

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**Minutes**  
**January 19, 2010**

City Hall, Community Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
241 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Members Present: Erin Seaverson, Acting Chair; Bob Cinabro; Linda DeYoung; Nelson Nave; Chris Roussi; James Tribu

Members Excused: Jay Bonsignore, Chair

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

Guests: Jerome Kisscorni, Executive Director of Economic Development, City of Kalamazoo; Steve Deisler, Downtown Kalamazoo, Inc.; Eastern Michigan University Student; Chris Wright, Historic Preservation Commission Chair

Ms. Ferraro advised that a Vice Chair had not yet been appointed for the HDC. Therefore, the HDC would need to appoint one of their members to run the meeting during the Chairperson's absence. Ms. Seaverson volunteered to chair the meeting.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Seaverson called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF ABSENCES**

Mr. Bonsignore advised city staff that he would not be in attendance at the January 2010 HDC meeting.

**Mr. Cinabro, supported by Ms. DeYoung, moved approval of Mr. Bonsignore's absence from the January 19, 2010 HDC meeting. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**Ms. DeYoung, supported by Mr. Nave, moved approval of the January 19, 2010 HDC agenda as submitted. 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.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. 100 block of East Michigan – update on historic designation.**

Mr. Dally stated that his company initially purchased 232 W. Michigan Ave. He later inquired about other opportunities in the area and was advised that the 100 block of E. Michigan was available. Mr. Dally was informed of the history of the buildings and the past attempts to save and redevelop the property. He decided to hire consultants to assess the buildings and determine if redevelopment was feasible or if they should be demolished. The decision was made to save the buildings. Mr. Dally presented drawings showing the footprint of the buildings in the 100 block, along with a proposed streetscape, and streetscape improvements to lot #9. The streetscape design on the mall will be carried through to the back of the properties in the 100 block. This will provide a “green” access point rather than just asphalt.

Mr. Dally provided pictures showing the front and back facades of the buildings in the 100 block as they appeared in the 1890’s. The buildings are being referred to as the Metropolitan Center. They were originally very ornate and will be returned to a more ornate look with limestone trim and detailed facades. He hopes to restore the retail areas as close as possible to what is shown in the pictures. Where allowed by the tax credit, Gingerbread details will be added to the façade. Details on the upper façade of building #2 had disappeared over the years, but historic photos provide evidence as to what was once there. Mr. Dally’s staff spent months on the Internet finding supplies that will help recreate the details shown in the photos.

Originally, there were plans to construct an addition on the back. This would have created a connection between the buildings and they would have been treated as one building. Those plans have changed and the decision was made to treat them as four separate buildings. The existing stairwells will be saved. Ms. Ferraro advised that the building code made it easier to provide egress if the buildings were not treated as one unit. Mr. Dally has been working with Building Inspector, Lee Larson, who has provided approval through code review for this project. Patios and balconies will be offered for the rear façades. Some of the details are not visible on the drawings, including the grade level, down spout collection boxes and details on the decks. One of the buildings will have a 20-foot deck. A “green” roof will be installed by a local company called Terra Roof. Brick work and lead abatement will be part of the restoration process.

On the east elevation of the building, there is a 20-foot deck area off the back of lot #9, which faces the Argos East building. The west elevation faces the Radisson. Part of the plan is to recreate the building sign and seven-foot diameter clock that are shown in the historic photos. There were unique features on all four buildings that Mavcon hopes to recreate.

The building closest to A-1 Printing and the Argos East building has many original details, but most of the original windows have been removed over the years. A combination of round and square ornate columns will be installed. Ms. Ferraro advised that this building is a twin of the Gazelle Sports building. She has photos of the Gazelle Sports building circa 1900, which shows details of the façade at the ground floor level.

Mr. Dally advised that the entryways will be tiled. Period-correct fixtures and hardware will be used. The two center buildings will be red limestone. A supplier has been located to provide the finials. The windows will be trimmed in stone. There are plans for back lighting similar to what has been installed at the Food Dance Restaurant. Mr. Dally met with representatives of a foundry and they will recast in aluminum. The first building (the one closest to KVCC and the Radisson) has had the most alternations over the years. The six-foot-long windows will be restored. The brick is in great shape, but the center mullions were removed to create large, square windows. It will have red brick with black trim and gold leafing. The first floor will be all retail. The second and third floors will be studio apartments and one-bedroom and two bedroom apartments. One building could be completed early and opened as a model. A 13-month construction period was proposed but it is likely that

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an extension will be requested. Construction is scheduled to start at the beginning of the second quarter (May). A major percentage of the approvals have already been obtained. This project will be out for bid prior to the closing on the property.

