

**Michael Gehr, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m. on Thursday, July 10, 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 C. Davis, V. Hrabal, S. Silas, and M. Wertman. S. Bockmiller, Development Planner/Zoning Administrator, and D. Calhoun, Secretary, were present on behalf of the Planning and Code Administration Division.**

**AMENDMENT TO AGENDA**

The commission was asked to consider moving Case No. HDC 2014-27 to the consent agenda. Since the packet went out, information was received from the applicant clarifying their intent and the proposal now meets the guidelines.

- MOTION:** (Davis/Wertman) I move we amend the agenda to move 154-156 South Prospect Street to the Consent Agenda.
- DISCUSSION:** None.
- ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

No minutes were ready for approval.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- HDC 2014-24** 135 West Washington Street (Miller House) – Washington County Historical Society - Projecting Sign and Grant
- HDC 2014-25** 245 North Potomac Street – Wertman Photography Wall Sign and Grant
- HDC 2014-26** 43 West Washington Street – City of Hagerstown Temporary Storefront Screen Wall
- HDC 2014-28** 25 Renaissance Way – City of Hagerstown Elevator Vestibule Enclosure
- HDC 2014-27** 154-156 South Prospect Street – Braden A. K. Myers Fence

Ms. Wertman recused herself from the vote on the Consent Agenda since she is the applicant in one of the cases.

**MOTION:** (Davis/Silas) Mr. Chairman, I reviewed the materials submitted in Cases HDC 2014-24, 135 West Washington Street and its associated grant; HDC 2014-25, 245 North Potomac Street and its associated grant; HDC 2014-26 43 West Washington Street; HDC 2014-27 154-156 South Prospect Street; HDC 2014-28 25 Renaissance Way, 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 for the applicants in Cases HDC 2014-24, and its grant; HDC 2014-25 and its grant; HDC 2014-26, HDC 2014-27, HDC 2014-28.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (ABSTAIN - Wertman)

### **DESIGN REVIEW**

#### **6 and 12 South Potomac Street – Bridge of Life Church – Façade Alterations (Revision) Case No. HDC 2014-15.**

Daniel J. Poyner, 7831 Mapleville Road, Boonsboro, Maryland, was present.

Mr. Bockmiller stated that Bridge of Life received approval of certain models of windows; however, in the meantime vendors have suggested a Lincoln window as a third alternative. Mr. Bockmiller stated that the commission and staff advised the applicant previously that the primary issue is the exterior profile of the window associated with the grids. Two grid patterns (two-over-two and six-over-six) were approved due to the bisected design of the building. Based on the window sample provided by Mr. Poyner, staff had no objection to the proposed Lincoln model. According to Mr. Poyner the Lincoln window is aluminum clad. The replacement windows will be used on the second floor. All the windows on the first floor are wood. Mr. Poyner indicated that based on the prices the church has received; they will most likely be using the Lincoln window. The color will be either the tan sample or a shade or so lighter.

**MOTION:** (Wertman/Hrabal) 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 reasons

that the window grilles are projecting and they are on the outside of the window and there is nice little shadow going on. The manufacturer of this particular window is going to be able to do the grille patterns that were originally in the building and it is all 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. HDC 2014-15.

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

Mr. Gehr recused himself from the next two cases. Ms. Hrabal assumed the chair.

**100-128 West Washington Street – BFM Architects for Board of County Commissioners of Washington County – Alterations, Case No. HDC 2014-22.**

Aaron House, BFM Architects, 473 North Potomac Street, Hagerstown, Maryland, was present on behalf of the owner.

Staff Report: These buildings are “E” Resources in the Downtown Local Historic District. Applicant proposes to modify the accessible ramp and steps at West Washington Street (124-128); add new steps, ramp, and canopy at the north elevation (100-128 West Washington Street), and replacement of first floor windows/storefront (100 West Washington Street) with a new aluminum storefront system (including new aluminum entrance doors). Manufacturer’s literature will be provided by the applicant at the meeting.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Mr. House did not have the storefront materials list, but stated that new storefronts will be the standard squared-off aluminum storefronts with a clear anodized finish to match the existing. The only change to the windows will be to add a few horizontal elements due to the plenum space above the ceiling and being able to lower the ceiling height for the new mechanical equipment that will be installed as part of this project. Currently each window has one vertical mullion; the proposal is to add two horizontal mullions at seven and ten feet. Mr. House stated that the existing windows are not insulated and there have been problems with the windows sweating.

Steps are proposed for the back of the building with a covered area. The Board of County Commissioners would like to create an entrance on the north side of the building adjacent to the parking lot that would be usable by both buildings. A final plat has been approved that formally combined both properties into one lot. Mr. Bockmiller pointed out that the rear of the building is quite visible from Jonathan Street.

