



MINUTES

**City of Ypsilanti
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting held in person at Ypsilanti Freighthouse**

**Tuesday, May 24, 2022
7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Meeting Called to Order 7:20 pm (Technical/audio trouble and staff had forgotten batteries for the mics at city hall. Staff apologized to the audience and the commission for the delay.)

Motion: Ratzlaff (seconded by Szumko) moved to elect Chesnut as chair for this meeting.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Temporary chair Chesnut welcomed everyone, told public when and how they would have an opportunity to address commission.

Commissioners Present:

James Ratzlaff – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Stefan Szumko - Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
James Chesnut – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Jeff Muir – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Jimmy Huffman – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti

Commissioners Absent:

Alex Pettit – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti, ill, excused
Delrhea Byrge—Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti, ill, excused

Staff Present:

Ellen Thackery, Preservation Planner

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Szumko (second: Ratzlaff) moved to approve the agenda.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS—none

PUBLIC HEARING—none

OLD BUSINESS—none

[109 Maple was an amended application for work from a postponed application May 10. It should have appeared here, but staff considered it a new agenda item instead. In the future, amended applications will be placed under "Old Business."]

NEW BUSINESS

210 Oak

**Removal and replacement of 21 windows and replace with Andersen Fibrex windows.*

**Removal and replacement of storm door and front door. No storm door would be proposed, new proposed door would be steel.*

Staff Report: [Given in writing as part of packet, not verbally.] House contributes to the National Register and local historic districts. Commission will likely need detailed information about current conditions to determine whether materials are beyond repair and replacement is needed.

Applicant: Homeowner Jenn Wenzel and Andersen's permit coordinator Brett Mahaffey attended the meeting in person. Brett provided an overview of the proposal. 21 windows—all the windows in the home—are proposed to be replaced. There is a variety of window types in the house, and all would be replaced in the same configurations as they are now (one-over-ones would remain one-over-ones; one-over-three would remain in that configuration also). Windows would be white on the exterior. Staff report indicated aluminum trim, but Brett stated they don't use aluminum for their exterior trim. They don't cover up the wood trim. If they have to replace wood sills, they replace them with wood sills cut to fit.

Discussion: Commissioners expressed concerns that this document doesn't seem to show that deterioration of doors or windows are beyond repair. They stated that serious deterioration may indeed be present, but this current documentation doesn't really show that. The commission is sensitive to the removal of historic material. The windows that have smaller upper portions than lower portions are likely historic. Applicant expressed that the windows have been recently painted so the condition of the wood is worse than it appears. Homeowner would like functional and energy-efficient windows and front doors and would like the windows to be consistent and trimmed out the same. Front door also has been kicked in, so the steel door is preferable to the homeowner. Homeowner has looked into wood window restoration professionals and one quoted \$12,000 for the two windows believed to be historic and one quoted a 2.5-year waitlist. The commissioners indicated that they'd like a better understanding of which windows are historic, where they are on each elevation, where there is serious deterioration (including on the doors), and they suggested submitting one app for the vinyl and non-historic windows, and one for the historic windows. No re-application fees for amended, more broken-out applications. Staff will research window technology so that the windows can be better understood. Commission explained that they aren't saying no to the whole proposal—they just need more information.

Motion: Muir moved (Ratzliff seconded) to postpone the revised application received May 10, 2022 for work proposed at 210 Oak Street so that the applicant can provide more detailed photos and commentary about the conditions of the exterior front doors and conditions of all of the wood windows that make the materials unrepairable. With the information provided in the current application, the proposed work does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards 2 and 6. Commission also advises applicant that a separate application for the vinyl window replacements

could likely be more readily processed and approved. If no further application is taken on this application, a procedural denial will be issued by July 8, 2022.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Szumko moved (Muir seconded) to amend the last sentence of that motion to “If no further *action* is taken on this application, a procedural denial will be issued by July 8, 2022.”

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Relevant Secretary of the Interior’s Standards:
2, 6

410 N Hamilton

**Replace porch railing; paint siding and trim; reroof house and porch*

Staff Report: [Given in writing as part of packet, not verbally.] This house is a frame foursquare. It contributes to both the National Register and the local historic districts.

Applicant: Was not in attendance.

