

CITY OF YPSILANTI
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF March 10, 2015

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Anne Stevenson	Chair 7:00 PM
Meeting Location:	City Council Chambers, City Hall
Commissioners Present:	Anne Stevenson, Hank Prebys, Ron Rupert, Alex Pettit, Jane Schmiedeke, Michael Condon, Erika Lindsay
Commissioners Absent:	None
Staff Present:	Abigail Jaske, HDC Assistant

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Request to add 59 E Cross to agenda as study item.

Motion: Prebys (second: Rupert) moves to approve the agenda as amended.

Approval: Unanimous. Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS - none

PUBLIC HEARING- none

OLD BUSINESS- none

NEW BUSINESS

6 S. Washington

Applicant: Andrew Epstein – property owner.

Discussion:

Stevenson: States that there was a discussion about the application for 6 S. Washington at the last meeting and there are apparent issues with the awning sagging. States that she is concerned with the process of replicating the awning without knowing what materials would be used and the exact way this would be completed. States that the Commissioners would like to discuss the actual state of the awning with the applicant and whether repair is an option.

Epstein: The property owner expresses that he really loves the awning, but are about to start a bunch of work on the rest of the building. States that he would like it removed for safety reasons and to avoid further damage during

construction. States that he would like to preserve the awning. States that later on they are going to come back to talk to the HDC about replacing windows.

::Passes around images to Commissioners::

The applicant expresses that especially after this winter, with all the snow, the safety issue is more apparent. States that the most important part is the exterior trim piece that is attached to a wood substructure and that is what is failing and causing awning to sag. States that he wanted to talk to the Commissioners about removing the awning and then come up with a plan to replicate it. States that in taking it down he would save all of the trim pieces and hopefully just replicate the awning. States that he brought architectural drawings and the plan is to keep the awning and add a letter sign on top. States that he has read the rules about awnings and signs. States that he wants to work with the HDC to move forward with his plans

Rupert: States that when he observed the awning last year and met with the applicant, his suggestion was to take off the porcelain paneling so that the substructure underneath can be repaired and new members installed and attached directly to the building and that would eliminate the need for extra external supports. He advised that the Commission would prefer to see the awning preserved.

Epstein: Inquires if what is connecting it to the chain is ripping out.

Rupert: Confirms. States that the applicant could build scaffolding and lift it up and would allow avoiding the removal of the paneling and, after repair, you would not need the chains at all. States that it's only that first 25% that is insecure. Advises that there is no need to tear the whole thing down and put it back up again.

Epstein: States that he is concerned about the safety issue of that 25% falling down on someone and he thinks very little looks salvageable. States that the only part that looks salvageable is the trim piece and all other parts of the structure are not in good shape. States that the trim piece is just a 2" piece and is attached to the wood and metal.

Rupert: States that one of the HDC standards is to repair not to replace.

Epstein: States that he thinks none of the awning looks very good.

Rupert: States that one cannot see the substructure without getting up on a ladder to view it.

Stevenson: Inquires if the Commissioners have a problem with replicating the trim, but not the substructure?

Rupert: Advises that for the substructure one would have to remove the top part to have access to it. States that those are porcelain finished panels and that the panels fit right into the concrete.

Pettit: States he would not mind if the substructure or gutter cannot be saved. States he would like the façade to remain the same.

Prebys: Inquires if the porcelain can be removed without damage and then reinstalled without damage?

Epstein: States that he would like to replace with new materials, because he is worried they are going to get damaged, because of window and roof work. States that he is worried about preserving the structure.

Condon: States that the porcelain panels are in good condition and it is just the substructure that needs to be fixed.

Epstein: States that he thinks the porcelain could be salvaged, or touched up. Inquires if porcelain could not be removed safely, is there a replacement?

Prebys: States that he does not think something like that exists.

Condon: States that if the applicant has an architect come out there and states parts of the awning are rusted through and have to be replaced that is understandable, but if the porcelain panels are in good condition he does not see why they could not be reinstalled.

Epstein: Inquires if that is how the Commission wants him to proceed?

Prebys: States that he is really uncomfortable moving forward without a proposal on how the applicant will proceed after the awning removal and is concerned with someone coming in and damaging or stealing the paneling when they're sitting out. He states that without knowing how this is going to be accomplished, he cannot vote.

Epstein: States that he has spoken with Frank Daniels about the awning being a safety issue several times and is concerned.

