

**Historic District Commission
MINUTES**

**March 12, 2015
City of Hagerstown, Maryland**

Michael Gehr, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 12, 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. S. Bockmiller, Development Planner/Zoning Administrator, and D. Calhoun, Secretary, were present on behalf of the Planning and Code Administration Division.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 9, 2014; December 11, 2014; and January 8, 2015.

October 9, 2014:

MOTION: (Silas/Davis) Move to approve.
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

December 11, 2014 and January 8, 2015:

MOTION: (Crumrine/Allen) I'll make the motion to approve.
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

CONSENT AGENDA

**449 North Potomac Street – Robert Cochran Insurance – Fence (Revision),
Case No. HDC 2015-01.**

412 North Potomac Street – Ray Daugherty – Sign, Case No. HDC 2015-05.

933 Hamilton Boulevard – Tyler White – Fence, Case No. HDC 2015-06.

There were no concerns from the audience or by commission members on any of these cases.

MOTION: (Davis/Silas) Mr. Chairman, I have reviewed the materials submitted in Cases HDC 2015-01, 449 North Potomac Street; HDC 2015-05, 412 North Potomac Street; HDC 2015-06, 933 Hamilton Boulevard, 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 this 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 the cases

as its own and grant Certificates of Appropriateness to the applicants for the previously mentioned cases.

DISCUSSION:

None.

ACTION:

APPROVED (Unanimous)

DESIGN REVIEW

None.

WORKSHOP

None.

NEW BUSINESS

- Staff-Approved Work. Mr. Bockmiller stated that there is a provision in the package of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance which allows staff approval of some low-level types of work in historic districts. Mr. Bockmiller said he recalled an HDC discussion on this matter but there was never a final decision by the commission. He asked if there was any interest by the commission to delegate authority to staff to approve projects such as window lettering, fences that meet the design guidelines, and possibly basic signage.

For routine items, Mr. Gehr indicated that he did not see a problem with allowing staff approvals. Mr. Bockmiller noted that the new amendments would require that even window lettering would need to be approved by the HDC. Ms. Davis added that situations such as the temporary banner for the donut drop might qualify for staff approval. If staff approvals are given the green light, Mr. Gehr said anything approved at the staff level should be brought to the HDC for an “F.Y.I.” Also, sometimes the commission cannot get a quorum so cases are continued to the next meeting. Ms. Allen asked if the value of the HDC would be diminished with staff approvals. Mr. Bockmiller compared the minor site plan approval process with the Planning Commission to staff approval of certain HDC cases. He stated that if staff has any questions at all about whether a situation meets requirements, it is reviewed by the Planning Commission. Staff would only be approving applications that fully comply with the design guidelines. If there would be any questions about whether applications comply, they would be reviewed by the HDC. Mr. Bockmiller will poll other jurisdictions about how they handle staff approvals and asked the HDC to give the matter further consideration before making a final decision.

- Preservation Month – Award Nominations. May is preservation month and now is the time to think about nominations. Suggestions from the commission and staff included:

- Bridge of Life – Snow White Grill project.
- John Wesley United Methodist Church – stained glass windows were repaired and covered with quality storm windows for protection.
- Washington County Free Library Rebuild.
- Maryland Theatre Interior Renovations.

Between now and the next meeting, Mr. Bockmiller will look through the design review applications for the last 18 months. Commission members will also look for possible nominations. Projects are not limited to the historic districts.

- Mr. Gehr announced that he has been contacted by Hagerstown Paint and Glass (HPG) about whether the commission would be interested in attending another information session about windows. About eight or nine months ago HPG held a similar event during the lunch hour and had a window sales representative on hand to make a presentation. Commission members said they would be interested, possibly later this year.

OLD BUSINESS

- Tax Credit Workshop. Planning is well underway for the tax credits and grants seminar in April. In addition to presentations by the state, Washington County is also on board for a presentation on the County's tax credit program. Kathleen Maher, Planning Director will be speaking about the City's upper floor renovation tax credits. Mr. Bockmiller is also working to have someone from the City's Economic Development office in attendance. As a result of a suggestion by Ms. Davis, staff is also working to have the session videotaped. Handouts will be provided. The session will be open to the public, and staff will be inviting other jurisdictions in the region. The seminar will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Washington County Free Library meeting room.
- West Antietam Street Demolition. Ms. Allen noted that the building on West Antietam Street is going to be demolished in the near future. She asked about the status of the adjacent derelict building. Mr. Bockmiller said the owner of that building is not sure of what direction to go with this building. His plan is to put a gravel parking lot in, but staff has discouraged that. It was approved for a demolition several years ago and the building is pretty shot inside. With the demolition of these two buildings and the A & E trail construction, there will be a tremendous amount of potential for this block of West Antietam Street. Mr. Bockmiller added that this site might be held vacant for a while as a construction staging area for the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts expansion.
- Mr. Gehr informed the commission that the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) is questioning the HDC's decision to not require a screen for the rooftop HVAC unit that was before the commission several months ago. His firm sent the sketch but has not heard how that will play out with MHT. Mr. Bockmiller pointed out that the state's easement is

on the inside of the building only and future construction will most likely block any view of the equipment from South Potomac Street.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- On April 23 Mr. Bockmiller will be recognized with an award by the Hagerstown Civil War Roundtable. The Henry Kyd Douglass award for writing, education and promoting local history.

ADJOURN

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (5:07 p.m.).

4/9/2015

Approved



Debra C. Calhoun – Secretary