Mr. Tribu inquired if this would be the first green roof in the city. Ms. Ferraro advised that the NACD (Northside Association for Community Development) has a green roof on their building. Mr. Dally stated that the deck area on top of the building will have a gazebo, an arbor and a vestibule. Mavcon is seeking a second project in Kalamazoo to pursue.

Mr. Dally advised that the apartments and retail areas will be market rate. Ms. Ferraro mentioned that there is a 2% vacancy rate in downtown Kalamazoo.

Ms. Nave suggested that the HDC should review materials and details on the new windows, doors and store fronts. Mr. Daly advised that the three wood cornices would be reused.

Mr. Nave inquired if the proposed sign conformed to the city's sign ordinance. Mr. Dally responded in the affirmative. He advised that it is a building sign not a billboard. Mr. Nave expressed concern that the proposed sign is too large. It will be right next to the hotel. He pointed out that the blue, lighted sign for Chase Bank is visible from the hotel. The bank sign is huge but it is smaller than the sign proposed for the 100 block project. The bank sign looks like a billboard.

Mr. Nave suggested that the windows on the sides of the buildings need a stone sill. Mr. Dally advised that the historic tax credit requires that the existing features be restored. He suggested that Mr. Nave send an e-mail with suggestions on what could be done on that part of the building. Ms. Ferraro mentioned that the comments from the HDC are advisory at this point because the 100 block is not yet an established historic district.

Mr. Nave inquired if the buildings in the 100 block would be sprinkled. Mr. Dally stated that the attic areas would be sprinkled, but not the other areas of the building.

Mr. Dally advised that replacement wood windows will be installed. They will look the same as the original windows but they will be more energy efficient. A platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating is a goal for this project. Some of the old transoms and skylights are still there. The third building has a skylight, which is approximately 12' x 25'. Ms. Ferraro stated that the skylight was a light source for the cigar company that was located in that building. Mr. Dally advised that the roof built over the skylight will be removed. Ms. Ferraro commented that most of the original windows were replaced but there is evidence to show what they looked like. Mr. Dally advised that Mavcon will remain as the owner of the building. He will provide further information to the HDC regarding the products they want to use for this project.

Mr. Cinabro inquired if the 100 block historic district would abut the Haymarket Historic District. Ms. Ferraro advised that it will be an extension of the Haymarket district. The extension will include the Argos East building, which will be a non-contributing building in the Haymarket Historic District.

Ms. DeYoung suggested that a museum should have the Stanwoods Luggage sign that is still on the back of one of the buildings in the 100 block. Mr. Daly stated that he could have the sign taken down so that Ms. DeYoung could donate it to the museum. Mr. Deisler advised that the son of the owner of Stanwoods would like to have the sign.

Mr. Nave inquired if the replacement windows would have a simulated divided light with a grill. Mr. Daly advised that he plans to install true divided lights.

Discussion followed with regard to a timeline of events pertaining to this property. Mr. Dally advised that the closing is scheduled to occur during the first quarter. Ms. Ferraro stated that the public hearing to establish the historic district is scheduled for February 25<sup>th</sup>. Comments from the public hearing will be integrated into the final report, which will be forwarded to the City Commission. After the closing on the property, this matter will be placed on the City Commission agenda for approval of the addition to the Haymarket historic district. Mr. Dally inquired if the hearing in front of the City Commission could take place prior to closing on the property. Ms. Ferraro advised that there is a 30-day public comment period after the public hearing. This matter can be placed on the City Commission agenda any time after the public comment period.

Ms. Ferraro mentioned that while excavating for the new drainage basin for the parking lot behind 232 W. Michigan, a hole was discovered that was filled with old bricks. The bricks are in excellent condition and can be used to repair the buildings in the 100 block. The bricks are likely from the building that was torn down in the 1960's to make way for the building that currently sits at 232 W. Michigan. The bricks appear to be more than 100 years old, and they are of the right era to be used in the restoration process. Mr. Dally advised that the bricks are worth about \$4.00 to \$5.00 a piece. He estimated the total value of the bricks at \$8,000 to \$9,000. Mr. Dally stated that he would identify the proposed products for the 100 block project and set up a meeting to discuss the details. He advised that anyone with ideas for the project could send him an e-mail with their suggestions.

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **B. 411 Locust (Case #: IHA 09-0479)**

Steve Stayner, Home Marketing System, was present to represent the property on behalf of the owners, Paul and Jayne Zak. The application requests installation of a solar powered light fixture on the exterior stair to illuminate the rear (NE) door.

Mr. Stayner stated that the owner is proposing to install the solar-powered lights at the back of the house. Ms. Ferraro advised that the housing inspectors are firm about having lights at the exterior entrances to rental properties.