Pettit: States that there needs to be a proposal to move forward and there needs to be an assessment to determine if these panels are salvageable. The proposal would be: how the panels are taken down and how the panels are repaired or reattached.

Epstein: States that he would like the HDC to communicate to him what they want to see. States that he is working with a structural architect.

Condon: Inquires if he has someone to take them down.

Epstein: States that he currently does not. States that this is the beginning of the process for him.

Lindsay: States that she recommends finding someone who can do restoration and specializes in these types of projects.

Epstein: States that he is in the beginning stages of the project and if the HDC would like him to keep the awning up, he would like something in writing, because the safety issue that this poses.

Condon: States that what he would approve right now is a walk-through scaffolding attached on the sidewalk and right underneath it and will prevent the awning from falling down.

Epstein: States that he agrees and thinks it would be a great solution.

Condon: States that another reason the Commission is hesitant to approve the removal of the awning, because once the awning is removed there is no set plan to see it put back and the outcome is uncertain. States that the Commission has seen this happen before. States that he understands the applicant wants it to look like it was, but there also needs to be a defined plan.

Epstein: States that there could be a better way for information to be communicated. States that he has gone to Frank in the Building Department several times and there is not a strong communication between the departments. States that he has discussed with Frank the removal of the awning and the timeline discussed would give him upwards of 6 mos. to a year to figure out a replacement plan. States that other than scaffolding does the Commission want him to get an engineer to determine the replacement or repair options?

Schmiedeke Inquires if he is working with Quinn Evans?

Epstein: States that he is not.

Stevenson: States that Quinn Evans has a Historic Preservationist on staff.

Rupert: States that the applicant could do an exploratory to see which part of the wood needs to be repaired.

Schmiedeke: States that if 25% of the awning is damaged, how do we know the other 75% is not damaged? States that her assumption is it would be damaged; looks like water damage so she would assume it would be in there. States that if the applicant could get a construction company with enough details, she could support, removing, re-mantling, and replacing the structure. States that the point is no one knows the details of removal and reinstallation so it is difficult to move forward.

Epstein: Asks for a recommendation for someone who can do this type of specialized work.

Stevenson: States that the Commission tries to be careful to not give recommendations on specific contractors.

Prebys: States that he wants to see what structural work is necessary.

Stevenson: States that the applicant will need to find out more information about the structure and his plan to proceed and then come back to the Commission to share it.

Epstein: Inquires if the Commission wants the awning removed or replaced?

Prebys: Advises that the Commission cannot approve the removal of the awning without knowing the repair.

Epstein: States that he feels like this process could go smoother.

- Prebys: Advises that the property owner should feel free to come talk to the Commission at any meeting as a study item and the Commissioners would be happy to have a discussion with him.
- Lindsay: States that it is hard to make decisions without the details of the plan.
- Epstein: States that he understands and will attend another meeting.
- Motion: Prebys (second: Rupert) moves to table application.**
- Approval: Unanimous. Motion carries.**

STUDY ITEMS

309-311 N. Washington

- Applicant: Ronald W. White – company manager.
- Discussion:
- Stevenson: States that the applicant wants to replace 14 windows. Inquires if they are currently metal windows?
- White: States that they are steel with single frame glass, casement windows. States that there are a total of 22 windows, but they want to replace 14 windows that are in poor condition. States that he has worked with George Meyer Company in Ann Arbor and the company had been making repairs on the casements for a while, but can no longer find supplies to fix them. States that they are now looking to replace the whole window. States that he has priced out vinyl clad windows, but knows that vinyl is not allowed in the Historic District. States that he believed the building was in the Historic District and had a window company also gave them an estimate on historic windows and chose to purchase 14 of those. States that the windows installed would be from the Pella Architect series. States the windows are wood frame aluminum clad windows which he believes are permitted in the Historic District. States that he wanted to ask the Commission for some recommendations as to somewhere where he might be able to obtain supplies or windows. States that they are crank type windows.
- Condon: States that the applicant has the option of replacing the entire crank system. States that Strybuc is a company that still sells the parts needed for this type of window. States that they may not have exact, but there might be something similar that can be swapped out. States that steel casements are pretty common in Ypsilanti. Advises that the reason the price is so high to replace steel casement windows is the process for removing them which involves breaking the glass and cutting the steel frame. States that even a vinyl replacement is expensive, because of the labor costs of removing the steel casements. Inquires if the windows have a deep sill and a deep jam?
- White: Confirms
- Condon: Makes a suggestion for making the windows more energy efficient which would preserve the current windows without having to replace.