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Mr. House stated that for the portion of 124-128 that extends further north than 100 West Washington Street (currently painted plywood, with glass block on the second floor, aluminum screen wall on the third floor) will be removed and replaced with an aluminum panel system that will tie into the joint entrance. The actual entrance to 100 West Washington Street will have a slightly curved canopy with an elevated walkway and steps down each side and a handicapped accessible ramp down to the parking lot level. They are trying to find the best way to tie the two buildings together design wise.

Concerning 124-128 West Washington Street, Mr. House stated that the Board of County Commissioners has indicated in its master plan for this building a complete façade restoration; however, funds are not available at this time for that portion of the project, which would include removing the aggregate façade. Mr. Bockmiller noted that the HDC approved a plan in the past for removal of the aggregate siding.

Mr. Bockmiller made Mr. House aware that the Planning and Code Administration Division is currently processing a site plan for the exterior work. One of the proposals is to move the current dumpster closer to the alley. A trash enclosure is required and because of its location in the historic district, it will need to be constructed of materials other than chain link and vinyl.

The project will be done in two phases. The first phase will use grant funds for the accessibility improvements to the building. The second phase encompasses the interior renovations, including the storefront window replacements. The replacement windows will be double pane, with low E glazing, replicating the finish on the storefront window frames with the only change being the addition of the two horizontal elements. Spandrel glazing is proposed for the upper sections of the window. This is necessary because the ceiling will be dropped on the inside for mechanical equipment. Ms. Wertman asked what the setback is from West Washington Street. Mr. House stated that it is 12 feet from the colonnade and at least another 15 feet from the street. Dr. Reed noted that the building itself was built in the mid 1960s and is a noncontributing building. Mr. House assured the commission that any additional façade renovations will come back for review.

Handicap ramps will be broom-finish concrete with the taller back ramp containing exposed concrete on the vertical face with stainless steel rail and a horizontal cable rail system between the posts.

**MOTION:** (Wertman/Davis) 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 reasons that the ramp is on the back of the building and though visible will be constructed in a way that will complement the building; the materials will also match the building that is there right now and then the front windows are setback enough that the drop of the ceiling is not going to be as visible

and it is going to be hidden behind darker glass. So the general form and proportion are 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 2014-22.

**DISCUSSION:**

None.

**ACTION:**

APPROVED (Unanimous)

**21 South Potomac Street – Maryland Theatre – Replace Rooftop HVAC System,  
Case No. HDC 2014-23.**

Michael Gehr, BFM Architects, 473 North Potomac Street, Hagerstown, Maryland, and Sam Young, Maryland Theatre Board of Directors, were present.

Staff Report: The Maryland Theatre is an “A” resource in the Downtown Local Historic District. The interior of the building contains a Maryland Historical Trust easement. Applicant proposes to replace existing HVAC units on the roof over the theater lobby, stage, and projection booth. The new unit that will replace the unit over the projection booth will be screened with a new metal wall similar to the existing metal screen wall that hides the fire escape above the lobby. The project also includes removal of the duct work on the north side of the building over the alley walkway. Staff recommended that the screen for the unit over the projection booth extend the full width of the lobby entrance to preserve symmetrical spacing.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Mr. Gehr said the screen wall will be mounted vertically so it matches an existing screen wall. The wall will be burgundy terra cotta to match the faded red panel. The old HVAC system will be replaced with one unit in the back over the stage roof. A second unit will be on the roof above the projection room which necessitates the screen wall. Unfortunately the screen wall will extend ten feet above the roof. An existing piece of duct work in this area will be removed. A third unit will sit above the lobby roof, which will allow the duct work on the side of the building to be removed. This unit will be hidden by the arches over the entrance doors.

Commission members were concerned about the ten-foot screen wall proposed for over the projection room. Mr. Gehr indicated that in the next several years that Maryland Theatre may be proceeding with a project to replace the theatre lobby and to build a four-story building in the current vacant plaza area, which would hide the proposed screen wall and HVAC equipment. Ms. Hrabal asked if the unit could be a different color such as white to match the sky. Five years is a long time and the unit will be more visible from across South Potomac Street than if someone is standing in the plaza. Dr. Reed questioned whether the unit even needs to be screened. Mr. Gehr indicated that the unit would be rectangular, and he was not certain what color it would be. Dr. Reed and Ms. Wertman agreed that by leaving the unit unscreened would be less obvious;

Ms. Hrabal still wanted a minimal gray screen. Mr. Bockmiller noted that the application submitted cannot be changed without the consent of the applicant. Mr. Gehr indicated that his client would not be opposed to amending the application to remove the screen wall. If a screen wall is deemed necessary in the future, the theatre will come back for review of the screen wall.

