

**Historic District Commission
MINUTES**

**February 23, 2017
City of Hagerstown, Maryland**

Michael Gehr, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 23, 2017, 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. Davis, S. Kreiger, S. Silas, and M. Wertman. S. Bockmiller and D. Calhoun, Secretary, were present on behalf of the Planning and Code Administration Department.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

January 27, 2017 – Special Meeting:

On page 3, middle of the third paragraph, Mr. Gehr asked that “front back” be changed to “the area toward the front of the property should be shown on the rear elevation. . .”

MOTION: (Allen/Kreiger) I move to accept the January 27, 2017, special meeting minutes as amended.

DISCUSSION: None.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

February 9, 2017:

MOTION: (Davis/Wertman) Move to approve.

DISCUSSION: None.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

CONSENT AGENDA

**6 West Franklin Street – P & D’s Island Delights/Pamela Chin – Signage,
Case No. HDC 2017-06.**

Staff had no concerns about the vinyl covering. It is not overly glossy.

MOTION: (Davis/Silas) Mr. Chairman, I have reviewed the materials submitted in Case No. HDC 2017-06, 6 West Franklin Street, and its associated staff report and recommendations, and I have viewed the property in question. The staff report recommends approval of this application as consistent with the applicable standards adopted by this commission, and no one has appeared at this hearing with concerns about, issues with, or objections to this application. Therefore, I move that this commission adopt the staff

evaluation and recommendation in this case as its own and grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to the applicant for Case No. HDC 2017-06.

DISCUSSION: None.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

DESIGN REVIEW

261 South Prospect Street – City of Hagerstown – Alterations, Case No. HDC 2017-04.

Terry Irwin, Project and Program Coordinator with the Community and Economic Development Department, and Jonathan Kerns, was present on behalf of the City of Hagerstown, 14 North Potomac Street, Hagerstown, Maryland, owner of the property.

Staff Report: This building is a contributing resource in the Prospect Street Local Historic District. Applicant is proposing the following rehabilitation work on this circa 1910 residence:

- Add a 14-foot long by 6.5-foot wide, one-story wood porch on the south façade for a new entry door; wood to be painted or stained once wood has seasoned. Entry door on the south façade will be a Pella Twin Colonial Light entry door with glass.
- Replace the northern-most entry door on the east façade with a Marvin Ultimate Double-Hung wood window.
- Replace all windows with Marvin Ultimate Double-Hung wood windows.
- Remove rear porches and replace with three-stories of living space. Siding will be HardiePlank lap siding; windows will be Marvin Ultimate Double-Hung wood windows.
- Replace roof with Timberline Natural Shadow shingles in “Slate.” There is an existing gray shingle roof on the house currently.
- Enclose window on second floor front (left side of later addition box window) in order to comply with building code.

Staff recommended approval. Mr. Bockmiller noted that the south elevation on page A-3.1 of the plans contains a minor error in that the new porch surface will start about two feet behind the bay window. Two steps down to grade will be behind the bay windows. The replacement of the front door should use brick infill up to the new window sill instead of the framing with siding that is shown on the plans to fill in the area formerly occupied by the lower door.

When the initial plans came in the architect had drawn the porch so it would protrude beyond the bay window. The revised design extends the porch to the west to make up for the floor area lost with the first design. Staff stated that the new porch steps will not be visible since traffic is southbound on South Prospect Street and the new porch will be on the south side of the building.

Mr. Bockmiller stated that a subdivision plat will be necessary to create two separate lots. In addition, numerous maintenance easements will be necessary due to the configuration of the house.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Concerning the rear porch, Mr. Kerns stated that the new rear porch will not be an exact replacement of the footprint of the existing porch. The window fenestration will be cleaned up and the walls will be covered with HardiePlank. Currently there are four units in the building and the plan is to reduce the number of units to two and subdivide the property to create home ownership opportunities.

Mr. Gehr noted that the elevation drawings do not show the bathrooms as a bump out on the rear porch addition. The drawing needs to be corrected so it accurately reflects what will be built on the rear side of the building. Mr. Kerns stated that he will submit revised elevations to show the true elevation in the rear. Mr. Irwin indicated that they hope to start the project in May; however, demo of the rear porches will begin in the next few weeks. Due to the delicate nature of the project, the demolition work will be done by hand rather than using big pieces of machinery. Doing the demolition work by hand will most likely add to the amount of time needed to complete the porch removal. Staff estimated construction to conclude in early fall. Due to cost considerations, they will be using building-grade and market-grade materials. Once complete, the total square footage will be 1,500 square feet per unit, plus basement and attic. One homebuyer will need to meet Community Development Block Grant income requirements, and the other family will not. Applicants for potential purchase of the units must match up with regard to family size vs. unit square footage. Mr. Gehr pointed out that the wood deck will need to be painted or stained once the wood has seasoned. Mr. Kerns noted that the gutter sizes may be upgraded, but they plan to use half-rounds in a larger size. A Certificate of Appropriateness for any changes to the gutters will be necessary.