Rupert: Inquires if it was original?

Condon: Confirms. States that there is a possibility of interior storm windows. States that there are commercial companies that make similar windows. States that a Michigan manufacturer is Wojam Window. States that the company may be more inexpensive than the Architect Series. States that one disadvantage of these particular windows is the thicker perimeter in the profile. States that with this style could potentially save money and it is a similar style, more so than aluminum clad.

Schmiedeke: States that wouldn't the Commission prefer to see the windows repaired rather than replaced?

Rupert: States that his objection as well, would be to see the windows repaired rather than replaced.

Prebys: States that while the windows may not be of modern taste, the Commission would want to make them fit and work.

White: States that there has been many repairs made on the windows over the years, but some of the windows are significantly damaged to the point that they will not open.

Condon States that even the cost of rehabilitating these windows will be expensive.

309 N. Park

Applicant: Mary Wigton, Ray Anderson—Standing in for their son and his wife.

Discussion:

Wigton: States that her son and his wife finally closed on the house this Friday and would like to begin work soon.
::passes out pictures::

States that on the exterior of the home they would like to have white cedar stained, that the stain would be longer lasting, and an opaque stain on the trim elements, semi-transparent. States that the plan is to clean the white cedar.

Anderson: States that they will need to do some testing on the white cedar, may need to do some opaque stains on the house.

Wigton: States that with the entire Commissioners' expertise, they would like to know what the Commission suggests for painting or staining.

Rupert: States that he specializes in painting and states that the cedar is probably weathered. Advises that the cedar will need an oil based primer and then will need to be covered with a latex paint.

Anderson: States that he thinks that is entirely a possibility. States that they are working with Don Randazzo, who said the cedar was in remarkably good

condition. States that his son is making the decisions at this point with help from the Commission's input. States that they would like to try a stain on the cedar.

Prebys: States that the problem with a stain is there are sections on the house where the wood will have to be replaced and this will cause the stain not to match the existing wood.

Pettit: States that the Commission's preference is for opaque stains or paints

Prebys: States that if paint is being used as Ron said, a good quality oil based primer and latex paints, are much better quality and that the whole idea of paint is preservation. Advises that the paint should have a satin finish, because it helps shed water.

Wigton: States that the picture they have, shows there was an addition.

Anderson: States that it is not the same materials.

Wigton: States that they have had a hard time finding images; that picture was from 1995.

Prebys: States that he is a neighbor and went to the Historical Society and there was no information on this specific property.

Wigton: States that she asked the archives to look and they did not have information. States that she could not find anything about the house, but it appeared on a Sanborn map in 1893.

Prebys: States that there are directories, 1870 something to 1890 and the house looks like it is from that time frame and these directories could be useful.

Wigton: States that she is not fond of the awning and they are thinking of a porch, a wraparound or just one across the front.

Prebys: Advises that it might be valuable to see what kind of shadows is left on the home from what was there in terms of a porch that may have existed.

Anderson: States that there is some evidence of the shadow across the front.

Prebys: Suggests that there is decoration on that little side porch which could be replicated for a new porch and it gives you information to base it on.

Anderson: States that the column would be a hard thing to restore.

Prebys: States that it would provide an example of what to aim for.

Wigton: States that another thing they are thinking of working on is the shingling on the north side of the house.

Rupert: Inquires if it is on the gables?

Wigton: Confirms.

- Anderson: States that it was removed from the front of the house due to a fire in 1945. States that the attic has charred boards and the roof was damaged.
- Prebys: States that it was probably removed when they put the stone on.
- Rupert: States that there is one on south side as well.
- Wigton: States that they would also paint barn/garage.
- Prebys: States that the colors in their color charts are appropriate.
- Wigton: States that she is thinking of switching the colors between the house and the garage.
- Prebys: Advises that aesthetically, garages are least important and to minimize drawing your attention to it, use the darker color, it then will draw more attention to the house. States that if the house is brighter it will make the garage more subtle.
- Anderson: States that he will have to bring all of these ideas back to the homeowner and then they can go from there, but he plans on returning as an action item before May.
- Wigton: States that they are also considering painting the aluminum of the windows black to make them look older.
- Prebys: States that the Commission would also like to hear about their landscaping plans.
- Wigton: States that they want to leave fence, but there is a center piece they are thinking about removing.
- Schmiedeke: Advises that staining fresh timber is one thing, but using it on older surfaces is different, the Commission would prefer something opaque.
- Prebys: States that there will have to be some replacement wood here or there and if you stain the difference will be more noticeable.
- Condon: States that they will want to clean the wood, but not power wash as this will damage the material.

