

Vickie Hrabal, vice chair, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 12, 2014, 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. Davis, S. Silas, and M. Wertman. S. Bockmiller, Development Planner/Zoning Administrator was present on behalf of the Planning and Code Administration Division.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**March 13, 2014**

**MOTION:** (Silas/Davis) Make a motion to accept the minutes of March 13.  
**DISCUSSION:** None.  
**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**100 North Potomac Street – Dwight Glenn – Wall Signs and Grant, Case No. HDC 2014-19.**

**705 Oak Hill Avenue – John Rohrer – Railing, Case No. HDC 2014-20.**

**95 West Washington Street – Washington County Board of County Commissioners – Screen Wall (Amendment to Previously Approved Application), Case No. HDC 2014-04.**

Case Nos. HDC 2014-19 and HDC 2014-04 were moved from the Design Review agenda to the Consent agenda. Mr. Bockmiller reviewed the revisions proposed for HDC 2014-04. Screen wall will be raised from eight feet to ten feet tall.

**MOTION:** (Silas/Allen) I make a motion to adopt the consent agenda for 2014-20, 2014-04, 2014-19, as well as the sign grant for 2014-19.  
**DISCUSSION:** None.  
**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

(Ms. Wertman arrived.)

**DESIGN REVIEW**

**901 Potomac Avenue – Bryan Kinch – Replace Porch Decking and Railing, Case No. HDC 2014-18.**

Bryan Kinch, 5819 Jane Way, Alexandria, Virginia, owner of the property was present.

Staff Report. This structure is a C resource in the Oak Hill Local Historic District; per tax records the building was built around 1952 and the period of significance for this district ended in 1941. Staff questioned why this building was not ranked as a noncontributing structure. Applicant is requesting approval to replace the side porch decking, railing, and support posts. Railings are being raised to meet code per notice from the City of Hagerstown. The porch decking is not visible from a public street. All the replacement materials are wood, but the pickets that were used are decorative, turned wood pickets which are more indicative of Victorian architecture, rather than this mid-20<sup>th</sup> century structure. Staff noted that the spindles used are not consistent with the architecture of the building; however, the building appears to be noncontributing to the district. Staff rescinded its original recommendation of denial and instead made no recommendation.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Ms. Hrabal was concerned about the turned spindles not being consistent with the style of the house, but noted that the property is on the fringes of the historic district. Mr. Kinch stated that the railing is deteriorated, as well as too short to meet code. It would have been more difficult to repair and raise the railing as opposed to just replacing everything. Any replacement in-kind but at the correct height would have to be custom built. Ms. Hrabal stated that plain square pickets would have been a better choice. Ms. Wertman agreed with Ms. Hrabal that the railing should “act its age” and coincide with the building’s style. Mr. Kinch stated that the railing will be on all three sides of the porch—there are no steps. Ms. Davis agreed that the pickets should be more in keeping with the age of the house. Mr. Bockmiller clarified that buildings that do not contribute to the character of the district should be considered leniently, therefore any modification or removal is deemed to have no material effect on the historic district. Commission members came to a consensus that they could be more lenient regarding the use of the turned spindles.

**MOTION:** (Silas/Davis) Mr. Chairman, I move to accept 2014-18 901 Potomac Avenue as is since it is a C resource.

**DISCUSSION:** Ms. Hrabal asked that the motion include that this decision is not meant to be precedent setting. Mr. Silas and Ms. Davis agreed to the amendment to the motion.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (NO - Allen)

## **WORKSHOP**

### **157 South Prospect Street – Kim Winders – Rear Porch Reconstruction.**

Ms. Winders was not present. This item was not discussed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Urban Partners Presentation by Planning Staff.**

Kathleen Maher, Planning Director, presented an overview of the Urban Partners study and recommendations (PowerPoint presentation slides in meeting file, along with Draft Downtown Hagerstown Catalytic Project Candidates for the Economic Analysis and Implementation Plan). The City received a grant from the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development to help with Downtown planning. The City chose to use the funding to help implement the City's adopted Downtown Plan. Urban Partners out of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was hired to prepare an economic analysis of the plan and then create an implementation plan to use to jump start projects.

Since being hired late last year, they have completed a market analysis of the recommendations in the City's Sustainable Community Plan and also the Market Conditions. Urban Partners completed a physical analysis of the downtown and conducted numerous public input sessions. Based on all the feedback and study, Urban Partners presented recommendations to the Mayor and Council in April for eight catalytic projects, including new development initiatives and expansion of existing programs:

- Strategy for New Office Development and Recruitment.
- Maryland Theatre Expansion Project.
- USMH Expansion Support Strategy.
- Hotel/Conference Center/Heritage Center Commemorative Park.
- Linking City Park and A & E District with Trail and New Housing.
- Expanded Downtown Arts/Events Programming Strategy.
- Expanded Operations of the City Farmers Market.
- Expanded and Targeted Home Ownership Support Strategies in the areas of South Prospect Street/Summit Avenue; 200 Block of South Potomac Street; 100 Block of South Mulberry Street/King Street/West Antietam Street; and the area bounded by North Potomac Street/North Mulberry Street/East Avenue/East North Avenue.

Ms. Wertman asked if any consideration was given to creating a pedestrian mall downtown. She has attended outdoor events and eating establishments downtown and finds the vehicle noise and exhaust fumes unpleasant. Ms. Maher stated that in many communities pedestrian malls have been converted back to streets because it turns out to be detrimental to the business community where these malls are located.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Economic Development Demolition Draft Ordinance Amendments.**

Mr. Bockmiller stated that staff was asked to develop a protocol that would have economic

development concerns override preservation of some historic resources. Also, there might be a case where a development proposal is so significant that may outweigh keeping any particular historic building. The proposed language has been developed as a balance. The proposal for demolition must demonstrate that the new building will generate significant redevelopment in the downtown as far as consumer traffic or employment opportunity. Approval for the new building would treat the new building as if the old building does not exist. Any new development would be subject to the commission's design guidelines. The new language would require all approvals and financials to be in place prior to demolition being approved. All "A" resources are excluded from consideration for demolition.

Ms. Hrabal asked if there is anything in place that would target developers who get approval to remove elements, presumably to bring it up to code, then once the elements are removed, do not follow through with the project. Is there a way to guarantee that developers have the wherewithal to complete a project once approved for these types of modifications? Mr. Bockmiller stated that the proposed language does not deal with that type of situation.

Mr. Bockmiller also discussed the revamped Demolition by Neglect provisions in the ordinance. He anticipates using that tool soon on some of the endangered properties.

Staff would like to pass this on to the Planning Commission as part of a larger package of Zoning Ordinance amendments. Since the Planning Commission will not be reviewing this portion of Land Management Code HDC members asked if they could have more time to review it before making a recommendation. Ms. Maher stated that staff could explore language that gets at what Ms. Hrabal brought up earlier about requiring demonstration that developers have the resources to implement rehabilitation projects.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Mr. Bockmiller reminded members about the July 4<sup>th</sup> Event at Fairgrounds Park between 3:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.

### **ADJOURN**

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (5:45 p.m.).

9/25/2014

Approved



Debra C. Calhoun – Secretary