

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**Minutes**  
**March 17, 2009**

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jay Bonsignore, Chair; Bob Cinabro; Linda DeYoung;  
Nelson Nave; Bob Oudsema; Erin Seaverson

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** James Tribu

**CITY STAFF:** Sharon Ferraro, Historic Preservation Coordinator;  
Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**II. APPROVAL OF ABSENCES**

Mr. Tribu informed city staff that he would not be available for the March 17<sup>th</sup> HDC meeting.

**Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved approval of Mr. Tribu's absence from the March 17, 2009 HDC meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (March 17, 2009)**

Ms. Ferraro advised that John Kirk from Kingscott was not available for the presentation regarding changes to the former Kalamazoo Central High School building and Chenery Auditorium. Accordingly, Ms. Ferraro will provide the presentation at the end of the meeting.

**Ms. DeYoung, supported by Ms. Seaverson, moved approval of the March 17, 2009 HDC Agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

None

**V. DISCLAIMER**

Ms. Ferraro read the disclaimer into the record.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. 423-5 S. Westnedge (Case #: IHA 09-0045) (Item A)**

Mike Hills was present to represent the property. The application requests a free-standing, internally illuminated sign.

At the February meeting, the HDC requested more information from the applicant to help determine if the new sign would be the appropriate size for the proposed location. In response to that request, Mr. Hills had a cardboard model of the sign constructed and nailed to the existing sign to help the commission visualize how the final product will look. Mr. Hills stated that the width of the new sign is the same as the existing one. A new sketch was provided to show the changes to the face of the proposed sign, which is significantly lower and more slender than the proposal at the February meeting. There are a couple of other internally lit signs on the block, and Mr. Hills is requesting that the HDC allow him to install the proposed sign in front of his law office.

Paul Havenaar from Sign Impressions stated that the posts for the sign would be constructed of styrofoam with a hard coat and stucco on the outside. The sign will have a dark background and only the white letters will light up, rather than having a spotlight on the sign which would also illuminate the area around it. There will be less chance of vandalism with the new sign because of the way it is constructed. The existing spotlight has been damaged by vandals.

Mr. Nave inquired if the white square at the bottom of the sign would be lit. Mr. Havenaar advised that part of the design has changed. The sign will have a black background with white lettering and only the white lettering will illuminate. The sign will be single-faced like the old one.

Mr. Oudsema inquired if the sign serves the second address at 423, and Mr. Havenaar responded in the affirmative. Ms. Ferraro stated that 423 and 425 are the same building but separate entrances. Mr. Oudsema inquired if the applicant wanted to install a sign at the other entrance. Mr. Hills advised that he only wants a sign by the south entrance (425) where the secretaries are. The entrance at 423 S. Westnedge is used after hours.

Mr. Cinabro inquired if the red and green sign would be coming down. Mr. Havenaar stated that the existing sign will be replaced with the proposed sign, if it is approved.

Ms. Seaverson inquired if the photos show the original size or the newer size of the sign. Mr. Havenaar stated that the photos depict the older version of the proposed sign, the new proposal is for a slightly smaller sign.

**Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved approval of the application for the sign at 423-425 S. Westnedge as presented.**

**Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Cinabro, amended the motion to stipulate that the sign approved by the HDC will be the same dimension and shape as the one shown in the photo circulated at the dais. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **B. 714 Locust (Case#: IHA 09-0078) (Item B)**

Robert Noble was present to represent the property. The application requests removal of the chimney.

Mr. Noble stated that the chimney was repaired in the past. During the past winter, the upstairs was empty while the applicant was rehabbing the internal part of the structure. The furnace was running a lot and there were no windows in the upstairs at that point. As a consequence of those conditions, the methane, carbon dioxide and water converted to carbonic acid and seeped through the chimney in the upper part of the structure, all the way up to the roof. There was 2 to 4 inches of ice on the outside of the chimney. Mr. Noble stated that he was uncertain as to the extent of the damage to the chimney and roof on the inside. The chimney is not original to the house and Mr. Noble would like to remove it. The chimney, which is in the original, center portion of the house, is barely visible from the street. The only plaster around the chimney peeled off and the mortar is soft. Mr. Noble would like to reinforce the roof and add rafters and joists to make the house more structurally sound.

Mr. Nave stated that he did design work on this house several years ago. Mr. Noble confirmed that Mr. Nave provided drawings for the front porch about 10 years ago.