59 E. Cross

Applicant: Van Huntsberger – architect

Discussion:

Huntsberger: States that there are two major items the owner is looking at changing. States that the owner needs to reorganize the kitchen and that the current kitchen needs improvement. States that the first major item would be relocating the entrance doors on the back and the intent is to move them about 20 ft. to the east, to the location marked on the map. States that the next drawing shows the doors after construction and they would block up the opening that

was previously there with brick and paint to re-patch the opening. States that the other major item is at the back where the entrance doors use to be. States that there is currently a window there, but they would like to replace it with a door. States that the window there is an exact match to the window next to it to the west. States that this new door will be the one serving outdoor patio and the intent would be to remove and cut down the window to be able to put the door there. , States that they could leave awning and tuck door under the awning.

Rupert: States that he is concerned if the door swings out, that it might hit the awning.

Huntsberger: Inquires if the awning is important to the Commission?

Rupert: States that no, it is not original.

Huntsberger: States that the owner wants to use the same doors, but they are under code so the owner wants to extend the length of the door on either side so they are up to code; they will have to strip off polyurethane. States that there are exhaust vents over those existing doors. Asks the Commissioners if they want to consider moving that entire assembly and putting glass in those areas or just the doors?

Condon: Inquires what does the applicant want to do?

Huntsberger: States that he has not approached that subject yet, he just thought of it today; doors are 7' 6".

Schmiedeke: Advises that these doors should be automated and they should both open; they are currently not handicap accessible.

Huntsberger: States that they are enlarging the doors, but just on the jam, because of all the hardware existing there and this will make them handicap accessible.

Pettit: Inquires how much needs to be added?

Huntsberger: States that 6-7" need to be added. States that the plan is to replace window with 6 panel door, hollow metal door.

Schmiedeke: States that they should keep the door flush.

Rupert: States that it is good to keep it simple.

Stevenson: Asks if the applicant has any other questions?

Huntsberger: States that he does not.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS- None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Property Monitoring:

169 N Washington: Appears that there was a fire at this location and it needs to be monitored. Staff took photos on 12/2/14 and there was a dumpster on the property and a letter was sent to the owner on 12/11/14 advising that any exterior changes need to be brought to the HDC. Sent out a letter on 2/24/15 inquiring about the work that needs to be done due to the fire and that it will require HDC approval.

525 N Huron: Staff will continue to monitor. Photos were taken on 12/2/14. Staff sent a letter to the owner re: the vinyl windows on the sides, back and front and the metal door on the side. Email response received on 12/24/14 that states that the owner is seeking a loan to finish the work. Second notice sent as of February 24th seeking info on work completion and where they are at with their CO.

214 W Forest: Second notice sent 12/11/14. No update.

314 E Cross: No update.

35 S Huron: No update.

106 S Washington: Scheduled for re-inspection by the building department on 1/21/15. The concern is that this structure will only get worse. Staff sent a letter on 12/16/14 advising the owner that the structure needs to be stabilized and recommend immediate action. Received 1/5/15 response from the owner advising that he is still obtaining bids.

613 N Prospect: No update.

221 S Washington: Staff advises that a letter was sent on 10/28/14 to the owner regarding fence needing painting. No response has been received at this time. A second notice will be sent in the spring.

322 E Cross: It was noticed by the HDC that there was a recent outbuilding added to the property. Staff sent a letter on 12/11/14 requesting an application for the additional structure. Staff sent second notice on 1/15/15, no response as of 3/10/15.

215 S Washington: The HDC requests that a letter be sent to the owner advising that any exterior work requires an HDC work permit application since it appears that work is in process at this property. Staff sent letter on 1/15/15, no response as of 3/10/15.

33 E Cross: Staff sent out a letter on 2/24/15 to the owner inquiring about work that needs to be done to maintain the bricks on the West side of the building.

15 S Washington: The HDC noticed work being done on this property without approval; specifically this is referring to the removal of the roof. Staff sent out letter on 3/12/15 requesting more info. Staff will take photos.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS –none

HOUSEKEEPING BUSINESS

Approval of the minutes of February 24, 2015

Motion: Rupert (second: Prebys) moves to approve the minutes as submitted.

Approval: Unanimous. Motion carries.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Schmiedeke (second: Pettit) moves to adjourn.

Approval: Unanimous. Motion carries.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:25 pm