

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Minutes

December 16, 2008

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

Members Present: Jay Bonsignore, Chair; Bob Cinabro; Linda DeYoung; Nelson Nave; Bob Oudsema; James Tribu

Members Excused: Lisa Poole-Woldring, Vice Chair

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

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Bonsignore called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA (December 16, 2008)

Ms. Ferraro requested a discussion regarding a possible change in the January HDC meeting date to be added to the end of the agenda.

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved approval of the December 16, 2008 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

None

NEW BUSINESS

A. 723 W. South St. (Case #: IHA 08-0519) (ITEM B)

Richard Emig, South Street Properties, was present to discuss the application. The application requests the installation of appropriate siding for a non-historic structure surrounding the 3rd story rear entrance.

Mr. Emig advised that the OSB by the entrance has been in that location since he purchased the property in 1999. Tim Collins, Housing Inspector for the City of Kalamazoo, recently noticed the OSB and requested that it be covered. Mr. Emig is considering replacing the OSB with T-111 pine siding to be consistent with the addition on the lower portion of the house since they are both additions. There is stucco on the upper part of the building, which is original to the house. Mr. Emig advised that he would prefer to have something that would provide uniformity with the rest of the house. He requested input from the HDC as to what they would prefer.

Ms. Ferraro stated that she thought the stucco on the dormers was original; it is a “popcorn-textured” surface. The new construction could either blend in with the stucco, or a different material could be used to more clearly define the new construction. Mr. Emig suggested using T-111 siding and painting it to match the house. Inspector Collins is scheduled to return in January for a re-inspection.

Mr. Emig stated that the satellite dish is no longer being used and it will be removed shortly. He inquired if Ms. Poole-Woldring had resigned, and stated that he had submitted an application to serve on the HDC. Ms. Ferraro advised that Mr. Emig and the other applicant would be invited to interview at a future HDC meeting.

Discussion followed with regard to the possibility of using T-111 siding. Mr. Bonsignore commented that there is no T-111 siding at the level of the dormers. Accordingly, he felt that it would not be appropriate to use it in that location. He suggested using a smooth, cement-fiber siding such as Hardie Board.

Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved approval of the cement board, faux stucco panel for the siding and trim around the door at 723 W. South Street. The trim should wrap slightly around the corner to the edges of the door frame. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bonsignore stated that the roof should be flashed to the siding to avoid problems in the future. Mr. Emig advised that Brian Bishop and Matt Musselman would be working on this project.

B. 926 W. Main (Case #: IHV 08-0522) (ITEM C)

Brian Spaulding was present to discuss the application. The application requests demolition of the garage.

Mr. Spaulding stated that he would prefer to demolish the garages rather than investing a substantial amount of money for repairs. The style of the garages is not compatible with the house which was built in 1870. Ms. Ferraro advised that the pressed, faux brick metal above the doors appears to be from the 1930's. The garage is not original to the house. Mr. Spaulding requested advice on how to proceed with the garages.

Mr. Oudsema inquired as to what would be done with the space if the garages are demolished. Ms. Spaulding stated that the space would be turned into a parking area and a privacy fence would be added. He is proposing to install a 6' high, cedar reverse board privacy fence similar to the fence at his house at 218 Woodward. No additional landscaping will be added.

Mr. Oudsema suggested that the garages would add value to the rental property. Mr. Spaulding agreed, but questioned how they could be made to look more attractive. The tenants leave the garage doors open. The doors don't match and something needs to be done with them. Mr. Spaulding questioned if the garage should be repaired and improved or if it should be torn down. He stated that he didn't have estimates on the cost of demolition, but it is possible that the demolition might cost more than the repairs. Ms. Ferraro estimated that it would cost \$4,000 to \$5,000 to demolish the garages. Mr. Spaulding commented that the block walls will take substantial effort to remove.

Mr. Nave referred to a similar garage on South Street that has been restored and now looks very nice. Mr. Nave observed four cars in the subject garage, which confirms that the renters are using it. He stated that the garage is in good shape other than the roof and trim. Mr. Oudsema commented that the HDC has a history of bias toward keeping garages. Some garages in need of more repair than the ones at the subject property have been denied demolition.

Mr. Tribu commented that the historic district is losing a lot of garages. It wouldn't take much to make these garages look better. He suggested providing estimates to compare demolition and repair. Mr. Spaulding stated that he could obtain that information and return to the HDC in April or May. Mr. Nave mentioned that the two garage bays on the left/west have original doors and they still slide.

Ms. Ferraro offered to find out if the repairs would qualify for the tax credit, which could be utilized if the garages are more than 50 years old.