**MOTION:** (Silas/Davis) Ms. 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 reasons that the architectural detailing are 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. HDC 2014-23, which has been amended to delete the screen wall.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

Mr. Gehr resumed the chair.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Ms. Hrabal met with the sales specialist at Lowe's. Lowe's has some windows they would like to present for approval by the Historic District Commission. Mr. Bockmiller advised that Lowe's could make a presentation to the commission whereby the HDC could let them know that in general the windows are either acceptable or unacceptable according to the commission's guidelines. Applicants would still need to apply individually to the HDC for approval; however, Lowe's could tell customers that certain windows have been generally favorably received by HDC, similar to what was done with Hagerstown Paint & Glass.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Economic Development Demolition Policy.**

Mr. Bockmiller stated that at the last meeting the HDC reviewed a draft of the Economic Development Demolition Policy. At that time, the commission was generally in agreement with the policy albeit with a few concerns: 1) a definition is needed for "high-tech job"; 2) if and when this policy is adopted, should there be a limited number of certificates issued or a sunset provision.

With that information offered, staff will set up a meeting at staff level before taking it to the Planning Commission. Ms. Davis noted that a more in depth definition of “Certificate of Hardship” is also needed.

Dr. Reed stated that she is still not comfortable with the idea behind the policy. It will provide an excuse to poke holes in the continuity of the district which will erode its integrity. Mr. Bockmiller indicated that it is staff’s belief that it will not be used much. There are safeguards built in so buildings are not removed unless all the other “ducks are in a row.” HDC approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a demolition would be the final step.

Mr. Gehr, a member of the committee that drafted the policy language, stated that they struggled with how to qualify what “skilled employment” means—it is difficult to qualify what hits the bell as to what is important. Any new building that is erected in the place of an historic one needs to generate a significant number of jobs and bring people downtown. Ms. Davis suggested using guidelines for what the state sees as qualifying for tax breaks. Mr. Bockmiller will look into that suggestion.

## **WORKSHOP**

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

Kim Winders, co-owner of the property, was present.

Ms. Winders stated that she and her partner acquired the property several years ago. Two of the four units are occupied and fire egress is via the back porches. The porches have deteriorated and the owners would like to provide a safe environment for their tenants. Ms. Winders is proposing to resurface the top back porch with materials that will not allow water to pass through. There is a water issue currently which is contributing to the deterioration of the porches.

The back porches are not visible from South Walnut Street—someone would have to walk up to the porch to actually see the materials. The goal is to protect the real wood porch on the first floor and the pavers below. The proposed material is interlocking metal; no plastic materials are being considered. It is available in a variety of finishes and the one Ms. Winders is considering has an oak finish. The ceiling on the first floor could still be finished with tongue-and-groove board since it would be protected by the metal floor above. The metal material would only be placed on the second floor walking surface where you walk out of the two top floor apartments. A gutter in the middle would carry any water that seeps though to a downspout on the exterior of the porch.

Current porch floor boards run parallel with South Walnut and South Prospect Streets. Dr. Reed noted that historically porch flooring runs perpendicular. Ms. Winders stated that the flooring is a mixture of several materials, including particle board. Just the decking would be replaced with

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metal; the structure would remain wood. The idea is to use a material that does not need to be replaced regularly.

Ms. Hrabal was concerned about the weight and whether the structure would be able to handle it. Mr. Gehr suggested that Ms. Winders look for load tables associated with the metal material. The closer the joists are, the more weight it would hold. Concerning visibility from South Walnut Street, Mr. Bockmiller noted that the back yard is approximately 220 feet deep with a garage between the street and the apartment building. The staff's main concern is more about the upright features such as the railing and the posts. Mr. Gehr said as a porch deck he had no issues but was interested in seeing how the edge will be treated and how the gutter will be attached. Ms. Winders stated that she wants to keep it as close to original as possible. It is not her desire to create a new looking property. Her goal is to provide a safe walking surface for her tenants with a minimal amount of upkeep.

It was noted that the existing railings do not appear to meet current building codes. Also, the biggest issue will be reconnecting the porch material to the posts. The posts need to be anchored somehow so they cannot be pushed off.

Commission members had no issues with the product, but advised Ms. Winders to get the details pulled together especially concerning how the edge will be handled. The commission will need a mock up or a sketch. Drawing should include the final details for the vertical pieces that will be the most visible, how the face of the gutter will be handled, and what the material will be for the posts.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

**ADJOURN**

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (6:00 p.m.).

10/23/2014  
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Approved

  
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Debra C. Calhoun – Secretary