Mr. Cinabro inquired if the new furnace would have small vents to the outside. Mr. Noble stated that he is proposing to install a "green", 95% efficient furnace, a tankless water heater, and a heat pump, which will be vented with PVC pipe, probably through the side of the house. There will be no need for a chimney.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved approval of the application for removal of the chimney at 714 Locust. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Bonsignore mentioned that, in the past, the HDC has not allowed removal of chimneys that are architectural features of the house and are visible from the outside. This chimney does not provide much of an architectural feature.

Ms. Ferraro suggested that the applicant salvage any reusable bricks to be used on other projects.

**1516 W. Michigan – Islamic Center (Case #: IHV 06-0056) (Item C)**

Nelson Nave, AIA (architect) was present to discuss the application. The application requests demolition of part of the non-historic building.

Mr. Nave advised that the applicant would like to demolish approximately 1,000 square feet of the concrete building, which was built in the 1950's or 1960's. That area of the building is badly deteriorated. Mr. Nave referred to a photo of the west entrance of the addition, the area of the building on the left with the faux brick would be torn down.

Mr. Bonsignore requested clarification of the plan. Mr. Nave approached the dais to provide further details of the proposal. He pointed out the 25' x 40' section of the building that is slated for demolition. Half of the future master plan will be used for a future prayer area, but that may not be done for several years. That area is designated with a dotted line on the site plan. Mr. Nave pointed out the changes that will be made to the north entrance. The wall is 16' and the dome is 4' above that. The dome is set back on the roof so that only the three foot, half circle is visible from the parking lot. The wall facing west will have a mural painted on it, and the windows will look like a series of arches. It will be designed so it won't deteriorate, and it has a beige and white latex coating.

Mr. Oudsema inquired as to how this would impact the store fronts on W. Michigan Ave. Mr. Nave advised that the store fronts owned by the Islamic Center would stay the same. The proposed changes won't be visible from Michigan Avenue. Mr. Oudsema inquired as to the long-term plans for this property and how those plans will affect buildings facing W. Michigan Avenue. Mr. Nave stated that the future changes will be hidden behind the Bruno's Pizza building and the Kinko's building. The site is only visible after you turn onto Burrows Street from W. Michigan.

Mr. Oudsema inquired what affect the proposed changes would have in ten years. Mr. Nave stated that the final prayer hall currently has ten foot tall ceilings; the ceilings will be 14 to 15 feet tall in the final prayer hall. Mr. Oudsema inquired if the future addition would extend to Michigan Avenue. Mr. Nave stated that the full addition will be further to the north. There will be no signage on Burrows or the street to the east. The only signage will remain, as is, on the store front.

Mr. Oudsema inquired if the applicants have communicated with adjoining property owners about this project. Mr. Nave advised that the proposed plan has already received site plan approval. The Planning Commission approved a special use permit for the project. The Planning Commission requires that surrounding property owners be notified of proposed projects. Mike Fleckenstein was the only property owner who spoke at the public hearing in front of the Planning Commission. He commented in favor of the request from city staff that the applicants clean up the woods at the northeast corner of their property. Mr. Fleckenstein owns the house to the northeast of the applicant's property.

**Ms. DeYoung, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved approval of the demolition of the north part of the non-historic building at 1516 W. Michigan Ave as presented by Mr. Nave. With a roll call vote, the motion carried with five ayes and one abstention. Mr. Nave abstained from voting.**

**Ms. DeYoung, supported by Ms. Seaverson, moved approval to rebuild the portion of the building at 1516 W. Michigan Ave. as presented by Mr. Nave, for the current phase of the project only. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. With a roll call vote, the motion carried with five ayes and one abstention. Mr. Nave abstained from voting.**

Mr. Nave stated that there will be no lighting in the dome. The two lights on top of the posts are hundred watt metal halide and they are not very bright.

## **VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (February 17, 2009)**

There were no changes to the minutes.

**Mr. Oudsema, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved approval of the February 17, 2009 HDC Minutes as submitted. With a voice vote, the motion carried with five ayes and one abstention. Mr. Bonsignore abstained from voting.**

## **XI. DISCUSSION**

### **A. Van Beck Roofing and Siding – Presentation by Chris Landis regarding new contractor for window rehabilitation and Supertherm paint (1125 King Highway, Kalamazoo, MI 49001) (Item F)**

Mr. Landis advised that the pamphlet provided to the HDC shows the thickness of the Supertherm insulated coating application and the equivalent “r-value” for fiberglass insulation. The coating can be any color paint Sherwin Williams produces from a medium to light tone; the dark tones do not perform well in this product. It has a 25-year life expectancy on a residential wall. It comes with a 10-year material warranty. It offers an R-19 insulation value on the exterior of building.

