

**City of Kalamazoo
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Minutes
August 15, 2017
FINAL**

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

Members Present: Grant Fletcher, John Mitchell, Bob Oudsema, BJ Shell, and Max Tibbitts

Members Excused: Jeremy Berg and Sally Reynolds

City Staff: Sharon Ferraro, Historic Preservation Coordinator; Shelby Donaldson,
Recording Secretary

Guests: Dana Underwood, Chris Coyle, Pam O'Connor, Curt Aardema, Regina
Gorham and Sue Robinson

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Tibbitts called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Shell, made a motion for the approval of the absences for the August 15, 2017 Historic District Commission meeting.

With a unanimous vote, the motion to approve the absences carried.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

IV. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Dana Underwood, Chris Coyle, Pam O'Connor, Regina Gorham, Curt Aardema, and Sue Robinson

V. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

VI. DISCLAIMER

Ms. Ferraro read the disclaimer into the record.

VII. HEARINGS

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

a) 1028 W. Kalamazoo

Owner/Applicant: Greg Marvin

1. Vinyl fence installation (retroactive application)

Mr. Marvin stated he is coming to the commission, retroactively, to ask for permission to keep the fence he installed approximately one month ago at the back of his properties (he also owns 1020 and 1026 W. Kalamazoo) that back up to Douglas Ave. He said his reason for installing the fence was because there have been issues with properties in the area becoming vacant and condemned and transient traffic coming through there. He stated that he did it for the safety and peace of mind of his tenants and felt the fence would add some aesthetic value to the property because it looks nice, would age well, and would be easier to maintain.

Mr. Tibbitts stated that he doesn't believe the commission has ever approved vinyl and typically that the fencing in historic is wood.

Mr. Mitchell questioned the placement of the fence for compliance reasons.

Mr. Tibbitts stated that the last owner of the home had a small picket fence there and Mr. Marvin said that it was torn down by the neighborhood.

Mr. Marvin asked about alternative fencing materials (type B) that were allowed and Mr. Tibbitts stated that if he had come to the commission before installing the fence he chose, they could have gone over the alternative materials.

Mr. Oudsema asked about chain link fence approval, to which Ms. Ferraro replied that, administratively, she could have approved it for the back yard only, but have referred the rest of it to the commission.

Public Comment:

Dana Underwood, of the Stuart neighborhood, stated that she is working on her wood fence right now, but it was installed in 1985 and is just starting to deteriorate. She also stated that part of the charm of the homes in the historic district is the lack of vinyl in the area.

Mr. Marvin asked if her home butted up to condemned homes and she replied no, it is next to a vacant lot.

Commissioner Comment:

Mr. Oudsema stated that while he is sympathetic to Mr. Marvin, the approval of his vinyl fence would open the door to having to approve the addition of more vinyl fencing and if it were wood, there would be no issue. He also stated that this sets the stage for others to install the vinyl fencing, and then apologize after the fact.

Mr. Tibbitts agreed.

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Shell, made a motion deny the installation of the vinyl fence as meeting based on the Secretary of Interior Standards #9 and #10.

With a unanimous roll call vote, the motion to deny retroactive approval of the vinyl fence installation carried.

b) 207 West Vine

Owner/Applicant: KNHS/
Matt Millcarek

1. Demolish severely deteriorated house

Ms. Ferraro, Mr. Mitchell, and Mr. Oudsema did a site visit on this property, as was the agreement at the last meeting. Mr. Oudsema said there is no redeeming value to keeping the property and it should be demolished. Mr. Tibbitts asked if the structure was safe. Ms. Ferraro stated that since the chimney is gone, she doesn't think that it will fall on anyone but removing the chimney introduced a permanent and profound structural flaw. One is the sinking of a wall, illustrated by the fact that the mantles are pulling away from the wall. Mr. Tibbitts asked Mr. Millcarek what would happen to the land if the demolition was approved and Mr. Millcarek replied it would be turned into a parking lot, complete with some landscaping.

Public Comment:

Pam O'Connor asked if someone could explain what the original application was for. Mr. Tibbitts explained what it was for and also explained that with the removal of the outdoor chimney, since it was a major part of the support of the house, the property has been on the list of historical violations for years. He went on to add that now that KNHS owns the property, they came before the commission to find out what their options are. He also added that the cost of repairs to the property doesn't justify keeping it. Mrs. O'Connor asked what the cost would be and Mr. Millcarek replied it would be well over \$150,000 or perhaps closer to \$250,000. He added that it only has room to park one small car. He said rehabilitation would amount to a \$50,000-\$100,000 loss. Mr. Mitchell said that he believes that the figures to fix the property are low and says the bigger question would be who would be willing to take on that project.

Mr. Fletcher, supported by Mr. Oudsema, made a motion for the approval of the demolition of the house, as meeting one or more of the required criteria, specifically #4, to issue a Notice to Proceed.

With a unanimous roll call vote, the application for demolition was approved.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Fletcher, moved approval of the July 18, 2017 Historic District Commission minutes.

With a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

IX. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

X. OTHER BUSINESS

- a) Report on Violations- (Item C)
- b) Hearings were followed by a presentation from CP & D Director Rebekah Kik about the Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 Master Plan and from Steve Brown regarding the Foundation for Excellence.

Public Comment:

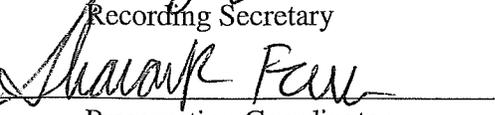
None

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Oudsema, supported by Mr. Fletcher, made a motion to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Submitted by:  Date: 10-17-17
Recording Secretary

Reviewed by:  Date: 10-17-17
Preservation Coordinator

Approved by:  Date: 10-17-17
HDC Chair