

This meeting was held remotely via Zoom and was broadcast to the public via the Planning and Code Administration Department’s YouTube channel. Stephen Bockmiller, Development/Planner and Zoning Administrator opened the meeting. All HDC members participated in the meeting off site. Michael Gehr, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. on Thursday, April 23, 2020. A roster of the members of the commission and the technical posts they fill are on file and available upon request. Also participating virtually were commission members L. Allen, R. Powell, and M. Wertman. In addition to Mr. Bockmiller, K. Maher, Director of Planning and Code Administration Department; P. Fulk, Audio-Visual Technical Assistance; and D. Calhoun, Secretary, were present at City Hall.

Approval of Minutes:

March 12, 2020.

MOTION: (Powell/Allen) So moved (to accept the minutes of March 12).
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

Amendments to Bylaws to Address State Allow Emergency Meetings.

Mr. Bockmiller provided background for the proposed amendments to the bylaws. The emergency amendment will be temporary and will expire 45 days after the Mayor suspends the Civil Emergency. Staff noted that the commission could amend the bylaws to make this a permanent measure in the future. This action is just to get the language into the bylaws so this virtual meeting can take place.

MOTION: (Wertman/Powell) I move we approve it (to adopt the amended bylaws).
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

CONSENT AGENDA

919 Hamilton Boulevard – Edmund Dunn – Fence, Case No. HDC 2020-07.

27 West Antietam Street – Adam Hager/Frederick, Seibert & Associates, Inc., for Joel Merrbaugh, Owner - Parking Lot, Case No. HDC 2020-09.

No one had concerns with these cases.

MOTION: (Wertman/Allen) Mr. Chairman, I have reviewed the materials submitted in Cases HDC 2020-07 and HDC 2020-09 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 these cases as its own and grant Certificates of Appropriateness to the applicants for Cases HDC 2020-07 and HDC 2020-09.

DISCUSSION: None.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

DESIGN REVIEW

152 West Washington Street – Darren Sweeney – Swimming Pool, Case No. HDC 2020-05.

Dean Martin and James Sheats, Sign Here, 345 East Antietam Street, Hagerstown, Maryland, participated virtually on behalf of the property owner.

Staff Report: This building is an A resource in the Downtown Local Historic District, and is known as the Congressman James Roman House. The applicant proposes to install a 30-inch wide by 36-inch tall two-sided, MDO wood sign on the left side of the arched entry way and refurbish the existing middle wall-mounted signs to reflect the new tenant. The hanging sign will have a dark green painted background and gold-tone vinyl lettering and accents. A new metal scroll bracket will be installed in the mortar joints from which to hang the sign. The distance between the bottom of the sign and the sidewalk is ten feet. The resurfaced wall-mounted sign will be made of aluminum composite, use the same color scheme as the projecting sign, and will measure 13 inches by 28 inches. Staff recommended approval. Staff noted that the existing projecting sign next to the door needs to be removed since it was never approved by the HDC, nor is it of a design consistent with the Design Guidelines and likely does not comply with height clearance requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and is unlikely to be approved. Staff stressed that the commission does not have purview over the message of the proposed signs.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Mr. Martin and Mr. Sheats did not have any additional comments or information to provide.

Ms. Allen had concerns about the amount of signage on the front of the building and asked if the owner would be open to removing some of the signage or combining them to reduce the amount of signage. Mr. Martin indicated that the owner would be willing to share space and the preference would be the perpendicular sign. Mr. Bockmiller observed that it appears there will be three tenants in the building. The Liquor Board has its own sign which is located on the side of

the building. Mr. Gehr pointed out that if applicant comes back with an application for another tenant sign they would have to consider consolidation at that point.

MOTION: (Wertman/Powell) Mr. Chairman, I have inspected the project plans and the property in question, and if constructed in accordance with the plans, the project is compatible with the character of the district for the reasons that the sign will fit in, is the right height and fits in and it goes with the historic look of the surrounding building, and, therefore, will be generally in harmony with the Architectural Design Guidelines for the Downtown Historic 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. 2020-08.

DISCUSSION: None.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

Alexander House – 7 East Washington Street – Window and Façade Alterations.

MJ Wojewodzki, Quinn Evans Architects, 100 North Charles Street, Baltimore, Maryland, was present virtually on behalf of the owner.

