

**CITY OF YPSILANTI**  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 27, 2018**

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Hank Prebys Vice-Chair, 7:06 pm

Meeting Location: City Hall, Council Chambers, 1 S Huron, Ypsilanti, MI

Commissioners Present: Jane Schmiedeke, Mike Davis, Jr., Hank Prebys, Erika Lindsay, Alex Pettit

Commissioners Absent: Anne Stevenson, Ron Rupert

Staff Present: Cynthia Kochanek, Preservation Planner  
Seth Torkelson-Regan, Commission Secretary

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Kochanek: Added 15 S Washington, 114 W Michigan, and 110 N Park as study items

Audience member: Added 7 S Washington as a study item.

Motion: Schmiedeke (second: Davis) moved to approve the agenda as amended.

Approval: Unanimous. Motion carries.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS—none**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**25 S Huron**

*\* Amendment to previous sign application*

Applicant: James Summers, owner- Present

Discussion: Summers: Stated he wants to amend the previous application. There was a plan to put a neon sign over the door. He tried for a month to find someone that could build the sign the way that he wanted but in the end there was no guarantee that it would turn out as he wanted.

Davis: Asked if there will be a white background on the sign.

Summers: Responded that what is currently there will be it and that it does have a white background.

Motion: Davis (second: Schmiedeke) moved to approve the amended application for work at 25 S Huron to include the installation of an aluminum wall sign in dimensions of 70" x 22". The sign is already installed instead of the previously approved neon sign. The sign is slightly smaller than the originally approved neon sign. And the sign is attached within the existing signboard.

Secretary of the Interior Standards:

#9- Contemporary designs shall be compatible and shall not destroy significant original material.

#10- New work shall be removable.

Approval: Unanimous approval. Motion carries.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **9 S Adams**

*\*Application is for the infill of a window opening*

Applicant: Laura Gillis, Growing Hope representative- Present

Discussion: Gillis: Stated that per building code and for fire protection they need to remove one of the original windows that is within 10' of an unsuppressed building. They plan to take out the metal window frame and infill with brick to match as closely as possible to the brick on the building. They will also brick the interior. That will satisfy the ordinance.

Davis: Stated that staff noted that the commission may want discuss a setback of 1 inch and to not "tooth in" the masonry. He asked if these issues have been discussed already.

Schmiedeke: Stated that this was discussed when this item was here as a study item. Advised that the sill and the lintel are to remain.

Lindsay: Asked what type of mortar will be used.

Gillis: Responded that she does not know.

Prebys: Stated that he believes it will be hard fired brick.

Schmiedeke: Mentioned that the color match for the mortar may be a concern.

*[Staff provided the HDC Masonry Repair and Cleaning fact sheet to the applicant]*

Motion: Lindsay (second: Pettit) moved to approve the application for work at 9 S Adams to include the removal of the existing window on the west side of the building. The opening will be in-filled with brick, set back an inch, and not toothed in with an appropriate mortar to match per the fact sheet provided. The existing lintel and sill will remain in place as discussed.

Secretary of the Interior Standards:

#9- Contemporary designs shall be compatible and shall not destroy significant original material.

#10- New work shall be removable.

Approval: Unanimous approval. Motion carries.

### **116-118 W Michigan**

*\*Application is for front & rear façade work; window & door replacement & window reopening, roof deck & balcony installation, rear expansion, painting & cleaning*

Applicant: Van Hunsberger, architect and Adam Tasselmyer, owner- Present

Discussion: Hunsberger: Stated they are lowering the basement floors, and originally all the work would have occurred at the back. They were denied by DPS to set up facilities at the back. That left taking construction debris out through the front. They need to repair the brick façade in the front. The floor in the front is settling a bit. They want to remove the a portion or all of the painted plywood sign panel on the front façade so they can investigate the structure, reinforce the façade, and put the panels back as they were.

Prebys: Clarified that they are requesting approval to remove the panels of the façade.

Davis: Asked how the scope of the work will affect the ability to complete the project, and what the timeline is for having everything done on the exterior.

Hunsberger: Responded that summer is the goal, that June 15 is the date that they are shooting for.

Lindsay: Suggested having the demolition piece separate from the work.

Schmiedeke: Asked where the entrance is.

Hunsberger: [*Showed using an image*]

Schmiedeke: Stated her concern is with the lack of entrance for each of the buildings, since these are two different buildings from two different periods.

Hunsberger: Stated that if one was put on the 118 W Michigan storefront, that it would need to be a non-functioning entrance because of the slope of the sidewalk.

Pettit: Asked if Commissioner Schmiedeke's concern is a lack of a door or the lack of an actual entrance.

Schmiedeke: Responded that she wants the appearance of a door, that her concern is more visual.

Pettit: Stated that the Corner Health building is three buildings together, but they have only one entrance. Stated that if both storefronts looked exactly the same or were uniform, he would then be concerned. But the storefronts are different and that differentiates them from each other.