Discussion: This is an agenda item where the applicant has installed a taller railing and now seeks the commission’s approval retroactively. Commissioner observed that the original porch guardrail had balusters that were close together. New guardrail has thinner, more spaced-out balusters. What does the commission do with that? Commissioner stated that this question gets to the proportionality of the new design—how does the new railing interact with the historic elements of the house? Commissioner stated that he understands that the long expanse of original front guardrail without a central support post would be difficult to keep stable over the long term and he’d like to hear from applicant about their intention; commissioner states that he’s not sure that the new rail is appropriate for the house, but some of that may come from the added support in the center. One commissioner states that he sees that the post closest to the handrail is lower than the rest of the new railing now, and that indicates to the commissioner that this new rail wasn’t really an intentional design. Commissioner looks at the front of the house and the intent of the original design and this result is far from that, and this is such a public-facing architectural feature. Commissioner would like more information from building code official about whether the applicant could install a new lower porch guardrail plus a booster rail at this point. Or does the applicant need to install a handrail that’s at least 36” but that meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation? And the handrail likely needs to be addressed—it likely does not meet code as it is and the post there might need a booster.

Motion: Szumko (seconded by Huffman) moved to postpone the application for the replacement of the historic porch rail as proposed May 10, 2022 for 410 N Hamilton because the proposed porch work does not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation 5 or 6 or the associated Guidelines for Rehabilitation. A proposed new railing should match the historic railing in design, color, texture, and materials. Staff can approve the proposed roofing and painting administratively.

Relevant Secretary of the Interior's Standards: 5 and 6

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

305 E Forest

**Garage:*

Replace two wood garage doors with one new metal overhead garage door.
Remove center post, bolster sagging header.
Install gutter on front of garage with downspout.
Move electrical from overhead line to underground conduit.
Install grounded electrical box inside garage.
Removal of flood light, replace with lights similar to those on house.

**Patio:*

Remove concrete patio, replace with stone pavers and landscaping

Staff: [Given in writing as part of packet, not verbally.] 305 E Forest is a 1.5-story bungalow that is not mentioned by address in the National Register nomination. The boundary of the local historic district includes this north side of E Forest as the boundary of the local historic district. The house was likely built in the 1940s.

Applicant: Property owners were in attendance.

Discussion: Commissioner clarified that the commission and the homeowners have discussed this house and garage previously as recent study items and invited applicant to describe an overview of the proposed work. Applicant outlined proposed work on garage and patio. Commissioner clarified that the new garage door will have a smooth texture; applicants confirmed.

Motion: Ratzlaff moved (seconded by Szumko) to approve the application and issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work proposed May 17, 2022 for 305 E Forest Ave, for work including removing a concrete patio and replacing it with pavers, and doing work on the garage to prepare it for new doors and installing new doors. The garage work includes removing the center post, bolstering the sagging header, removing deteriorated wood doors, installing a vertical overhead door, removing and replacing flood lights, installing a gutter and downspout, moving an overhead electrical line and replacing it with an underground conduit, and installing a grounded electrical box inside the garage. The proposed patio work meets Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation 9 and 10. The proposed garage work meets Secretary of the Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation 9.

Relevant Secretary of the Interior's Standards: 9 and 10

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

206 N Huron

**wood detached deck, retroactive application*

Staff Report: [Given in writing as part of packet, not verbally.] This historically significant house contributes to both the National Register district and the local historic district. It is a two-story hipped-roof brick cubical Italianate with 2-story brick wings to the sides and rear. The original Italianate house at the center was built in 1863 by Delos Showerman. The addition to the north was built in 1909 by the Daniel Quirk family. More research is needed to determine when the addition to the south side was built.

Applicant: Applicant/homeowner Ian Greenlee attended. Gave overview of the project—he built a freestanding deck in the backyard, 10' x 12', treated lumber. Behind the house. There is a wood fence in the backyard and he stained it black, and his plan is to stain this deck to match once it cures.

Discussion: Commissioner states that the deck doesn't likely match the house or carriage house but likely no deck could match. Commissioner thinks that the stain will help the deck blend into the hillside. Building department will likely need additional railings and lattice around the bottom, but that will come through the permitting process.

Motion: Ratzlaff moved (Szumko seconded) to issue a certificate of appropriateness for the work proposed at 206 N Huron May 18, 2022 to include a freestanding deck of treated lumber, to be stained once it cures. The design is likely incompatible with the historic house, but the deck meets Standard 10 in that it is removable.

Relevant Secretary of the Interior's Standards: 10

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Next up was 109 Maple, but homeowner suggested that he go last because he has study items as well. Chair agreed that they could switch those agenda items and no formal motion was needed.

317 N Washington

** Demolish gas station convenience store and build a new convenience store. Gas pumps remain where they are.*

Staff Report: [Given in writing as part of packet, not verbally.] This gas station is a modern non-contributing building.

Applicant: Todd Ballou, architect, representing the owner of the gas station. Seeks to understand (1) if commission would have any issue demolishing this gas station, and (2) if commission would prefer one placement of the new proposed building over the other potential placement.

