

Michael Gehr, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 10, 2015, in the Conference Room, Fourth Floor, City Hall. A roster of the members of the commission and the technical posts they fill are on file and available upon request. Also present were commission members L. Allen, C. Crumrine, C. Davis, and S. Silas. P. Nigh was in attendance representing the Mayor and City Council. S. Bockmiller, Development Planner/Zoning Administrator, and D. Calhoun, Secretary, were present on behalf of the Planning and Code Administration Division.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 12, 2015:

MOTION: (Silas/Crumrine) Move to adopt.
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

CONSENT AGENDA

827 Oak Hill Avenue – Alan Fogle for Ralph Wyand – Front Porch Alterations, Case No. HDC 2015-43.

59 West Washington Street – Ken Padgett for BB&T – Signage, Case No. HDC 2015-44.

There was no opposition from the public or from the commission.

MOTION: (Davis/Silas) Mr. Chairman, I have reviewed the materials submitted in Cases HDC 2015-43 and HDC 2015-44, and their associated staff reports and recommendations, and I have viewed the properties in question. The staff reports recommend approval of these applications as consistent with the applicable standards adopted by the Commission, and no one has appeared at this hearing with concerns about, issues with, or objections to these applications. Therefore, I move that this Commission adopt the staff evaluations and recommendations in these cases as its own and grant Certificates of Appropriateness to the applicants for Cases HDC 2015-43, 827 Oak Hill Avenue, and HDC 2015-44, 59 West Washington Street.

DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

DESIGN REVIEW

30 East North Avenue – Andrew Escalet – Remove Front Porch, Case No. HDC 2015-45.

The Applicant was not present. Mr. Bockmiller noted that the 45-day time limit expires on January 15, 2016. An informal poll of the commission indicated that most commission members present would be available for this meeting. The case was tabled until the next meeting, unless Mr. Escalet appeared before the end of the meeting.

WORKSHOP

None.

NEW BUSINESS

2016 Draft Meeting Schedule.

Mr. Crumrine noted that the meeting date and the submission deadline date were transposed.

Mr. Gehr asked for a motion to approve the meeting schedule with the minor corrections.

MOTION: (Davis/Crumrine) So moved.
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

Election of Officers.

Ms. Davis made a suggestion that HDC members take turns serving as chair and vice chair. The suggestion was not supported by the members present.

MOTION: (Crumrine/Davis) I move to continue the current officers as is.
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

Main Street Community.

Mr. Bockmiller informed the commission that a Main Street Design Work Group is being formulated in conjunction with the City's Main Street designation. This body's mission will be to

study the City's downtown area and make recommendations for positive downtown design. The City already has Downtown Design Guidelines through the Historic District Commission; however, to meet the Main Street requirements from the state they need to have input into downtown design.

As a "heads up," Mr. Bockmiller informed HDC members that the Main Street work group may be meeting with the commission to offer recommendations for the design guidelines. Ms. Davis suggested that one of the HDC members could attend the Main Street work group meetings. Mr. Gehr asked what the Main Street boundaries are and whether they follow the historic district boundary. Ms. Allen noted that there may be a second group focusing on similar issues with the potential for duplication. Mr. Bockmiller agreed that there are several groups, however, he was not familiar with each group's mission.

OLD BUSINESS

Design Guidelines Review – Residential.

Commission members and staff began review of the Residential Design Guidelines. Generally, the commission noted that many of the items discussed under the Downtown Guidelines could also be applied to the Residential Design Guidelines. The commission also agreed that the Downtown and Residential Design Guidelines should be combined into one document for efficiency. There is enough overlap in each of the districts to warrant combining the two documents.

Chapter 1 – Introduction.

- The Introduction chapter will be consolidated with the Downtown Design Guidelines.
- Check the date of renaming the commission. Page 5 of the Downtown Guidelines and page 6 of the Residential Guidelines are not in agreement when the commission's name changed from Preservation Design District Commission to Historic District Commission (2008 vs. 2009).

Chapter 2 – Residential Historic Districts.

- Add landmarks to the descriptions of the various historic districts.
- Landmarks should be shown on a larger map.

Chapter 3 – Architectural Styles.

- This will be a new combined chapter, including the new architectural styles suggested in the Downtown Guidelines.
- The Oak Hill section discusses Mrs. Clara Hamilton and her role in developing this neighborhood, including the covenants and who retains the rights to the trees. Mr. Gehr asked if the City of Hagerstown could plant street trees in Oak Hill District to replace the

older trees that have been removed over the years. Many of them have come down and it would be beneficial to recreate the historic canopy.

