

Christina Davis, vice chair, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 14, 2015, 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, P. Reed, S. Silas, S. Taylor, and M. Wertman. S. Bockmiller, Development Planner/Zoning Administrator, and D. Calhoun, Secretary, were present on behalf of the Planning and Code Administration Division.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

Minutes were not ready for approval.

CONSENT AGENDA

834 Potomac Avenue – Paul Frey – Fence, Case No. HDC 2015-11.

44 North Potomac Street – Washington County Playhouse – Signs and Awning; and Sign Grant and Façade Grant, Case No. HDC 2015-12.

There were no concerns from the audience or by commission members on any of these cases.

MOTION: (Silas/Crumrine) Ms. Chairwoman, I have reviewed the materials submitted in Cases HDC 2015-11 and 2015-12 and grant application 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 the commission adopt the staff evaluations and recommendations in these cases as its own and grant Certificates of Appropriateness to the applicants for Case No. HDC 2015-11 and HDC 2015-12.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Allen recommended that the motion be amended to include the grant application in the approval. Mr. Silas and Mr. Crumrine agreed to the amendment.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

DESIGN REVIEW

49-53 South Potomac Street – Zepheira Sports Bar/Hamada Abu Ziyad – Revision to Previously Approved Application, Case No. HDC 2014-56.

The applicant, Hamada Abu Ziyad, was not present. Mr. Bockmiller suggested that if the commission had any objections to this application, that it be continued to the next meeting. Commission members did not have any objections to the revision.

Staff Report: Mr. Bockmiller noted that there were no concerns about the amendment by staff. Upon inspection for the sign grant, staff noted that the signs were not installed on decorative brackets as approved, presumably due to the lower overhead clearance of the pent roof under which the signs were installed. Instead of decorative scroll brackets the signs were installed with “L” brackets adhered to the front wall of the building and the roof overhang. They are still projecting signs. With this method of attachment, the required eight-foot clearance is achieved. No changes were made to the actual signage—the only change is how the signs have been installed.

MOTION: (Crumrine/Silas) 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 districts for the reason that the sign is the same, just without the brackets, and 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. 2014-56.

DISCUSSION: Staff recommended that the motion be amended to create some uniqueness in this particular situation due to the low overhead of the pent roof. Mr. Crumrine and Mr. Silas agreed to the revision to the motion.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

927-929 Oak Hill Avenue – Paul Johnson for Varner Paddack – Porch Repairs, Case No. HDC 2015-13.

The property owner, Varner L. Paddack, 12901 Lance Circle, Hagerstown, Maryland, was present.

Staff Report: This property is a B resource in the Oak Hill Local Historic District. The applicant has begun to wrap the front porch columns and trim just under the roof with aluminum. Wrapping these elements is inconsistent with the Residential Design Guidelines. In addition, the applicant is also planning to replace the porch railing which currently does not meet code, although that is not part of this application.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Ms. Davis asked if Mr. Paddack's intention for wrapping the porch columns was to protect the wood. Mr. Paddack stated that he has owned this property for over 40 years. The wood columns are beginning to rot and he would like to protect the wood from further damage. He was not aware that this property is in an historic district. Other properties in the neighborhood have been worked on for restoration. Ms. Allen noted Mr. Paddack's unfortunate circumstance but said he would still need to comply with the guidelines. She asked if the posts are so far gone that they cannot be replaced. Mr. Paddack stated that the column on the left side was rebuilt and cost him over \$600. He cannot afford to replace the columns at that price. Wrapping the columns in aluminum does not change the exterior appearance. Dr. Reed pointed out that if the aluminum wrapping is not vented properly, it would not be apparent whether moisture has been trapped underneath or if water is getting through from the top or bottom.

Ms. Taylor asked how the wrapping material is attached to the wood. Mr. Paddack explained that the posts are nailed on the back side with a lap joint fit to the post. Since it is difficult to do a four-corner bend, two separate pieces would be bent half and half. Dr. Reed stated that regardless of how sympathetic the commission is to Mr. Paddack's situation, there is still the matter of the guidelines and what the commission must uphold. Ms. Allen said it is difficult, but she did not think the commission could approve Mr. Paddack's application. Mr. Silas stated that Mr. Paddack also needs to deal with the fascia board that is below the drip line on the roof. Mr. Paddack said the fascia board is not in bad shape. The ceiling is varnished board that runs perpendicular to the house and that will remain. He pointed out that the porch floor was replaced 15 years ago and not with the same product that was there before. He used 2 x 6 treated boards. All of the windows have been replaced with replacement windows.

MOTION: (Silas/Allen) I move to deny the application.

DISCUSSION: None.

ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

Ms. Davis suggested a workshop when Mr. Gehr is available to discuss possible solutions with Mr. Paddack. An application for the railing could be considered at that time, too.

**100 North Potomac Street – Janelle Horst – Revision to Previously Approved Application,
Case No. HDC 2015-10.**

The applicant was not present. Mr. Bockmiller did not have a chance to inform the applicant that this was going to be on the agenda. He described the proposed revisions briefly, with the understanding that if the commission had questions about the proposal it would be moved to a workshop.

The applicant has run into a building code issue with regard to the size of the bedroom windows on the East Franklin Street side of the building. The historic windows do not meet the current code for egress. As a possible solution, each bedroom would be converted to a casement window,

designed to look like a double-hung window. All of the bedrooms face East Franklin Street; and as a result, eight of 12 windows will be affected. The appearance of the casement windows will be close to the original windows, but they will not match exactly. Structural issues with the building have arisen so the applicant does not have the funds to replace all the windows with casements. The fire escape is being removed. The commission has approved a similar use of casement windows; however, the previous application on South Prospect Street only involved one window on a side of the third floor.

Several commission members had concerns about this application so the change will have to go before the HDC at the next meeting. In particular, the commission was concerned about how close the casement windows will actually be to the existing true double-hung windows.

WORKSHOP

None.

NEW BUSINESS

- Staff asked the commission if it would consider a special meeting next week to deal with the proposed changes to the design guidelines. After checking calendars, the commission agreed that a special meeting will be held on Thursday, May 21, at 4:30 p.m. The window issue at 100 North Potomac Street will also be added to the agenda since the City is pushing the applicant to complete the project. Mr. Bockmiller will have material on the design guidelines out to HDC member no later than Thursday.

OLD BUSINESS

Design Guidelines Amendments: Economic Development Demolition Provisions.

Not discussed.

Staff-Approved Work.

Commission members believed that allowing staff to approve signage that meets the guidelines would be acceptable. Anything to support economic development with the guidelines. However, window lettering needs to be defined.

33 West Franklin Street – Window Film.

Staff reported that the applicant is reviewing his options. The property owner is anxious to wrap up his City grant.

Ms. Davis asked about a rumored methadone clinic on Public Square. Mr. Bockmiller stated that the Zoning Ordinance does not allow methadone clinics, except as part of a bona fide hospital use.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Memorial Park Dedication will be held on Saturday, May 23, at 10:30 a.m. Descendants of ten of the 12 honorees will be present.
- Ms. Davis commented that the tax credit/grant presentation on April 23 was beneficial. Mr. Bockmiller stated that a video will be created so it can be repeated. There were suggestion to put it up on YouTube.
- Mr. Crumrine announced a presentation on architectural styles which will be held in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He will forward members a copy of the handout via email for anyone who is interested.

ADJOURN

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (5:17 p.m.).

7/9/2015

Approved



Debra C. Calhoun – Secretary