Discussion: Staff reminded commissioners that the process for a proposed demolition is that:

- At the first meeting at which a complete (as determined by city staff) application for demolition or moving is considered, the Commission shall follow its usual procedures, allowing for presentation by the applicant and discussion by the Commission.

- The Commission shall determine whether sufficient information has been submitted with the application. The Commission may request any additional information it deems necessary for its determination.
- If the application can be accepted as submitted, the Commission shall vote to accept the application and schedule a public hearing. (The application is considered formally accepted as the date of the vote to accept.)
- If the application cannot be accepted because additional information is needed, the application may be postponed until such time as the additional information becomes available.
- **No action shall be taken by the Commission at this first meeting.**

Staff also reminded commission that this application and process is starting here, but it will have to make its way through Zoning (variances may be required) and Planning. Commissioner wonders if the materiality of the new design is part of this conversation regarding application completeness or not. Staff asked Mr. Ballou how far his design process is. He stated that he has done almost nothing design-wise because if variances are needed, he doesn't imagine this project will go forward and so he has not invested a lot of time in design. The concepts on the application that show new design are very conceptual—very early in the process. Commissioners asked whether this building was ever considered historic. Staff stated that the National Register nomination for the district did not mention this building; surveyors at the time in the late 1970s and early 1980s were documenting historic buildings with integrity as contributing and historic buildings that had lost their integrity over time as non-contributing. Those surveyors were likely not even thinking of this building at all at that time—to them, it was clear that this building was newer and not contributing. The commission wants to be sure that the documentation on this building is thorough so that we don't lose a building that doesn't look historic anymore but actually has historic significance.

Another commissioner stated that, for him, he doesn't have quite enough information in the materials because this issue is not strictly just about demolition—it will also be about what will be built on the site as well—and he doesn't have enough information on that piece. Commission agreed that this project should likely now go to Zoning Board to see if variances are even possible before holding a public hearing on the demolition. Straw poll to see which location commission believes would meet the Standards better. Commission agreed that the non-conforming location for the new build would be preferable for the existing historic resources instead of the new build being to the streetfront on Washington, because of that placement's potential impact on the next-door historic house on Washington.

Motion: Huffman moved (seconded by Szumko) to postpone the application for demolition of the convenience store at 317 N Washington because the historic district commission thinks that the proposal needs to go before the Zoning Board first to determine the location of a new building so that the architect could move into designing the building. Once that information has been reviewed by the Zoning Board of Appeals, the application will be reviewed again by the historic district commission for completeness. Once the application is deemed complete, the commission will accept it and a public hearing will be scheduled.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

**installing PVC exhaust pipes for high-efficiency hot water tank and furnace*

Staff Report: [Given in writing as part of packet, not verbally.] This house is considered to be non-contributing in the National Register district nomination because of the outside stair that was added for the apartment, in place of a porch, according to the nomination. It is described as a “2-story, late 19th-century cross-gable Queen Anne. Original gable detailing covered and porch removed.”

Applicant: Unable to attend. Staff can give feedback to applicant as needed.

Discussion: Staff stated that she spoke to the applicant about a concern of moisture being directed onto the house’s siding and Ms Pollard stated that they could install straight vents instead of elbowed vents to get the exhaust further away from the siding. Commissioner stated that he thinks one reason they use elbowed exhaust pipes is to avoid contamination with one pipe pulling in the other pipe’s exhaust. He stated as long as the units will be operated safely and exhaust is kept off the siding as much as possible with the units operating safely, he was comfortable with either straight or elbowed pipe.

Motion: Szumko moved (Ratzlaff seconded) to issue a certificate of appropriateness for the work proposed at 315 S Washington May 17, 2022 to include two PVC exhaust pipes to be installed through the siding above the foundation. The proposed work meets Secretary of the Interior’s Standard for Rehabilitation 10.

Relevant Secretary of the Interior’s Standards: 10

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

109 Maple

**amended application per commissioners’ suggestions from last meeting when item was postponed: proposal now is two vinyl window replacements and re-approval from last year to remove all aluminum siding and restore wood siding underneath.*

[This was listed on the agenda as a new agenda item, but, because it was technically an amended proposal from the last meeting, it should have appeared on the agenda as an “Old Business” item.]

Staff Report: 109 Maple is a two-story, hipped roof house. The 1988 National Register district nomination for this area describes the house as “early 20th-century” and contributing to the National Register district. The house now has aluminum siding on it and in May 2020, the homeowner received approval to remove this siding to reveal the wood underneath. No historic photos have been located to date, but staff will try to find some. Homeowner would also like to discuss a porch as a study item; it is possible that the wood siding under the current siding will have evidence of a past porch and its location and outline.