Mr. Gehr asked about the heating system and whether the existing chimneys will be active or discontinued. Mr. Kerns stated the chimneys will be discontinued and a heat pump system will most likely be installed. The most recent heating system was baseboard heat. Mr. Gehr noted that at least one of the chimneys is leaning. That situation needs to be corrected and Mr. Bockmiller suggested that the chimneys be capped to avoid water problems in the future.

MOTION: (Wertman/Davis) Mr. Chairman, I have inspected the project plans and the property in question, and if constructed in accordance with these plans the project is compatible with the character of the district for the reasons that the plans go along with what is there and are generally in harmony with the Architectural Design Guidelines for the Residential Preservation Design District and the character of the adjoining properties. Therefore, I move that the HDC grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to the applicant for Case No. HDC 2017-04.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Allen asked that the motion include a requirement that accurate revised drawings be provided prior to permits being issued. Ms. Wertman and Ms. Davis agreed to this amendment.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

WORKSHOP

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Rules of Procedure for Public Improvement Projects.

Mr. Bockmiller stated that the City is beginning to get itself positioned to assist developers with several urban improvement projects that are being proposed by Washington County and other entities for downtown. Due to their complexity, staff is trying to determine the best way possible to help these projects along. There was a staff meeting on this matter recently and one of the things that was discussed is that the current rules of procedure that deal with demolition, Certificate of Hardship based on a Public Improvement Project, are out of date. The ordinances in the past rolled together a hardship based on public improvement or to the benefit of the community. The recently added Major Economic Development Opportunity (MEDO) is not unique in that there has always been a veiled reference that a Certificate of Hardship could be obtained based on the magnitude of the project and its impact on downtown.

When the ordinance was re-written the two were separated into two sections: Major Economic Development Opportunity and one specifically for Public Works Projects. Because of that the Rules of Procedure are now out of context. One of the projects will need to use MEDO and the other will be using the public project procedure. All of the developers involved need guidance on how to proceed.

Staff developed draft amendments to the existing rules of procedure and those amendments were sent via email to commission members in the last day or two (see meeting file). Staff made basic changes to bring the language up to date (i.e., removed old references to Preservation Design District Commission and PDDC, updated ordinance references since the ordinance was amended several years ago, etc.). In addition, staff took out references to private economic development provisions which is now covered under the MEDO provision. The document being discussed at this meeting will be limited strictly to public and quasi-public projects. This document does not change what someone would have had to do if they had gone through this process five years ago to build a new public school downtown.

The second document is a layman’s explanation of the time frame that someone would need to follow in order to have a building demolished for a public project downtown, including proving to the commission that the proposed project is truly a public works project and that it meets the requirements that the HDC would have for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness. Since this provision has not been used regularly, staff is creating a process. The timeline document tells applicants what they need to do, including providing evidence that the proposed work is truly a public works project; and provides a list of what the HDC needs from the applicant to consider approving a Certificate of Appropriateness for a demolition, including an explanation of why the existing building cannot be used and retained. Reasons for this could include the historic building does not meet current building codes, the floor plates do not match up, and other examples.

Ms. Wertman was concerned that the commission may be limited in what they can ask of a developer with respect to a proposed demolition, such as suggesting that the façade be retained or that as much of the original building be kept as possible. There were also concerns that this provision could be misused and begin to include non-public works projects. Ms. Allen was concerned about the title of the timeline, and wants to guard against all developers using this argument. Mr. Bockmiller said the language spells out that this provision is geared toward public improvement projects. She felt this process is in conflict with the point of the HDC. Mr. Bockmiller stated the point of the HDC is to preserve historic resources to make sure they are not unnecessarily lost. Using the example of an expansion of a public school, removing a building for a necessary public works project is viewed by the process as not an unnecessary loss.

MOTION: (Davis/Wertman) So moved (to accept the amendments as presented).
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

OLD BUSINESS

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

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MINUTES**

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ADJOURN

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (5:27 p.m.).

3/23/2017

Approved



Debra C. Calhoun – Secretary