Mr. Cinabro, supported by Mr. Nave, moved to postpone the decision regarding demolition of the garages until the May 2009 Historic District Commission meeting. With a roll call vote, the motion carried with five ayes and one abstention. Ms. DeYoung abstained from voting.

Mr. Bonsignore advised that the cost of the fencing and landscaping should also be included in the estimate.

Approval of Minutes (November 18, 2008)

Due to extenuating circumstances, the November minutes were turned in just prior to the December meeting. In order to provide adequate time for review of the minutes, the following motion was made:

Ms. DeYoung, supported by Mr. Nave, moved to defer approval of the November 18, 2008 Historic District Commission Minutes until the January 2009 meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion followed with regard to the January HDC meeting, and a potential conflict with the regularly scheduled meeting date.

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Nave, moved to defer the January, 2009 Historic District Commission meeting to February, 2009.

Ms. Ferraro suggested moving the January meeting date from the 20th to the 27th. If there are no applications submitted by the 13th, the January meeting would be cancelled. Ms. Ferraro advised that she spoke with two potential applicants who are planning major projects and they may need approval to get started as soon as possible. She suggested modifying the motion to allow for this contingency.

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Nave, withdrew the motion regarding deferral of the January 2009 HDC meeting.

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Nave, moved to tentatively reschedule the next HDC meeting to January 27th, with notification by January 13th regarding cancellation of the meeting due to a lack of applications. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Reappointment of Commissioners DeYoung & Tribu for a second term.

Mr. Cinabro, supported by Mr. Nave, moved to recommend to the City Commission, the reappointment of Commissioners DeYoung and Tribu to a second term on the Historic District Commission. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

B. FYI Report (ITEM D)

Ms. Ferraro advised that the Historic Preservation Commission has voted to nominate the Rickman House as a single-resource, local historic district. This will allow them the make use of the proposed, enhanced Michigan Historic Preservation income tax credit when they start the rehab in 2010.

Mr. Oudsema inquired as to why there is concern about tax credits for a building owned by a non-profit organization. Ms. Ferraro advised that the Rickman House is 99% owned by investors and 1% by Housing Resources, Inc. This arrangement was made to allow the owners to take advantage of the low income housing tax credit and the historic preservation tax credit during the last rehab in the early 1990's. They would like to have the same type of credit arrangement as before. The State legislature is expected to pass the augmented Michigan Historic Preservation Tax Credit. There is a federal tax credit of 20% and a state tax credit of 5% currently available. The new state tax credit will add a 10% -15% Michigan income tax credit in the near future.

Mr. Nave inquired if there are more buildings near the Rickman House that could be included in the designation. Ms. Ferraro advised that the Rickman House could be the first step. The building in which Sarkozy's Bakery is located could also be included in the district at a later date, as well as the building occupied by the Visiting Nurses Association, and the Gerber Building. The Rickman House is a unique building and can be nominated as a single-resource district for the local register.

Mr. Bonsignore inquired if the designation would have to be requested by the property owner or if the City of Kalamazoo could make the request. Ms. Ferraro advised that the city could make the request but probably wouldn't. Typically, a property owner will start the process by requesting the historic designation. Owners of the Rickman House have asked for the designation, but this matter will not likely appear on the HDC agenda until 2010.

Mr. Bonsignore inquired if the Lustron homes scattered around the city would be eligible for the historic designation. Ms. Ferraro stated that the five Lustron houses located in the City of Kalamazoo were built in 1948, and they would be eligible for the historic designation. The Lustron houses are metal with a porcelain ceramic finish and they were bolted together.

Mr. Nave inquired about having the two, tall buildings that are part of the Gospel Mission across from the Rickman House included in the designation. Ms. Ferraro stated that it is not likely since there are too many empty lots and other buildings in between, which are not part of the district. Mr. Nave commented that the Rickman House is one of the last of the old hotels in Kalamazoo.

Ms. Ferraro advised that Erin Seaverson and Richard Emig have both submitted applications to serve on the HDC. The applicants can either be interviewed by a sub-committee or they can be invited to a regular meeting of the HDC. Discussion followed as to whether or not the applicants are residents of the City of Kalamazoo, since that is a prerequisite to serve on the commission. Ms. Ferraro advised that she would review the applications to make sure both applicants meet the residency qualification.

Ms. Ferraro stated that the Old House Expo is scheduled for January 24th at the County Fairgrounds Expo Center. Gordon Bach from the Old House Journal is scheduled to speak at the Expo.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. DeYoung, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved to adjourn the December 16, 2008 meeting of the Historic District Commission. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
(Recording Secretary)

Date: _____

Reviewed by: _____
(Staff Liaison)

Date: _____

Approved by: _____
(HDC Chair)

Date: _____