This application is a revised application that the commissioners reviewed at the May 10 meeting and postponed action on. That application had 11 windows on it; per a commission recommendation, this application only includes the replacement of two vinyl windows from that total of 11.

Applicant: Matthew Peters, Homeowner/ applicant attending. Described long-term goals for property. Currently, house has shiplap, clapboard, asbestos, and aluminum siding stacked up. Also, 4

layers of roof shingles on top of cedar. He bought it out of foreclosure and there is evidence of water damage in the house, some spots worse than others. He expects there to be water damage when the aluminum siding is removed in places. He is not sure what he will find when he opens the house up. The aluminum boxing is prominent now around the windows because of so many layers of siding—he would like to add old wood trim back once the upper layers of non-historic siding are removed. He might want to replace the wood siding with cementitious siding once he assesses the wood siding’s condition. Walked the commission through window condition assessment. For two vinyl windows, applicant is seeking approval for two Pella windows in the same configuration as the originals are, and they are wood with aluminum cladding and this is this specific application. He also would like to blow in insulation. Ideally, he’d pull all siding off, blow in insulation and re-side but he doesn’t know yet if that would be possible. Wood siding will have many nails in it from the years of residings on top of it, so it may not be salvageable.

Discussion: Commission discussed that in general, they do not approve materials that try to imitate another material, and they try not to approve a really exaggerated wood grain that is not like actual wood grain. Commissioner seeks to clarify what is in this application specifically and what are the study items.

Motion: Ratzlaff moved (Muir seconded) to approve and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the removal of non-historic aluminum siding as proposed May 17, 2022. The proposed work meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, including Standards 2 and 6.

Relevant Secretary of the Interior’s Standards: 2, 6

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Motion: Ratzlaff moved (Szumko seconded) to approve and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the removal of two double-hung vinyl windows at 109 Maple and the replacement of them with the Pella Lifestyle Series aluminum-clad wood windows as proposed May 17, 2022. The proposed work meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, including Standards 2 and 9.

Relevant Secretary of the Interior’s Standards: 2, 9

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

STUDY ITEMS

109 Maple

**Window repairs and replacements*

Applicant stated that of the 11 windows he has, there is a variety of conditions. Some are not original and some are in bad condition. Likely about three of the windows probably could be repaired. In areas, there will be a lot of water damage. Applicant would rather not keep three windows of 11, but commission explained that we are trying to preserve historic materials in the historic district. That is our job as a commission and we use the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation to do that, and we try to stick with those and treat everyone the same. Commissioner explained that there may be extenuating individual circumstances for a particular window, and that's where the applicant documents that and brings that to the commission—like a frame is twisted and the sash isn't original, etc etc and the commission can look at those details. The commissioners rely on the applicants to bring the pertinent information and complete documentation to the commission so they can make the most informed decision possible. The commission's goal is to preserve historic material where it exists as much as possible.

Applicant wants a temperature reading from the commission about siding replacement and a front porch. The porch replacement will be a bigger portion of his next application. Applicant wants to understand how to design a front porch when we don't know what was there. Staff suggested that the ghost of the original porch might be hiding under the siding. It's possible that when you get some siding off, you will be able to see the original porch's pilasters or columns and roofline. That could provide good documentation for restoring the feature. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation ask that if we don't know what was there, we don't want to design a porch that looks like it was always there and borrow a design from another historic house. We don't want to confuse the historic record. So if you can find an old photo or the ghost of the old porch on the original siding, you can replicate that feature. But if you can't, the Standards ask us to design something that is compatible but that won't confuse the historic record—perhaps it's a simpler design and/or perhaps it uses materials that won't confuse the historic record. Commissioner speaks about proportion—proportion is really important. And because it will be contemporary, you will be using contemporary materials so it doesn't have to look like an old-fashioned, original porch.

Commission encouraged applicant to consult with a historic preservation professional who could assess the wood windows and who could consult about porch design. That could be really valuable if they are well versed in the Standards for Rehabilitation.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

1. 207 W Michigan—the application is to paint the second story black, and because it had already been painted, staff could approve administratively.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Property Monitoring

- a. Commissioners/Staff discussed property concerns and property issues under review.

2. Updates from Staff

- b. Conflict of interest forms—please sign and return
- c. Elements of Design/ New Construction Zoom presentation June 14, 7 pm to start our next meeting in Council Chambers

2. Commissioner Comments

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS—none

HOUSEKEEPING BUSINESS

Approval of the Minutes of May 10, 2022

Motion: Szumko (second: Huffman) moved to approve the minutes of May 10, 2022, as submitted.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous
Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair adjourned the meeting, citing the end of the agenda with no further items to discuss.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:45 p.m.