Ms. Ferraro suggested that the Supertherm could be used on the interior or exterior of the roof to help with loss of heat or cooling through the roof. Mr. Landis advised that the best method for the roof would be application of the product on the inside of the home on the ceiling. Most paint is about 22% ceramic, this is a 66% ceramic-base paint, which provides more insulation value than vinyl siding and preserves wood siding on the exterior of the home. This product has an R-20 value when used for an interior application. It has an 8.8 perm rating, which allows moisture out. Most siding has a perm rating of 5. It also has a .01 water vapor transmission and can be used as an extra ice and water guard under shingles. The return on investment with this product is about four years. Mr. Landis stated that he didn’t bring samples but could provide them if

needed. This is a reflective and deflective material to keep cold out in the winter and heat out in the summer. This product has been used in Germany, Florida and Colorado.

Mr. Oudsema inquired as to how long this product has been on the market. Mr. Landis advised that it has been on the market for about ten years and has been used for residential and commercial applications. It has also been used on the bottom side of the space shuttle for re-entry.

Mr. Oudsema inquired as to why this product is not commonly used if it has been in existence for ten years. Mr. Landis advised that there are only six dealers in the United States with this product. Ms. Ferraro mentioned that special training is required to be able to apply this product.

Mr. Oudsema inquired if Mr. Landis was aware if this product has been used in any historic districts. Mr. Landis stated that it has been used in Denver and San Antonio historic districts. Ms. Ferraro offered to contact the Historic Preservation Coordinators in those towns to get feedback regarding the performance of this product. Mr. Oudsema suggested keeping an open mind about this product, but stated that more information would be needed before a decision could be made.

Ms. Ferraro inquired as to how this product could be removed. Mr. Landis stated that he was not sure about removal of the product, but it can be painted over. Ms. Ferraro mentioned that there is a product called liquid vinyl siding which will bulge if water or air gets behind it. It can be removed with K-1 kerosene.

Mr. Oudsema requested information regarding the cost of this product for a 1,600 square foot, two-story, frame home. Mr. Landis stated that it would cost approximately \$7,600 in labor and material.

Mr. Cinabro inquired if the HDC was expected to endorse or approve the use of this product. Ms. Ferraro advised that she gets questions about new products and paint and the HDC needs to be able to form an opinion about those products. The presentation is for informational purposes only. The HDC cannot endorse this product but might be able to approve it for certain uses.

Mr. Landis stated that this product is no thicker than a business card or about two coats of paint (10 mils).

Mr. Nave inquired as to what happens when the product comes off. Mr. Landis stated that the product has a 20 to 25 year life expectancy. He further stated that he would try to get answers to the questions that have been asked.

Mr. Nave mentioned that if this product looks like vinyl, the HDC would probably not approve it. Mr. Landis stated that it reflects 95% of the heat load and can be applied over vinyl. Ms. Ferraro suggested applying the product to some of the wood trim pieces she

has to see what it looks like. It is important to not obliterate the fine details. Mr. Landis stated that the product does not fill in grooves on cedar or stucco.

Ms. Seaverson commented that the fact sheet doesn't say what the product is being compared to. How does it compare to other light-colored coatings? Mr. Landis stated that he has a CD with examples showing the product on two buildings with two different temperatures for a 24-hour period. Ms. Seaverson commented that the information provided about Supertherm states that the product by itself does not protect against heat loss and gain through conduction. Therefore, it is an r-equivalent and it is supposed to be used with foam insulation in northern regions and countries subject to hard freezes. Mr. Landis advised that Supertherm can be placed directly over the wood siding, which has a natural r-value. He suggested that applying the product directly to the wood should be sufficient.