Davis: Asked if the entrance for 118 W Michigan will be a flush entrance, or will it have dimensionality like the other storefront.

Hunsberger: Stated the entrance will be flush, not dimensional but that the awnings that they have proposed for above the storefronts will give the entrance dimensionality.

Davis: Asked if the applicant can bring back an option with a non-functioning door for the HDC to consider.

Prebys: Clarified that the purpose of this application is permission to remove the panels for investigation purposes.

Motion: Davis (second: Lindsay) moved to table the application for work at 116-118 W Michigan due to incompleteness of the application. Applicant may

start demolition work on exterior storefronts and the signage areas for the purpose of engineering review.

Approval: Unanimous approval. Motion carries.

Hunsberger: Stated they have the opportunity to raise the roof slightly on the north end of the building. Stated the material on the side can either be a composite vertical beadboard or brick. Asked what would be best for the side.

Prebys: Responded the HDC is in favor of new or different materials for additions to buildings so that there is a clear differentiation between the old and new.

Hunsberger: Added that it would wrap around the side.

Pettit: Stated he does not have a problem with that material.

### **15 S Washington**

Applicants: David Esau, architect and Bob Gillett, owner- Present

Discussion: Esau: Stated the first thing is an amendment to a previous approval. They are proposing to reorganize the three windows on the center of the second floor on the east side into six smaller windows. States that this is required since the structural studs are right in the center of the area where they planned to install the three windows. The second item is about the plaster. They want to repair the plaster and have come up with sample [*he indicates the sample that he brought with him on the table*]. He offers to pass around the sample so that the commission can get a closer look. They plan to paint the existing and new plaster in the same color, an off-white that was included with the application. The third item is a scupper on the roof to prevent water from standing on the roof if the drainage system is clogged. The fourth item is for exterior lighting under the canopies. On the west side, hanging cylinders would be installed and ceiling mounted cylinders would be installed on the east side. Lighting would also include one wall-mounted light for above the double metal doors on the east wall.

Davis: Asked if all the lights will be in bronze and in the same finish.

Esau: Confirmed that is the case. The fifth item is about signage. They propose to install address signs over the doors and tenant signage on the glass on either side of the west doors. Stated that he hopes that the

tenant signage would be approved for the size and that they would not have to return each time a new tenant sign needed to be added.

Davis: Asked if it would be the lettering on the glass or a board/case with letters.

Esau: Responded that it would be lettering in the glass.

Davis: Asks if the background will be clear/translucent.

Esau: Confirms.

Motion: Davis (second: Pettit) moved to approve the application for work at 15 S Washington as depicted in the application dated February 20, 2018. The work to include the installation of six silver anodized aluminum storefront windows measuring 2' -8" wide by 4' -8" high to be installed in the center of the second floor on the east facade. Plaster repairs with embedded stone as needed. Painting of the new and existing plaster in Sherwin Williams Pearly White paint and the installation of an overflow scupper, with the dimensions as noted in the application. New lighting will be installed on the east canopy with three 6 ¼" diameter by 9 ⅝" high ceiling mount cylinders in a bronze finish. At the west canopy, seven similar sized cylinders on 18" long stems in bronze and a new wall mounted LED fixture also in bronze finish above the service door on the east facade. All lights are to be dark sky compliant. Bulbs should also be conforming to the HDC fact sheet for color range/temperature. Signage will be installed as proposed with the application with any future tenants being able to be added to the vinyl sign area on either side of the west door entries within the proposed tenant sign area in a uniform size as decided by the applicant. If in the future, if the sign area needs to be increased, the applicant will return to the HDC.

Secretary of the Interior Standards:

#5- Preserve distinct features

#9- Contemporary designs shall be compatible and shall not destroy significant original material.

#10- New work shall be removable.

Approval: Unanimous approval. Motion carries.

## **STUDY ITEMS**

### **15 S Washington**

Applicants: David Esau, architect and Bob Gillett, owner- Present

Discussion: Esau: Stated that the plaster repairs are extensive and that he is hoping to discuss what can be done if repairs are more extensive than anticipated—such as the majority of it falls down.

Schmiedeke: Responded that pieces that fall down should be removed.

Davis: Stated they should repair sections as much as possible, but pieces that fall and shatter cannot be repaired.

Pettit: Asked if they are looking for permission to do something entirely different if the plaster is not working.

Esau: Responded yes.

Pettit: Added that what may fall is additional plaster, and that what is underneath is probably still stable.

Esau: Added that there could be some structural issues with the plaster because of water penetration. Stated if this were a new building, they would probably consider options other than plaster.

Davis: Stated that the worst case scenario is that the plaster is shot.

Lindsay: Stated that in that case, she'd recommend replacing it with new plaster.

Schmiedeke: Suggested that if most of the plaster is in need of replacement, then they should return to the HDC with options.

