

Michael Gehr, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 22, 2018, 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, Development Planner and Zoning Administrator; and D. Calhoun, Secretary, were present on behalf of the Planning and Code Administration Department.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

March 8, 2018 (if ready).

The minutes were not ready for approval.

Staff noted that he would have no issue with moving the Design Review case to the Consent Agenda. The applicant, Melisa Conroy, clarified that the sign would consist of lettering only and that the glass would not be “milked.”

Mr. Gehr asked that the agenda be modified to move the Design Review case for 7 Public Square to the Consent Agenda.

- MOTION:** (Davis/Allen) So moved (to move Case No. HDC 2018-11 to the Consent Agenda).
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

CONSENT AGENDA

7 Public Square – Melisa Conroy Photography LLC, Sign, Case No. HDC 2018-11.

No one was present in the audience with comments or concerns about this case.

- MOTION:** (Davis/Wertman) Mr. Chairman, I have reviewed the materials submitted in Case HDC 2018-11, 7 Public Square, and its associated staff report and recommendations, and I have viewed the property in question. The staff report recommends approval of this 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 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. 2018-11 and HDC 2018-10.
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

DESIGN REVIEW

None.

WORKSHOPS

235 North Potomac Street – Gerald Saum – Proposed Demolition.

Gerald Saum, Zion Church, 201 North Potomac Street, Hagerstown, Maryland; and Linda Franks, 1818 Elizabeth Court, Hagerstown, were present on behalf of Zion Church.

Mr. Bockmiller explained that the former Christian Science facility is for sale. Zion Church is interested in the property because the parking lot abuts the church property in the rear. The proposal is to demolish the structure because of the condition of the building. Mr. Bockmiller said this is a contributing resource to the Potomac-Broadway Local Historic District, although he was unsure of its resource rating.

Gerald Saum explained that there is hyperbolic damage inside due to frozen pipes which caused the radiators to break creating water damage throughout the building. The building's electric system is knob and tube, and the roof needs to be replaced. They believe the building will be too expensive to fix up. Eight or nine radiators would need to be replaced (at approximately \$50,000); the knob and tube wiring would need to be brought to code (approximately \$10,000); and the roof would need to be replaced (no estimate on that work yet).

The church would like to provide parking for its parishioners and also offer parking to the Department of Social Services on North Potomac Street.

Linda Franks, told the commission that the selling price has been reduced to about \$195,000. The church is trying to determine what they could do with the property. Ms. Wertman had first-hand knowledge of this property and observed that despite the radiators, the walls seemed sound and there are nice architectural features throughout the building. She did not believe that the building is at the point at which the commission would typically consider approving a demolition. Mr. Bockmiller informed the church representatives that for the HDC to consider an application for demolition the building needs to be unsalvageable and would need to be in far worse shape than its current condition. The primary purpose of the Historic District Commission is to slow down or negate the unnecessary loss of resources. Any request for demolition needs to be well

founded in the condition of the building since once removed is gone forever and cannot be replaced.

Mr. Gehr stated that his understanding is that the main reason the church wants to purchase this property is to expand its parking. Mr. Saum expressed concern that if the church purchased the building they would not be able to rent out the structure. Mr. Bockmiller suggested they could purchase the property and subdivide the structure off and lease parking back to them. This parking lot is immediately adjacent to the church holdings and purchasing the property would give them control of the property. Mr. Bockmiller made the church aware of certain requirements for vacant structure program and suggested they contact the City for more information on the Vacant Structure Program. His understanding is that there would be an expectation for the church to maintain the building. There are ways to secure the building that are not expensive. The building could be mothballed by turning off the water and electric. The Planning and Code Administration Department would require a site plan, which would need to also be reviewed by the HDC since it will be an exterior change. The parking lot is not visible from North Potomac Street. Mr. Saum pointed out that access to the lot is from North Potomac Street through an existing parking lot that belongs to the adjacent property to the north. Mr. Gehr cautioned that they should watch the stone wall in the back. Mr. Bockmiller stated that since the access to the parking lot is from the adjacent property, the church would need to make sure there is something in writing formalizing that they can use the adjacent property to access their parking lot.

329 North Potomac Street – Leslie Allen – Replace Widow’s Peak.

Leslie Allen, 329 North Potomac Street, Hagerstown. As a commission member, she stepped back from her role as a commission member for this matter.

Ms. Allen has a former Victorian-style house that had columns added to it in 1913 which completely changed the appearance of the building. They are about to undertake some window repairs and brick façade work on the rear. At the same time that they are making the repairs, they are considering replacing the cap that covers the area where a Widows Peak once was (when it was a Victorian-style house). The Widow’s Peak is behind the pediment. Ms. Allen stated that it will be visible from North Potomac Street and would be contributing to mixed styles on the building. The additions in the back were added around 1907.

Ms. Allen believes the Widow’s Peak was removed when there was a fire in the house in the 1940s. Ms. Allen stated that the area under the cap is completely flat and about 2 x 4-four feet and clad with copper, no shingles. The cap is moveable. They would like to install an attic fan in the opening.

Commission members did not have an issue with re-introducing the Widow’s Peak feature. Ms. Allen asked for input on the design of the railing. Most commission members believed the railing should pick up details from the 1913 renovations since it is no longer a Victorian House

and the “message shouldn’t be mixed.” Mr. Bockmiller suggested Ms. Allen check with the Chief Code Official about railing height and other code issues since it will be a usable space.

Ms. Allen rejoined the commission.

NEW BUSINESS

- Ms. Allen informed the commission about the State of Michigan and its formation of a relationship with a local government to use a building in that community as a program to train workers to be specialized in historic restoration. She suggested that the City should looking into something like this in Hagerstown. Commission members were very interested in this proposal and Ms. Allen will put together more information on the program and forward it to commission members. A copy should also be sent to Amanda Whitmore, the City’s Main Street contact.

OLD BUSINESS

- Preservation Month. The following properties were suggested for preservation awards this year: Ravenswood (off of Frederick Street), the Professional Arts Building on Public Square, Lloyd Thoburn’s property on East Washington Street, and Ken Berry’s properties on East Franklin Street (façade work). The Cultural Trail was also suggested but it was decided to wait until the trail is finished. Staff should also look at smaller projects to encourage people to make improvements.
- Mr. Bockmiller stated that he received an unofficial overture from someone who is considering the purchase of the Hook & Ladder building on West Franklin Street. The prospective purchaser would like to restore the building to its original façade which would be contradictory to Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. The current facade dates to about 1934, so technically the façade is within the period of significance to the district. Staff advised the buyer that the Maryland Historic Trust may not provide funding for reconstructing the historic facade.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mr. Gehr will be unavailable for meetings in April and May; one meeting in June; and one or two meetings in August.
- Mr. Crumrine’s class is finished and he thanked commission members for their patience during his absence.

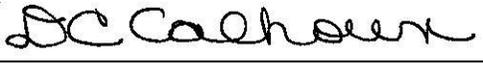
**Historic District Commission
MINUTES**

**March 22, 2018
City of Hagerstown, Maryland**

ADJOURN

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (5:25 p.m.).

4/26/2018
Approved


Debra C. Calhoun – Secretary