. The metal cones that used to be on the columns

are in a room at the Coney Island. The cones were supposed to have been put back on the building after the roof was finished. Ms. Ferraro advised that she would provide this information to the new owners.

In discussing violations from the table included in the HDC packets, Ms. Ferraro referred to a property on the corner of Wheaton and Oak, which has had an inappropriate rail for the past seven years. The new owner called Ms. Ferraro and she asked him to change the guardrail; he complied with the request.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. Poole-Woldring, supported by Mr. Nave, moved to adjourn the July 15, 2008 Historic District Commission meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Recording Secretary)

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Staff Liaison)

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_  
(HDC Chair)