Gillett: Stated that the chances of big chunks of plaster falling is 50/50. The stone infused plaster is expensive. They think there will be better consistency, strength, and cost if they went with a different material.

Schmiedeke: Asked if this is just at the rear [east side] of the building.

Esau: Responded yes.

Schmiedeke: Suggested that the back does not have to match the three sides.

Lindsay: Stated that the only reason this is failing is because of water. If you were to replace, it would not become a problem if the water is kept out. They would like to see examples of other options for replacement if plaster is not something they want to do.

Prebys: Stated that the purpose is to preserve the historic building.

## **114 W Michigan**

Applicant: Jennifer Eastridge, owner- Present

Discussion: Eastridge: Stated she is planning to put in a retail space on the first floor. She likes the idea of gooseneck lights and she understands the lights need to be down lit. She will also be looking at additional lighting for the sign, which will be a projecting sign about 42 inches wide, and hung with a bracket. The paint colors she is considering are a minty green for the body of the building with a brownish-grey for the trim. She would also like to add some scroll details for the signboard.

Lindsay: Stated it would be hard to see from the street without something on the signboard. A projecting sign also produces a strange elevation.

Davis: Stated he has seen projecting signs in other historic districts, but not so much in Ypsilanti. Thinks the light choice would be critical for the sign.

Eastridge: Added that she has spoken with the lighting company about getting lights on a swivel.

Prebys: Added that lights off the bracket could work, as well.

Eastridge: Added that she wants to put a decal logo in the door.

Pettit: Stated he doesn't think anything she is proposing would be a problem.

Eastridge: Stated she could imagine the 114 W being in the signboard or in the windows. Added that they will want to put hours of operation on the windows as well. As for display windows, they want soft warm lights to create a marquee feel for the storefront.

Davis: Stated that he doesn't think the marquee lights are appropriate in this building the way it is shown on paper. He is not against some sort of decorative spot lighting inside the windows pointing to displays.

Prebys: Suggested low wattage bulbs. Strip LED lights around windows are not acceptable.

Davis: Stated they must adhere to dark sky standards, and the marquee lights do not jive with that because the lights in the picture are omnidirectional. Motion lights are not allowed. Spot lights could be acceptable.

Lindsay: Suggested lights that are easy to change in the display windows at front to accommodate different window displays.

Eastridge: Responded that window displays will change often.

## **7 S Washington**

Applicant: Emily Weir

Weir: Stated they want a hanging sign for the front of the building. Added it is the same sign designer that did the sign for Hyperion Coffee. They have not thought about lighting yet because they are focused on sign and the awning may create a barrier for lighting.

Prebys: Suggested that the sign maker could do something that includes two lights that are focused on the sign.

Schmiedeke: Stated the problem could be light shining in a drivers' eyes.

Pettit: Responded that they don't have to be high volume lights, nor will they be pointing to the street.

Weir: Added that the sign will be made of PVC and vinyl.

Davis: Suggested they may not need lighting because of the colors and the street lighting.

Prebys: Stated they would get this approved easily.

## **110 N Park**

Applicant: Cynthia Kochanek

Discussion: Kochanek: Stated the address is not in the district but that it is the former Tucker House. That since the two adjacent houses have come down, there is some concern as to whether 110 N Park might be next. Suggested this could may be something that the HDC may need to get involved in. Stated that moving it to the historic district is an option.

Davis: Asked how the HDC can move quickly to make this happen.

Prebys: Stated that the Heritage Foundation once attempted to place markers on the site but that was refused. It is documented by the automotive museum. Suggested alerting Bill Nickels.

Davis: Stated he would like to take all action they can starting now. Asked to be informed about more information so they can take swift action.

Prebys: Suggested bringing this topic up at a City Council meeting.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS—none**

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Property monitoring**

### **LED lighting strips policy/resolution**

Kochanek: Suggested a written policy should be in place moving forward. She is looking for input on what the HDC wants in that policy.

Davis: Asked if it is possible to measure a percentage of light going in and going out.

Lindsay: Asked what the dark sky initiative says.

Davis: Responded that he can look into that.

Schmiedeke: Suggested some photos of different lights as models.

Kochanek: Suggested commissioners think about it more before making any policy. Stated she needs some starting point to identify what is and is not acceptable.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**—none

**HOUSEKEEPING BUSINESS**

**Approval of previous minutes for January 23, 2018 with supplemental material**

Motion: Lindsay (second: Pettit) moved to approve the minutes for January 23, 2018 with supplemental material.

Approval: Unanimous approval. Motion carries.

**Approval of previous minutes for February 13, 2018**

Motion: Pettit (second: Schmiedeke) moved to approve the minutes for February 13, 2018 with the spelling correction for Commissioner Lindsay's first name.

Approval: Unanimous approval. Motion carries.

**Officer Elections**

*[Votes are turned in to staff]*

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion: Pettit (second: Davis) moved to adjourn the meeting.

Approval: Unanimous approval. Motion carries.

**MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:51 p.m.**