Mr. Stayner advised that the stucco complicates the process of getting power to the area where the light is required. A solar light would be a good alternative. There is already a light at the side door, but it is not a solar fixture. Mr. Roussi commented that the solar panel and the wire are inconspicuous. Mr. Nave indicated that he didn't have any objections since the light is mounted on the stairway, which is non-historic. If the fixture were to be mounted on the house, it should be more traditional.

Ms. Ferraro suggested having a conversation about how solar lighting should be dealt with in the historic districts. It might wind up being very situational. Mr. Cinabro inquired as to how this issue has been handled in the past. Ms. Ferraro advised that there hasn't been an issue in the past because the solar lights are a relatively new product. They cost about \$40 per fixture and they meet the requirements of the housing code. There is some uncertainty as to whether or not the fixtures will fulfill the requirements requested by the housing inspectors. Mr. Stayner advised that the inspector suggested using the solar lights.

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Ms. Seaverson inquired as to how lighting requirements have been dealt with in the past. Ms. Ferraro advised that issues with lighting are not often reviewed by the HDC because very few applicants are requesting that light fixtures be added. In this case, the lights could be considered an addition and Secretary of the Interiors Standards and Guidelines numbers 9 and 10 would apply. Kalamazoo has no specific regulations regarding the addition of light fixtures because there are varying opinions about what is appropriate.

Mr. Nave inquired as to when the first lights would have been installed on houses in Kalamazoo. Ms. Ferraro stated that the gas lights and porch lights would probably have been installed in the early 1900's. Side lights were less common. Mr. Nave mentioned that many of the houses in Kalamazoo's historic districts are older than 1900. The first lights on many of those houses weren't installed until the 1920's or later. A house built in the 1880's might have a light fixture from the 1920's. Mr. Nave suggested looking at each situation separately unless standards are created to advise what would be acceptable.

Ms. Ferraro suggested exploring this topic as part of the revisions to the standards and guidelines. She will look at the solar lights that are available to find out if there are fixtures that look historic. If appropriate light fixtures are available, they could be approved administratively. Otherwise, the HDC may prefer to review each case.

Mr. Nave inquired if some of the electricity was charged to the property owner. Mr. Stayner advised that houses in the historic district are usually zoned single-family residential. Each bedroom may be rented to a different tenant, usually students. The electric bill is generally charged to the tenants. The house is currently unoccupied but it used to be a student rental.

Mr. Cinabro commented that the installation of the solar light fixture does not appear to be a violation of standards #9 or #10.

**Mr. Cinabro, supported by Mr. Nave, moved approval of the installation of a solar powered light fixture on the exterior stair at 411 Locust to illuminate the rear (NE) door. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Tribu mentioned that there might be a problem mounting the solar light to the house if the staircase wasn't there. He inquired if the stair railing would need to be updated. Mr. Stayner advised that the staircase and railings meet code. There is a grip rail on the side of the house.

Mr. Stayner commented that from the owner's standpoint, it makes sense to install the solar light. Solar lights are approximately \$30 to \$40 each and it only takes about an hour to install one. An electric light fixture would cost about \$300 to \$500 and it would cost about \$75 to get a permit to install it.

Ms. Ferraro advised that some locations don't have enough sun exposure to power solar lights. The solar collector could be mounted on the roof to be inconspicuous. At this point, it might be advisable to have the HDC review applications for solar lights until a precedent can be established.

Mr. Nave cautioned against using solar fixtures that look like colonial lanterns. Mr. Roussi mentioned that most of the historic-looking solar lights he's found look like carriage lanterns but none of the houses in Kalamazoo's historic districts are of that vintage. There are kits available to retrofit fixtures with an LED light.

Discussion followed with regard to the pros and cons of the solar powered lights. Many of the houses in the historic district are only about 15 feet apart and there is not much sun light during the winter months, which may

inhibit the proper functioning of the lights. However, the solar lights are not permanent, and they can be mounted in an acceptable way. Ms. Ferraro suggested that solar panels/lights should not be approved on the front of houses in the historic district, but it might be acceptable to install them on the side or back of historic homes. The cost of the fixture is not to be taken into consideration, just the appearance.

It might be necessary for the applicants to prove how difficult it would be to install a hardwired light fixture. There may be alternate methods for installing the light that have not been explored. Bringing the property up to code is part of the cost of being a landlord. The main issue is the appearance of the fixture. Standards #9 and #10 should be the guide when making decisions about the installation of light fixtures. The general consensus among the HDC members was that issues regarding solar lights should be reviewed on a case by case basis. The housing inspectors need to make it clear to landlords that they need to fill out an application for HDC review, or call the Historic Preservation Coordinator to discuss the addition of light fixtures.

