

**City of Kalamazoo**  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**Minutes**  
**July 19, 2016**  
**FINAL**

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

Members Present: Peter Carroll, Grant Fletcher, Sally Reynolds, B.J. Shell, Max Tibbitts

Members Excused: Jason Novotny, Bob Oudsema

City Staff: Sharon Ferraro, Historic Preservation Coordinator; Wendee Mayes,  
Recording Secretary

Guests: George Magas

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Carroll called the meeting to order at 4:59 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF ABSENCES**

**Mr. Fletcher, supported by Mr. Tibbitts, moved approval of the absences of Mr. Novotny and Mr. Oudsema from the July 19, 2016 meeting of the Historic District Commission. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Ms. Ferraro added a verbal report of demo by neglect to the agenda.

**Ms. Reynolds supported by Mr. Fletcher, moved approval of the July 19, 2016 agenda. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**IV. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Mr. George Magas joined the meeting.

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

Mr. Magas spoke with the commission on a few questions he had concerning the housing in the historic district being broken down into apartments. Both Ms. Ferraro and Mr. Tibbitts assured him that it is no longer possible to do so without going to the Zoning Board of Appeals and getting a variance, which would be very difficult to do.

Mr. Magas asked other questions in regards to housing not in the historic district as well as questions about the lighting downtown. Mr. Carroll explained to Mr. Magas the function of the Historic District Commission and asked if he had any questions that pertained directly to the commission. Mr. Magas did not have any further questions and left the meeting.

**VI. DISCLAIMER**

Ms. Ferraro read the disclaimer into the record.

## VII. HEARINGS

### OLD BUSINESS

None

### NEW BUSINESS

#### A. 100 Monroe Street (Case #PPZ16-0042)

Mr. Nelson Nave was present for the applicant. The reason for this application is to address the required code for a second stairwell in order to use the third floor of the castle.

There are three codes to be met:

1. A sprinkler system for the entire building. This has been done with copper and brass which looks great and will age well.
2. An elevator for the ADA access, which is going to be addressed later.
3. A second exit stair from the third floor. There is currently only one and it is not up to code. This is what is being addressed today.

There is no room inside the castle for the stairwell and they would like to put it on the side of the building. Mr. Nave presented the proposed stairwell. It would be a standing tower away from the building so as to not come within five feet of the windows on the existing stairwell. It is all steel open grating with the idea that it can be seen through. Code requires that the stairwell come out of the third floor and the only functional area is behind the bar in the ballroom. There are currently two windows there, which would need to be removed for a doorway. The stairwell will attach to the doorway and then the beams would attach to either side of the door. The bridge comes out away from the building then over a barrier free ramp at the northeast corner of the building. The stairwell then comes down in a spiral pattern and lands about four to five feet away from the support for the porte cochere. This design is very compact and can be prefabricated in the shop. The concrete pillars can be decorated to look like the pink sandstone on the castle itself. It will be very lightweight and the only difficulty will be in hooking it to the building itself. LED emergency lighting will be required all the way down.

Mr. Carroll verified that the only attachment point to the building will be at the exit door on the third floor. Mr. Tibbitts expressed concern that the placement of the stairwell is on the side of the building which is most visible from West Main Hill in winter. The most gorgeous part of this north facade is the window, which will be obscured by the stairwell. Mr. Nave suggested that on the West Main Hill side there are now evergreens which have grown up and screen this. Mr. Tibbitts asked what the problem with the west windows from the third floor being used. Mr. Nave responded that the future elevator is planned for that area. Ms. Ferraro suggested that they may want to go to the State Board to see about getting a waiver for the elevator code. Ms. Ferraro asked if the LED emergency lighting will be illuminated when not in use. Mr. Carroll added that the emergency lights will come on if needed but not at other times. Ms. Ferraro pointed out that it is a square spiral stairwell. Mr. Nave agreed and added that the building code does not accept a true spiral. Ms. Ferraro stated that this design is a Queen Anne. Mr. Shell verified that this is an emergency exit only. Mr. Nave stated that the building code requires this to be done in order to use the third floor ballroom, which seats 50 people, and six other rooms on the third floor. There is also access to the rooftop that this will be an emergency exit for. Mr. Tibbitts is concerned that it is not pleasant to look at and will be an eyesore for those driving up West Main Hill. Mr. Carroll pointed out that the

property is less visible over the years as the evergreens grow back in. Mr. Fletcher felt that all things considered it is probably the best option to ensure maximum and highest level of operations. Mr. Tibbitts strongly suggested that the west side as a better place to put the fire escape for the good of the historic building. Ms. Reynolds expressed concern with the stairwell covering up the architecture of the castle.

Mr. Carroll inquired as to having a site visit and postpone taking action. Ms. Ferraro, Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Nave agreed to the idea. The subcommittee will consist of Mr. Carroll, Mr. Tibbitts, Mr. Shell and Ms. Ferraro. Ms. Ferraro will set up the details for the site visit.

**Mr. Tibbitts, supported by Mr. Shell, moved to postpone action until a site visit has been made by the subcommittee. With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

### **VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Mr. Tibbitts, supported by Ms. Reynolds, moved approval the June 21, 2016 Historic District Commission Minutes. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

### **IX. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS**

The number of violations has dropped. The level of outreach has been amazing. Ms. Ferraro added that a lot of work is minor repairs that do not need approval.

Demo by neglect cases have all gotten responses.

On the Dutton houses, Langeland is working on plans and will have something by the August meeting. They are planning on meeting with Ms. Ferraro beforehand to discuss some ideas. If no plans are presented the city will proceed with court in the following month.

On the Bellevue houses, the management firm, O'Brien realtors, has gotten specs together to present to the commission. They have submitted an application for hearing review, are willing to do everything on the list of violations. Ms. Ferraro asked if the commission wanted administrative approval or to have them come to the commission meeting. Mr. Carroll suggested that they should come to the meeting and present a timeline. Mr. Tibbitts suggested that all demo by neglect cases should be brought before the commission to ensure compliance.

### **X. OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Ferraro reported that the Fountain of Pioneers at Bronson Park is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places at the national level or significance. This is the only spot within Kalamazoo that is listed nationally.

Mr. Carroll reported that he is working with teaching homeowners how to remove their window sashes to be restored and delivered back to them. This gets the price way down for the homeowner. By partnering with the homeowner it helps them out while getting the work done. This gives homeowners instruction on maintenance of house, pride of ownership and gets them involved in the repairs.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

Submitted by: Wendy Mayer  
Recording Secretary

Date: 8/23/17

Reviewed by: Alana Pew  
Preservation Coordinator

Date: 9-19-2017

Approved by: Max [Signature]  
HDC Chair

Date: 9-21-2017