Staff Report. This is an A resource in the Downtown Local Historic District. The applicant is proposing comprehensive renovations to the exterior of this building, some of which are “repair in kind” and do not require HDC approval. A list of the proposed work is included in the meeting file, however, only Items 1 through 7 apply; the eighth item (the handicapped ramp) is in the street right-of-way and beyond the purview of the HDC. Staff recommended approval, verifying that the framing and air conditioning units on the south side are painted the same color as the brick wall. This equipment should, to the greatest degree possible, given the size, weight and location of the improvements, be mounted into mortar joints and disturb as little of the brick material as possible. In this case, damage to some brick is likely unavoidable. Also, the use of simulated true divided lights on the second and third floors are used (referred to in the description of work as an option). Lights should reflect the patterns that appear in readily available historic photos as they would have existed in the first half of the 20th Century. The south side of the building where most of this equipment will be mounted is not readily visible.

Commission/Applicant Discussion: Ms. Wojewodzki explained that their budget is tight. The project as submitted calls for one-over-one windows; windows with exterior grills would be an alternate if they were able to find an additional \$24,000. At this point they are mostly concerned with the comfort of their tenants. They were not successful in obtaining funds from the Maryland Historical Trust. They are planning to apply for federal tax credits and also pursue Community Development Administration (CDA) funding. The proposed brick cleaning, masonry and stone repair will be done in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards.

In response to a question by Ms. Wertman, Ms. Wojewodzki stated that the former (historic) coffee shop space will be raised to make it accessible. At the corner space, the plan is to remove the infill area and reconfigure it as close to the historic floor plan as possible. It could become one or two retail spaces. The existing Cape and Blade storefront will also be refurbished.

Commission members and Ms. Wojewodzki discussed the windows and window muntins. This matter was discussed at the workshop. The application as submitted does not include muntins in the windows (only as an alternative). Historically there were muntins in the windows. Mr. Gehr recalled that at the workshop the commission and applicant discussed muntins in the second and third floor windows on the street side elevations. Ms. Wojewodzki indicated that the second floor replacement windows will be arched—the current windows are rectangular in the spaces that were originally arched-top windows. Ms. Wertman felt the muntins should be extended to the upper floors. Another suggestion was that the muntins be extended on the Public Square façade with no muntins on the East Washington Street façade. With regard to a question by Ms. Wertman, Ms. Wojewodzki stated that the “bump outs” will remain. There is no money in their budget to remove these features. However, if they had the budget those “bump outs” would be removed. Concerning the HVAC condensers, Mr. Gehr noted there are not many options for the condensers. However, the proposed location on the south elevation has limited visibility. Mr. Gehr had no objection to what is proposed (no muntins) but asked if the muntins could be added at a later date. Ms. Wojewodzki stated that the muntins are part of the manufactured window (interior and exterior grilles with a spacer).

Mr. Bockmiller reminded commission members that the application is for no grilles. Ms. Wojewodzki stated that they would like to add the grilles, but it is a budget issue. It will be a few months out before construction begins.

Commission members were disappointed that the application as submitted does not include muntins and hoped the applicant would be able to find funding to include the windows described in the Alternate.

MOTION: (Wertman/Powell) 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 reason that the applicant will be restoring a lot of the historical aspects that were there, replacing storefronts to make them go back in time a little bit more, and restoring the building generally be in harmony with the Architectural Design Guidelines for the Downtown Historic 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 2020-10.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Bockmiller wanted commission members to be aware that to approve the application “as submitted” means one-over-one windows with the option on the applicant to put the grilles in if they chose to do so later.

Commission members understood the motion, but encouraged the applicant to push for the windows with muntins if at all possible.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

WORKSHOP

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

- Preservation Month. Due to the Civil Emergency, staff has not pursued nominations for recognition since there will not be any type of recognition ceremony in May. Mr. Bockmiller encouraged commission member to continue thinking about potential honorees. Discussion on potential nominees will continue at the next meeting.
- Mr. Powell noted that the recently approved black “wrought iron” fence at 1011 Hamilton Boulevard is very attractive and made a big difference at this property.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

ADJOURN

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (5:32 p.m.).

5/14/2020

Approved



Debra C. Calhoun – Secretary