Mr. Bonsignore disagreed with regard to the r-value of the wood when this product is applied. He commented that most of the examples in the literature are from high-cooling areas, such as Phoenix, which deal with radiant heat loss and gain. If this product is used in Michigan to keep warm, it might be a disappointment. It would be better to use this product on interior surfaces to keep the heat in. The R-19 equivalent is radiant heat not conduction. Mr. Landis stated that he was not suggesting that fiberglass insulation would not be necessary. Mr. Bonsignore commented that the figures in the brochure could lead to abuses if individuals reading the information are not informed about what r-value means. This product could work with a properly insulated house to help retain heat in the house, but it would be less useful on the outside in northern climates.

Mr. Oudsema stated that he would prefer to see this product on wood. Stucco houses are less than 2% of the housing stock in Kalamazoo. There is a high percent of wood frame houses in this community. It would be helpful to see the product applied to a house before a further evaluation could be made.

Ms. Ferraro requested more details about the window restoration services. Mr. Landis stated that a company in Indiana does the window restoration. The wood windows would be removed, sanded, finished, rejoined at the corners, and the glass would be reglazed. He stated that he was not sure about the historic district rules. Ms. Ferraro advised that the HDC prefers restoration of windows rather than replacement. Mr. Landis stated that he could provide pictures of a 133 year old house in Mendon that the company is currently working on. The employees from the Indiana office are using the Mendon house to train a local crew to do the work. He inquired as to the HDC's recommendations for restoring windows. Ms. Ferraro advised that the windows should be as close as possible to the way they were originally.

### **B. Demolition notice proposal (Item G)**

Ms. Ferraro advised that a proposal for noticing adjacent property owners of potential demolitions, new construction or moving of structures was included in the March HDC packet. City staff would be responsible for mailing the notices to property owners.

Mr. Cinabro inquired if adopting such a noticing procedure would address the concerns expressed by Mr. Snyder at last month's meeting. Ms. Ferraro responded in the affirmative. She stated that property owners within 300 feet of the subject property would be notified of the opportunity to comment at a public hearing in front of the HDC. Mr. Cinabro inquired if the proposed noticing procedures would require an ordinance amendment. Ms. Ferraro stated that she was uncertain if an ordinance change would be required, and that she would look into that possibility.

Mr. Oudsema questioned if 300 feet would be an adequate distance for the mailings to be sent. He commented that it should help spread the word if there is an inflammatory issue in the neighborhood. Mr. Bonsignore mentioned the importance of staying consistent by using the 300 foot radius that other boards use. Ms. Ferraro commented that neighborhood associations would also receive notices. She already e-mails HDC packets to about 35 people; additional people can be added to the distribution list as requested. The HDC packets are posted on the city's website and can be accessed by the public.

Ms. Seaverson expressed concern that "substantial new construction" is not defined in the proposal; does that language refer to additions to a main structure? Ms. Ferraro stated that the addition of a stoop on the back porch would not be considered substantial construction. However, a family room addition on the back of the house would probably be defined as substantial construction.

Ms. Ferraro advised that possible upcoming agenda items include a proposed garage addition and a house to be moved into the historic district. It might be possible to do a "test run" of the noticing procedures if these agenda items are pursued, and then proceed with an ordinance amendment. She suggested that the noticing requirements may be procedural rather than ordinance driven. For instance, when work is being done in the historic district, green signs are posted at the property to let the inspectors and neighbors know the work has been approved. Those signs are not mandated by the ordinance. In Ann Arbor, signs are posted on the site before the historic district meetings to advise what is being proposed, notices are sent to people within a certain distance, and the decision is posted on the building.

Mr. Nave referred to the proposal for the Langeland Funeral Home from the February agenda. He stated that Mr. DeLoof, the builder who made the presentation, visited his office to discuss the project. The week after that visit, Mr. DeLoof passed away. Ms. Ferraro advised that she is waiting for someone to approach her again about the project.

Mr. Cinabro inquired if a motion would be necessary to approve the noticing procedure. Ms. Ferraro suggested deferring approval of the noticing procedures pending further input. There should be further clarification regarding the time needed to allow for demolition or moving of a house. Also, the term "substantial construction" needs to be defined. For instance, would a garage be considered "substantial construction?" The noticing requirements could state that if a building permit is needed, then noticing will be

required. Mr. Nave suggested that noticing could be required for any building over 80 square feet (8' x 10').

Mr. Oudsema questioned if a request for a garage demolition should be noticed out. Ms. Ferraro referred to an agenda item from the past that requested demolition of a 5-car garage. She suggested that garages should be including in the noticing procedures, with the possible exception of single-car garages.

