

**CITY OF YPSILANTI**  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES of DECEMBER 19, 2006**

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Hank Prebys                                      Vice Chair      7:00 PM  
Meeting Location:                              City Hall Meeting Room  
Commissioners Present:                      Hank Prebys, Ron Rupert, Joe Schultz, Ed Penet  
Commissioners Absent:                      Jane Schmiedeke, Christian Overland, Brenda Rigdon  
Staff Present:                                      Richard Murphy, Planner I  
    Cristin Moody, HDC Intern

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion:                      Penet (Second: Schultz) moves to approve the agenda as presented.

Approval:                      Unanimous. Action carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS - None**

**PUBLIC HEARING - None**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**133 W. Michigan Ave., Study Item**

Applicant:                      Ann Dilcher, Architect, Quinn Evans (Present)  
    Dave Morrison, masonry contractor (Present)

Discussion:                      The Commission had expressed concern with the masonry restoration work recently been completed and had requested more information.

Commissioners were concerned in particular with repointed sections which appeared to have non-matching mortar and replacement bricks that are clearly of a different size than existing, even though the approval for the work had indicated new materials must match existing. Applicant explains that the building was originally built with three bays on the Michigan Avenue façade in 1905. In 1919 it was expanded to add two more bays on the east side. At this time, the entryway was also moved to the new center bay. This created two different sections of the building at two different times of construction. The applicant states that the mortar appears to be a different color on certain areas of the building due to greater erosion on the older (1905) sections. When these other

sections of the building are repointed in the future, they should match what has already been done. Furthermore, according to the applicants, the replacement bricks used were 8 inches long instead of the 8 $\frac{1}{8}$  to 8 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches long due to the substantial additional cost of having the longer bricks specially made for the project. This caused larger mortar joints in areas where significant replacement was necessary. Commissioner Prebys asks about the possibility of finding used or reclaimed bricks of the correct size. The applicant states that salvaged brick is typically only used in a project if it is being moved from another section of the same building, not usually from one building to another. Applicant reveals that the masonry restoration on the remaining sections of the building will require additional brick replacement on an area around the Washington Street entrance. Commissioner Penet asks if any research was done to find salvage bricks of the correct size. The contractor indicates that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find salvaged exterior hard bricks of this type. Commissioner Schultz asks for details about plans for continuing restoration of the building. Applicant reports that the owner has applied for tax credits and does intend to restore the remaining sections of masonry, but she is not aware of the time table for completion, although the project had been thought of as a five year project, including the work already done. Commissioner Prebys informs the applicant that the HDC would like to be updated and apprised of any work planned in the future.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **32 N. Huron, Action Item**

Applicant: Philip Duczyminski, owner, World Class Martial Arts (Present)

Discussion: Application is for a business sign to be installed in the existing sign board. The applicant provides an illustration of the sign, showing the font and placement of the letters on the sign board. Letters are to be painted directly onto the board. The Commissioners ask how letters will fit, as well as the background color. The applicant indicates that the signboard itself will remain the current yellow color and the letters will be painted in dark blue.

Motion: Rupert (Second: Penet) moves to approve the application for work at 32 N. Huron to include the stencilling of a sign on the existing sign board. The font shall be Presidential, the lettering dark blue in color and will read "World Class Martial Arts", as shown on the application. The sign board shall remain the existing cream color.

The following Secretary of the Interior Standards were used in making this decision:  
#10 – New work shall be removable.

Approval: Unanimous. Action carried.

### **26 N. Washington, Action Item**

Applicant: Naia Venturi, owner (Present)

Discussion: The application is for masonry repairs to a rear corner of the building. Applicant states that she purchased the building in July and, at that time, the building inspector noted a section of brick which had fallen out. The applicant had employed Blue Sky Carpentry to repair the masonry and the work was nearly completed before she was informed that HDC approval was required. The repair was completed using the original bricks and soft mortar. All that remains to be done is painting the repaired section white to match the rest of the wall. Commissioner Penet asks if the applicant is satisfied with the work and she indicates that she is. Commissioner Rupert suggests using an oil-based primer and a latex paint for the finish coat. The oil-based primer should be applied only when it is 55 degrees or above and the latex can be applied at 40 degrees or above.

Motion: Rupert (Second: Penet) moves to approve the application for work at 26 N. Washington to include masonry repair to the rear corner using original bricks and soft mortar to fill in the collapsed section. The repaired section will be painted white to match the remainder of the wall, to be painted with an oil-based primer and latex paint.

