

MINUTES

City of Ypsilanti HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION Regular Meeting held in person, Freighthouse

Tuesday, July 25, 2023 (approved 8/8/23)
7:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairperson Pettit Welcomed attendees.
Meeting called to order at 7:08pm

Commissioners Present: Alex Pettit – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
James Chesnut – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
James Ratzlaff – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Stefan Szumko – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Delrhea Byrge – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Hannah McCready – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
John VanBolt – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Ellen Thackery, Preservation Planner

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Szumko (second: Ratzlaff) moved to approve the agenda as proposed.

Voice Vote - Ayes: Commissioners Pettit, Szumko, Chesnut, Ratzlaff, Byrge, McCready, VanBolt
Nays: None
Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS, other than their agenda item—Mr. Strenski of 323 Oak spoke in favor of 15 S Washington

PUBLIC HEARING—none

OLD BUSINESS—none

NEW BUSINESS

15 S Washington

**roof-mount solar installation*

Representative from Homeland Solar, present

Staff report: This is a modern building that is considered noncontributing to the district. Staff recommends approval of this application because it meets Standard 9 in that the proposed work will not negatively impact any historic materials or the character of the district.

Discussion:

Applicant: Described that the work will be out of view behind a parapet wall and set back for fire safety and the disconnect and inverter will be on the building's side.

Commissioners: Had no concerns. In the case of a noncontributing building when the solar panels will be almost invisible from the street, Commissioner Ratzlaff wondered if that should be a staff-level administrative approval. The chair requested that Commissioner Ratzlaff research that and possibly draft a resolution for consideration.

Motion: Szumko (second: Byrge) moved to approve Application PHDC-23-0064 and issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a roof-mount solar array at 15 S Washington because the proposed work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standard 9.

Voice Vote - Ayes: Commissioners Pettit, Chesnut, Ratzlaff, Szumko, Byrge, McCready, VanBolt
Nays: None
Motion carried.

323 Oak

**10 new wood windows with aluminum cladding*

Applicant: Dave Strenski, present

Staff report: House's historic details are quite intact and it contributes to the district. These proposed windows were approved for some windows in 2016, and applicant wants to replace the remaining windows, but he proposes to retain the most character-defining window on the first floor at the front of the house.

Discussion:

Applicant: Applicant confirmed the windows will be full-frame replacements and the windows will be replaced to the rough openings because of the advanced deterioration. Walked commissioners through photos, both in the packet and additional photos he sent to staff after the packet deadline (included in minutes), pointing out areas of wood rot and deterioration, including advanced deterioration on several sills and frames.

[Discussion about confirming ages of various windows and which windows are proposed for replacement. Discussion about method of window replacement and construction details.]
Applicant called builder Mike Condon of Ypsilanti Restoration and put him on speakerphone. Mr. Condon confirmed how the installation would be done and confirmed the advanced state of deterioration. He confirmed that these windows would all need to be rebuilt and so there

wouldn't be any historic material left to preserve—much epoxy repair has occurred over the years. Commission expressed satisfaction with the method Mr. Condon was proposing because, if the windows are beyond repair, his method would not reduce glass size, trim and windows would appear the same, and the proposed windows and installation method would also protect the house from more severe water infiltration over the long term.

Motion: Szumko (second: Chesnut) moved to approve Application PHDC-23-0063 and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the work at 323 Oak Street for the replacement of 10 windows as proposed in the application dated July 11, 2023 using Jeld-Wen Sitaline Clad-Wood, double-hung windows in the one-over-one configuration with Mesa Red aluminum cladding, with the condition that the method will be full-frame replacements and all windows and frames will be removed and headers will be replaced if necessary. The proposed work meets Secretary of the Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation 6 because the existing windows are beyond repair and the proposed windows match the existing in design, color, and texture.

Voice Vote - Ayes: Commissioners Pettit, Chesnut, Ratzlaff, Szumko, Byrge, McCready, VanBolt
Nays: None
Motion carried.

STUDY ITEMS—none

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS—

415 N Huron: half-round aluminum gutters

208 W Michigan Ave: repainting wood components of storefront

OTHER BUSINESS

Property Monitoring

Updates from Staff:

Staff offered a couple slides about Defensible Decisionmaking, and that the commission gets there through preparation, a consistent process, and objective consideration of the Standards for Rehabilitation. (attached)

Commissioner Comments

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS—none

HOUSEKEEPING BUSINESS

1. Approval of the minutes for July 11, 2023

Motion: Chesnut (second: Ratzlaff) moved to approve the minutes of July 11, 2023, as amended.

Voice Vote - Ayes: Commissioners Pettit, Chesnut, Ratzlaff, Szumko, Byrge, McCready, VanBolt
Nays: None.
Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Pettit adjourned the meeting, citing the end of the agenda with no further items to discuss.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:52 p.m.

Full Minutes Prepared By: Ellen Thackery

Additional Pictures Applicant Shared Separate from Application for Commission to View at Meeting,
7/25/23





































Your Job as a Historic District Commissioner

PROTECT/PRESERVE HISTORIC MATERIAL

- ▶ Review all exterior changes in local historic districts
- ▶ Issue Certificates of Appropriateness, Denials, or Notices to Proceed
- ▶ Develop design guidelines
- ▶ Promote preservation in your community
- ▶ **GOAL: Defensible decisions**



How Do We Get Defensible Decisions?

- ▶ Preparation
- ▶ Well-defined, consistent process
- ▶ Objective application of Standards

Before the Meeting: understanding the historic property

- ▶ Importance – history, architecture, contributing?
- ▶ Character-defining Features – architectural, landscape
- ▶ Integrity



Before the Meeting— site visit from public ROW

- Identify yourself if you meet the property owner
- Be cautious of “ex parte contact”—an oral or written communication that is not part of the public record.
- You may discuss the process (*appear at meeting, present project, questions from commission, comments from other parties, decision making, notice of final decision*). “I cannot discuss a pending issue outside of the meeting.”
- Limit discussion to the facts, avoid speculation on the decision.
- Disclose any contact at the meeting so it can become part of the record.

During the Meeting

- ▶ Ensure public can hear – microphones if possible
- ▶ Ensure recording meeting, in case of appeal
- ▶ Ensure taking notes for minutes and in case technology fails
- ▶ Treat public with kindness and respect
- ▶ Well-defined process used consistently
- ▶ Use the Standards & Guidelines—strive for objective application
- ▶ Each meeting may be an opportunity to educate

After the Meeting

- ▶ Written decisions sent to applicants
 - Why application approved or denied
 - If denied: reason, how to correct, how to appeal
 - Must be sent within 60 days
 - Good idea to send denials registered mail and 1st class
- ▶ Decisions are communicated to Building Department
- ▶ Minutes are prepared

Summary

- ▶ Preparation
 - ▶ review packets
 - ▶ ask key questions, understand resource and proposal
 - ▶ visit site
- ▶ Well-defined process used consistently
- ▶ Use your Standards & Guidelines
- ▶ Each meeting may be an opportunity to educate