Concern was expressed that the lights might not be working properly after they are installed. There should be further investigation into this issue. Mr. Roussi mentioned that the batteries in the solar lights don't hold a charge after a year or two. He expressed concern about the possibility of a large number of them being installed in the historic district just because they are easy to install.

Mr. Nave inquired as to how he could follow up regarding the size of the proposed sign for the 100 block project. Ms. Ferraro advised that the DDRC approved the work on the buildings, but they have not reviewed the sign. She suggested that Mr. Nave send an e-mail to her stating his concerns. She will forward the information to Mr. Dally, the DDRC and DKI. The proposed sign is 30 feet in diameter. DKI would like to use it for advertising events. Ms. Ferraro was uncertain if Brian Winkleman, the historic architect for the project, would approve the sign since the original sign was installed after the period of significance (1912-1915). Approval would be necessary in order to qualify for the 40% tax credit, which is an integral part of this project.

Ms. Ferraro mentioned that true divided lights might not provide the desired energy savings. There would be some energy savings with the false muntins. The energy savings begins 3" in from the edge of the window. The LEED certification process may not consider that issue. The third building from the Dewing building had divided lights, the other three buildings had one over one windows.

Mr. Nave commented that the last violation letters went out in October of 2008. He inquired if more letters would be sent. Ms. Ferraro advised that some of the violations may have been corrected. She is hoping to propose remedies for the remaining violations over the summer of 2010. Mr. Roussi requested information about the violations at 530 W. South Street. Ms. Seaverson suggested providing the update after approval of the minutes.

#### **IX. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (November 17, 2009)**

(The December 15, 2009 meeting was cancelled due to a lack of applications.)

Ms. DeYoung requested the following changes: Page 3, paragraph 1 pertaining to the explanation regarding the ownership of the asphalt dr. It was suggested that paragraph be deleted.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved approval of the November 17, 2009 HDC minutes as amended.**

Ms. Seaverson requested the following changes: Page 4, the vote regarding the motion on 425 Oak was inadvertently omitted from the minutes. The general consensus was that the vote had been unanimous. Page 5, before the approval of minutes, move the discussion regarding preference before the vote. Page 6, with regard to the De Novo hearing, add "609 Elm" to the second paragraph to indicate that the discussion was not about a separate case.

After a brief discussion, it was decided to defer approval of the minutes until the next meeting in order to verify the vote on 425 Oak.

**Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Cinabro, withdrew the original motion.**

**Mr. Nave, supported by Mr. Cinabro, moved to postpone approval of the November 17, 2009 HDC minutes until the vote regarding 425 Oak can be verified. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

#### **XIV. OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Ferraro advised that many properties in the historic district have changed hands, including the property on Bellevue. Some of the properties are in foreclosure and others are for sale. Ms. Ferraro will send letters when appropriate and restart the process. She is hoping to have the owners of 530 W. South on the HDC agenda again. Violations at that property have been an issue since 2003. The owners of the property had the wall/fence built without a permit. They wanted the fence to be 8 feet tall to block the view of the neighbor's hot tub. Six months later the hot tub was removed. The wall/fence should be shortened by at least 8 courses of brick. The contractor took the iron that is supposed to be on top of the brick. Ms. Ferraro will draft a letter regarding the violations at 530 W. South St. for Assistant City Attorney John Kneas to review and send out with his signature.

Mr. Tribu inquired as to how new home owners become aware of the existing violations on their properties. Ms. Ferraro advised that she provides notices to the banks, and advises that they should make the new owners aware of the violations.

Mr. Nave mentioned that Waldos Bar was supposed to have a sloped roof with a big "W." Now it has a flat roof. Ms. Ferraro will review the plans to determine what has been changed. This is a non-contributing building.

Mr. Nave advised that the Potter House is for sale. A Special Use Permit was approved for that house so that it could be rented to groups for meetings. Also, the English Tudor next to 530 W. South St. has developed issues with some of the repairs that were made and it needs maintenance. Ms. Ferraro stated that the previous owner installed the MDF (medium-density fibreboard). Mr. Nave suggested that it be re-stained or painted.

#### **A. FYI report**

Ms. Ferraro advised that there are 12 spaces available for the window rehab workshop to be held in February. Lowes will be providing the supplies. Help is needed for food preparation for the workshop attendees.

Assistant City Attorney Mike Miller is looking into procedures for demolition and window rehab (Chapter 16). The ordinance changes should allow the HDC to make changes to their procedures in the future.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. DeYoung, supported by Mr. Roussi, moved to adjourn the January 19, 2010 meeting of the Historic District Commission. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

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

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

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