

Michael Gehr, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m. on Thursday, September 22, 2016, 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 M. Wertman. S. Bockmiller and D. Calhoun, Secretary, were present on behalf of the Planning and Code Administration Department.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 25, 2016:**

**MOTION:** (Wertman/Crumrine) I move to accept them.  
**DISCUSSION:** None.  
**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**135 West Washington Street – Washington County Historical Society – Sign,  
Case No. HDC 2016-29.**

**814 Potomac Avenue – Ken Hubbard – Roof Replacement, Case No. HDC 2016-30.**

No one was present with objections to any of the Consent Agenda items.

**MOTION:** (Davis/Crumrine) Mr. Chairman, I have reviewed the materials the submitted in Cases HDC 2016-29, 135 West Washington Street; and HDC 2016-30, 814 Potomac Avenue, 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 this commission adopt the staff evaluations and recommendations of these cases as its own and grant Certificates of Appropriateness to the applicants for the previously mentioned cases.

**DISCUSSION:** None.  
**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

**DESIGN REVIEW**

**30 East North Avenue – Andrew Escalet – Front Porch Repair/Replacement,  
Case No. HDC 2016-31.**

Andrew Escalet, 30 East North Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, owner of the property, was present. Mr. Escalet was joined by his engineer, Merle Saville, toward the end of his presentation.

Staff Report: This building is a “B” resource in the Potomac-Broadway Local Historic District. Applicant proposes to repair/rebuild the existing front enclosed porch. The project will bring the existing enclosed porch back to an open porch, including:

- Decorative support columns to match the original as closely as possible.
- New pressure-treated handrail system.
- ¾-inch tongue-and-groove composite (“Trex”) decking.
- Pressure-treated wood lattice under the porch.

All unpainted wood must be painted or stained once the wood has seasoned. No work is proposed for the porch roof and the existing concrete steps will remain.

Staff recommended approval, with the condition that the HDC approval shall expire 12 months from the date a building permit is issued to ensure that the project is completed in a timely manner. The plan shows alternates of cedar or vinyl on porch posts. Approval should be for wood only, including the trim board (no material is shown). Although the application does not include work on the front door and its trim, the plan shows details that may not match existing. This application is for the porch only and does not convey any approval for work on or replacement of the front door. Applicant must provide pictures of the columns that will be used to verify they are close replications of the existing posts.

On the timing issue, this has been a long project involving the City’s Code Enforcement staff. Once an application is approved by the HDC, there is no time limit for construction. Because this is an existing violation case, staff is requesting a condition being included in the motion to ensure timely completion of the project. The clock will begin running when the building permit is issued, although staff will consider a request for a reasonable extension.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Mr. Escalet stated that as long as he can request extensions he has no concerns. Mr. Gehr stated that closure boards need to be added to the ends of the Trex® boards to cover them. Typically older porches have a piece of trim around the outside of the floorboards. (The record should reflect that the project engineer, Merle Saville, joined the meeting.) Mr. Escalet indicated that he had no issue with adding trim to hide the ends of the floorboards.

Concerning the conflicting materials for the trim work on the pillars (cedar or vinyl), Mr. Gehr suggested American mahogany since it also resists rot. Also the lattice panels need to have wood frames around them and they need to be painted.

**MOTION:** (Davis/Wertman) Mr. Chairman, I have inspected the project plans and the property in question, and if constructed in accordance with these plans and the recommendations in the staff report that include: approval shall expire twelve (12) months from the date the building permit is issued; wood is used on the porch posts, including the trim board; the decking has an enclosure board at the end of it that is wood; this application does not convey approval for the front door; the applicant must provide pictures of the columns; and paint the lattice at a time appropriate for doing so. For all these reasons and the work that they are showing is generally in harmony with the Architectural Design Guidelines for the Residential Preservation Design 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 2016-31.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

## **WORKSHOP**

None.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**West Antietam Street Demolition.** Mr. Bockmiller updated that commission on the demolition project in the first block of West Antietam Street, describing the situation as one where the condition of the building from the street and from behind does not appear dire. However, a potential purchaser took pictures of the roof from the Antietam Paper Building and discovered that the flat roof has caved in causing the floors inside to collapse. According to experts, the building is within months of falling over into the Antietam Paper Building. The Chief Code Official has ordered that the building be demolished.

Commission members expressed their frustration over property owners allowing their buildings to deteriorate to the point where they need to be demolished. There has to be something that will prevent these types of demolitions in the future. Mr. Bockmiller noted the City has a Vacant Structure Program; however, inspectors may not have the authority to get into the properties for internal inspection. Concerning the property on West Antietam Street, there was no indication from the street that the building was in deplorable condition.

Commission members also expressed concern about the fire house in the 100 block of North Potomac Street and the former YMCA building on the corner of North Potomac Street and Church Street. Commission members suggested:

- promoting ways in which historic properties contribute economically when they are taken care of;
- collecting success stories from other cities;
- helping to explain the story rather than regulating it (making a storyboard out of it, selling the idea to people who do not understand it).

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Commemoration of Rose Hill Cemetery will be held on Thursday, October 13 at 3:00 p.m. at the cemetery.
- Mr. Gehr informed the commission and staff that he will be out of town for the November 10 meeting.

**ADJOURN**

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (5:40 p.m.).

10/27/2016

Approved



Debra C. Calhoun – Secretary