- The reference to “objectionable and unsightly buildings” needs to be clarified. Mr. Bockmiller will address it by putting “objectionable and unsightly” in quotes since this terminology is part of the original covenants.
- Architectural styles need to be refined. Ms. Davis noted that her house is technically a “Tudor Craftsman,” not a “Tudor Revival.” Add a note to the Tudor Revival section since there may not be many examples of Tudor Revival—the ones in her neighborhood are actually Tudor Craftsman.
- Add the name of the district, such as “Example from Oak Hill District.”
- Generally, add the style of the building to all pictures.
- Mix up the photo examples—more variety in the districts shown.
- Show some double house examples.

Chapter 4 – Ordinary Maintenance.

- Expand “administrative assistance” to include workshops, etc.
- Demolition discussion will be expanded considerably since the existing guidelines do not say much about it. This is already in the DT.
- Note that existing unsympathetic additions are considered more leniently by the commission.

Chapter 5 – New Construction.

- Bottom of page 20, remove reference to “color” in the last bullet. The HDC does not consider color.
- Check to make sure photographs are actually in one of the districts. Some of the featured photos are of buildings outside of the district.
- Siding. Discuss new materials that are acceptable substitutes for historic materials.
- Commission and staff discussed new construction and new construction in the form of an addition to an historic house. There needs to be a way to differentiate between completely new construction and the example of an addition to an historic building. Need to add language to the effect that the less you do to the original structure the better to avoid damaging the historic building.
- Again photographs in this section need more definitive captions.
- Staff will better organize this section, including being cognizant of photographic examples used.
- Details. When discussing new construction, not looking to add new details on an historic building. This is another example of blurred lines.
- Gutters/Downspouts – Add a reference to half-round gutters.

Chapter 6 – Rehabilitation.

- Concerning houses that were built in different periods or in a combination of styles, Mr. Gehr explained that these homes need to be considered on a case-by-case basis with regard to the contextual issue of which style to pursue. Add a paragraph about combination homes.
- Concerning duplexes with different ownership, it would be beneficial to keep some kind of continuity, if possible.
- Porches and Stairways – beginning to get requests for railings as a result of code notices. This section should be expanded; refer to the discussion of this matter in the Downtown Guidelines.
- Add more discussion about synthetics and substitute materials.
- Handicapped access – refer to the discussion in Downtown Guidelines.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Unless the building is a business, the homeowner can dictate where the ramp will be placed. Mr. Gehr said questions need to be asked about where the best location would be to get the entrance which would depend on grade and the size of the doors. ADA in residential development is not as critical as commercial projects; however, applicants should be encouraged to discuss their plans with the HDC to find the best options.
- Individually Significant Buildings. This needs to be reworked to include A Resource buildings in the Downtown.
- Add language about potential landmarks, similar to what was added in the Downtown Guidelines.

Chapter 7 – Signage.

- This chapter needs to be reviewed to make sure it is consistent with the recently adopted sign regulations. In residential districts, usually these uses are nonconforming businesses or apartment complexes.

Chapter 8 – Site Design.

- Plantings are reviewed by HDC if an applicant is proposing work that requires a site plan.
- Add a section about trees in the Oak Hill District.
- Add a disclaimer that the HDC does not regulate routine landscaping.
- Keep language about courtyards.
- Fences – Make a note that fences should match the time period of the house.
- Outbuildings and Other Appurtenances – With regard to sheds or garages for apartment buildings, applicants should be encouraged to maintain the existing structure; if a new building is warranted, then it should be built to be compatible with the primary structure. If the shed or garage is not visible from a public way, the HDC can be more lenient in its review.

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- Swimming Pools – Be cognizant of a pool’s location because it will require a fence; owners may need to add landscaping. The HDC would be concerned about the design of the fence and visibility issues.
- Sidewalk paving (private sidewalks on private property) – Add something about stamped concrete and asphalt.
- Parking Lots – This would be mostly a concern in the Downtown District or a business property or an apartment.
- Add language addressing solar panels in the new section on utilities.
- Add language about trash dumpster enclosures which are now a requirement.

Discussion will pick up at next meeting with Appendixes. Mr. Bockmiller will prepare a list of the proposed changes to both sets of design guidelines. If commission members agree with Mr. Bockmiller’s notes, he will begin the rewriting process.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

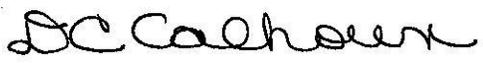
None.

ADJOURN

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (6:05 p.m.).

1/14/2016

Approved



Debra C. Calhoun – Secretary