

**Historic District Commission
MINUTES**

**September 10, 2020
City of Hagerstown, Maryland**

Michael Gehr, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 10, 2020, in the Council Chamber, Second 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, D. Carroll, C. George, R. Powell, and S. Silas. S. Bockmiller, Development Planner/Zoning Administrator and D. Calhoun, Secretary, were present on behalf of the Planning and Code Administration Department.

Approval of Minutes:

August 27, 2020.

MOTION: (Powell/Allen) So moved (to adopt).
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

CONSENT AGENDA

29 West Franklin Street – D. Bruce Poole, Esquire/JP Investments – Parking Lot Access Gate, Case No. HDC 2020-32.

No one appeared to speak against the case; no commission members had questions or objections to this application.

MOTION: (George/Powell) Mr. Chairman, I have reviewed the materials submitted in Case HDC 2020-32 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 recommendations in this case as its own and grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to the applicant for Case No. 2020-32.
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

DESIGN REVIEW

142 East North Avenue – Farukh Bhutta for Young Lee – Fence, Case No. HDC 2020-31.

Fatima Bhutta, 142 East North Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, was present, on behalf of Farukh Bhutta.

Staff Report: This is a B resource in the Potomac-Broadway Local Historic District. Applicant has installed a six-foot tall wooden, dog-ear picket fence in the back yard. The existing three-foot tall metal fence remains. This is a corner lot and the fences are visible from public ways. Staff recommended approval provided the applicant amends the application as follows:

- remove the metal and wire fence along the sidewalk;
- remove the chain link fence along the rear property line if that fence belongs to them; and
- remove the “dog-ear” portion of the fence and replace it with a cap board.

The fence must be painted or stained once the wood has seasoned.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: In response to a question by the chair, Ms. Bhutta stated that they were willing to amend the application per staff’s recommendations. She agreed that all the metal fencing will be removed and that a gate will be added. Ms. Bhutta also agreed to add 1 x 4-inch boards to the outside face so that it is flush with the top portion to bring the fence more into compliance with the design guidelines. Mr. Gehr advised that it will take six months for the wood to season which will allow the stain or paint to adhere to the wood. Ms. Allen recommended that the motion allow some extra time into the spring since winter is not conducive to painting or staining.

MOTION: (Powell/Silas) Mr. Chairman, I have inspected the project plans and the property in question, and if constructed in accordance with these plans, and modifications to these plans as accepted by the property owner, this project is compatible with the character of the district for the reasons that the materials, architectural detailing, are generally in harmony with the Architectural Design Guidelines for the Residential Historic Districts and the character of the adjoining properties. Therefore, I move that the HDC grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to the applicant for HDC Case No. 2020-31.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Allen asked for an amendment to the motion to allow six months for the wood to properly season so it can be painted or stained. Mr. Powell and Mr. Silas agreed to the amendment to the motion.

ACTION: APPROVED AS AMENDED (Unanimous)

WORKSHOP

941 Forest Drive – Michael Schwartzbeck – Proposed Addition.

Michael Schwartzbeck, 941 Forest Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland, and Rich Brunner of Facelift Remodeling, general contractor for the project, were present.

The proposal is for a 24 x 24-foot addition off the rear of the house which will be accessible through the basement door. The addition will have a shed roof with asphalt shingles.

Mr. Schwartzbeck had a sample of the siding he was proposing for the exterior of the addition and also the historic house. The siding is CertainTeed “Carolina” beaded siding which is very similar to the historic siding. Mr. Schwartzbeck asserted that the “Carolina” siding is reproduced from authentic hand-crafted boards and is wood composite material. He asked if this would be allowed on the historic house as well. Mr. Brunner added that the siding is available in many sizes so it is possible to find a size that will be similar to what is on the house now.

Mr. Gehr stated that he had no concerns about using the composite siding on the addition. He did have concerns with the use of the “Carolina” siding on the historic house. Mr. Schwartzbeck believed that the siding was made from wood and should be permitted on the entire house. Commission members pointed out several instances in the documents provided by the owner that the siding was vinyl and not a wood by product.

Mr. Brunner had questions about the process and whether he could apply for building permits. Mr. Bockmiller explained that he would not be able to sign off on the building permit until after the HDC approves the design review application.

Mr. Bockmiller noted that the historic house has divided muntins on the windows. He asked the commission what they would expect for the windows on the addition (one-over-one windows or grilles that are consistent with the remainder of house). Commission members would like to see grilles to match what is on the house already. Mr. Bockmiller added that the grilles need to be on the outside of the window, not just between the panes of glass.

In summary, commission members agreed that the addition could be sided with the vinyl siding. However, the design guidelines are clear about the type of material that can be used on the primary structure. The owners were concerned about lead paint regulations and believed that the house needed to be painted every year to avoid code violations.

Concerning color, even though the commission does not have purview over color, they suggested the color selected should complement the neighborhood. Mr. Brunner asked if the foundation of the addition needs to be stone if it is visible above the ground. The commission advised that the foundation of the addition can be masonry, painted to mask the rawness of the concrete block. Mr. Brunner indicated that the existing stone foundation will not be exposed.

When the design review application is filed, it must include details on all exterior materials and components. Interior details are not necessary. Mr. Brunner asked if K-style gutters would be acceptable for the addition. The primary structure has both K-style and half-round gutters. Commission members and staff recommended that this application be broken into two separate applications: the addition and the use of vinyl siding on the primary structure.

NEW BUSINESS

- 836 Oak Hill Avenue – Mr. Powell stated this property is in deplorable condition (mattresses and other garbage on the front porch).
- Ms. Allen was concerned about mailboxes and their proliferation on multi-unit houses. There are many different styles. She believed it was a slow erosion of the aesthetics of a neighborhood. Mr. Bockmiller stated that staff had researched this issue several years ago. The advice from the City Attorney was that the City has no authority over mailboxes. Mr. Bockmiller will look into this again.

Satellite dishes are a similar situation. Mr. Gehr noted that the design guidelines recommend that unused dishes be removed. Mr. Bockmiller stated that satellite dishes are federally regulated. Ms. Allen added that the mountings for satellite dishes are drilled into the masonry in many instances. She noted that security cameras and heavy wires are also an issue in multi-unit buildings. Mr. Bockmiller will look into this and research further.

OLD BUSINESS

- Mr. Bockmiller reported that the renovations to the Hamilton Hotel are beginning to wind down. The property owner indicated that once the Hamilton project is completed he will begin working on the space where the Delta Hosiery Building once stood.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Bockmiller announced that Preservation Maryland has purchased the old log house on Jonathan Street and are moving forward with plans to convert the building to a dwelling. The logs were originally covered with clapboard and that is the plan for the rehabilitation.

ADJOURN

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (5:26 p.m.).

9/24/2020

Approved



Debra C. Calhoun – Secretary