Mr. Oudsema commented that noticing of garage demolitions could lengthen the HDC meetings. Ms. Ferraro stated that it would be typical for only one person to show up at a ZBA meeting to speak at a public hearing. In response to Mr. Nave's question, Ms. Ferraro advised that the DBB (Dangerous Buildings Board) does not require noticing of surrounding property owners. Mr. Nave commented that only one person spoke at the public hearing in front of the Planning Commission when he presented the project for 1516 W. Michigan. Ms. Ferraro estimated that there is typically a 1% to 5% turnout at public hearings as a result of notices that are sent to property owners about agenda items.

Mr. Oudsema stated that he would prefer to see noticing for inhabitable, primary structures only. Mr. Bonsignore commented that garages sometimes have living spaces above them. He referred to the Stuart House, which has a substantial carriage barn/garage. Removal of that garage would be a major change to the neighborhood. Ms. Ferraro suggested that noticing could be provided when residential structures are involved.

Ms. Seaverson inquired if property owners would be required to come before the HDC if they put in a new garage. Ms. Ferraro advised that new construction in the historic district would require HDC approval. Ms. Seaverson stated that she was in favor of noticing for projects that require building permits. Ms. Ferraro commented that some sheds are small enough that a building permit would not be required for them to be constructed. They would require HDC approval to be built, but tearing them down would not be an issue. It is important to have notification regarding projects that could change the nature of the neighborhood. Accordingly, the noticing procedures could also include large signs.

Mr. Cinabro suggested waiting for further comments about the proposed noticing procedures and revisiting this issue at the April meeting.

**Mr. Cinabro, supported by Mr. Oudsema, moved to defer action regarding the proposed HDC noticing procedures to allow time for the HDC to provide comments to Ms. Ferraro. A full recommendation is to be presented at the April meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**XII. Other Business**

**A. FYI Report (Chenery Auditorium) (Item H)**

Mr. Nave advised that he looked at the work that has been done to this building. He commented favorably regarding the changes that have been made. In response to Mr. Nave's question, Ms. Ferraro confirmed that the HDC has no authority over the changes that are being made to the building because it is under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education. However, the HDC can provide comments to the school board on the work that is being done. Ms. Ferraro referred to the pictures that were presented, and stated that the pillar sign is not part of the current proposal. The gingko tree at the northeast part of the property will remain, however, it is missing in the picture so that a better view of the windows could be provided. There are plans to restore the window openings and install aluminum-clad windows with the original configuration.

Ms. Seaverson inquired if some of the original windows are still on the east elevation. Ms. Ferraro confirmed that there are a few of the original windows in the front of the building in the center.

Ms. Ferraro advised that changes to the auditorium include new seating, new curtains, and new paint. By the main entrance and to the right, there is an area where the floor slants at a 30 degree angle. That area will be reconfigured, and will include a two-story lobby area with a balcony and a barrier-free ramp.

Mr. Nave commented that most of the changes are proposed for the Dutton Street entrance. A steel canopy was added on this side supported by new piers, clad in limestone, that reflect the designs of the original piers flanking the Dutton Street door. The steel canopy is a rectangle on the outside; on the inside it has an arched top. Ms. Ferraro stated that the original staircase will be restored, and the trim and details are to be continued down the hallway.

Mr. Oudsema stated that the funds for this project have been raised through a soft fundraiser. Future fundraisers may provide money for a more elaborate redo. Ms. Ferraro advised that the remodeling should be completed by the time the Gilmore Festival starts in May 2010. The final remodel has been estimated to cost approximately \$15,000,000.

Ms. Ferraro mentioned that the canopy extends past the piers so visitors can be dropped off under the canopy when the city approves the curb cut.

Ms. Seaverson stated that she saw the complete presentation by Kingscott and it looks like they are doing a nice job. Ms. Ferraro advised that the work is being done to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, even though the historic tax credit is not involved due to the applicant's non-profit status.

Ms. Ferraro stated that the election of officers will take place at next month's HDC meeting, and that will be added to the agenda.

Information regarding treated wood was included in the March HDC packet . The manufacturer advises that their product is dimensionally stable, treated wood. Mr. Nave advised that Menards is selling South American Amazon Teak for deck boards. This material costs \$20 for a board that is 8 feet long and 5 ½ inches wide.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved to adjourn the March 17, 2009 meeting of the Historic District Commission. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Liaison

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
HDC Chair