The following Secretary of the Interior Standards were used in making this decision: #5 – Preserve distinctive features.

Approval: Unanimous. Action carried.

## **STUDY ITEMS**

**Motion:** Penet (Second: Rupert) moves to amend meeting agenda to add 107 E. Cross as a Study Item.

Approval: Unanimous. Action carried.

### **107 E. Cross, Study Item**

Applicant: David Kircher, owner (Present)

Discussion: The applicant requests the Commission's guidance on whether to replace a shed roof previously on the east side of the house. It had extended from the existing roof over an entryway and porch area. Currently, the entire porch is gone and the shed roof has been removed with only a few shingles attached to the main roof hanging over the edge. Commissioners agree that the porch roof can be left off in the rehabilitation, but the applicant will need to do more than just apply aluminum siding all the way up to the roof. A soffit or fascia will need to be added below the roof line and probably a gutter as well to protect the side of the building from runoff.

### **Frog Island Park**

Applicant: Richard Murphy, Riverside Neighborhood Association

Discussion: The Riverside Neighborhood Association's gardening committee has been working with Growing Hope to plan a community garden, to begin in the 2007 growing season. Little vacant land exists in the neighborhood; at the suggestion of Public Works Director Bill Bohlen, the committee is investigating a site in Frog Island

Park. The envisioned garden site is at the northern end of the park, between the running track and Forest Avenue. Neighborhood resident and landscape architect Chris Mueller has begun work on a draft site plan for the garden and the neighborhood hopes to ask City Council for permission to use the site in January. The physical plan for the garden is currently somewhat vague and the neighborhood would like to know which elements will require Commission review. Pictures of the Midtown garden on Congress and the Normal Park garden behind the Senior Center are provided for reference on elements of similar gardens. The Commission asks what considerations for security will be made. The neighborhood intends some sort of fence, two to three feet high, to prevent accidental damage from dogs and stray soccer balls; they understand that no amount of fencing can prevent determined vandalism, but hope to simply keep the site well enough monitored and cared for to discourage damage. The garden will likely have an area marked for harvest and consumption by passers-by, as a goodwill offering. Applicant notes that the gardeners are considering some sort of living fence, with willow or other softwoods growing along wire guides. This idea is generally approvable, with the note that it has the potential to become messy and/or shade the garden if not cared for. The Commission expresses some concern about growing food plants directly in the ground; past uses found in the surrounding area and proximity to the railroad tracks suggest potential contamination; Commissioner Prebys suggests considering some sort of raised beds with clean soil. Additional elements in the garden will probably include a composting area, water barrels, and possibly a small shed for secure storage of tools. The Commission expresses support for the idea of a garden and asks that a site plan be brought for review showing the final proposed layout and elements.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

**Administrative Approvals - None**

### **Property Monitoring**

**107 E. Cross** – The City and Mr. David Kircher, property owner, returned to Court on December 13, 2006, for a case review. The City still contends that Mr. Kircher has not shown an ability or willingness to complete all of the work required to abate nuisance conditions and bring this property up to habitability. The Court took no action on that day, however, but razing the property is one option. The Commission should be prepared for that issue to come before them.

**113 E. Cross** – Owner replaced the roof and made repairs to upper story porch on east end of house; this work was not included in previous HDC approval or building permit. Owner has provided both HDC application and building permit application for this work, but applications were received today, leaving no time for staff review or distribution of applications to the Commission.

**402 S. Huron** – The City Attorney's office continues to work with Deutsche Bank to create an arrangement that would allow the property to be sold to Mr. Nimer, who had previously appeared before the Commission, while still maintaining a guarantee of responsibility for the property's condition.

**Welcome Letter** – Commissioners indicate that the draft letter is generally good, but should be edited to make it more concise. Property owners should be able to quickly peruse the letter and obtain pertinent information without being overwhelmed. Staff will provide an updated draft at the next meeting.

**Annual Report** – Commissioners discuss projects to be highlighted in the 2006 Annual Report to City Council. An updated draft will be presented at the next meeting.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS** – None

## **HOUSEKEEPING BUSINESS**

### **Approval of the minutes from the December 5, 2006 meeting**

Motion: Rupert (Second: Penet) moves to approve the minutes of December 5, 2006 as presented.

Approval: Unanimous. Motion carries

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion: Schultz (Second: Penet) moves to adjourn the meeting.

Approval: Unanimous. Motion Carries.

**MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:30 PM**