

NORTHVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
April 16, 2014
Wednesday 7:00 P.M. – Northville City Hall – Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Acting Chair Hoffman called the Historic District Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Argenta, Field, Hoffman, and Vernacchia
Absent: Gudritz, Luikart, and Johnson (all excused)
Also Present: Consultant Elmiger

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: No changes; approved by consensus.

4. CITIZEN COMMENTS: none

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: March 19, 2014, April 2, 2014 (sub-committee)

Motion Vernacchia, support by Field, to approve the minutes of March 19, 2014, as published.
Motion carried unanimously.

Motion Argenta, support by Vernacchia, to approve the minutes of April 2, 2014 subcommittee meeting as published. **Motion carried unanimously.**

6. REPORTS

- A. CITY ADMINISTRATION: none
- B. CITY COUNCIL; none
- C. PLANNING COMMISSIONER: none
- D. OTHER COMMUNITY/GOVERNMENTAL LIAISONS: none

7. CASES

CASE #1

**GREG PRESLEY/HESANO
335 LINDEN**

ADDITION

Gregory Presley, Presley Architecture, 412 W. Dunlap, Northville, MI was present on behalf of the homeowner, Anne Hesano and her husband, Tom Topolski. Mr. Topolski was also present. Mr. Presley said that he had built this home in 2002. The house was a conforming structure to the Historic District. Originally the house had been created for a person with special needs, including handicap accessibility. This need had dictated certain interior design features. The current owners did not have that need, and wanted to expand the kitchen about 4 feet to the north by utilizing about 50% of the porch that was already there. They would demolish approximately 11.5 feet of the existing porch wall and push it out so that it was flush with the wall of the house. Per the consultant's memorandum, this was considered an "alteration," and not a "demolition."

Mr. Presley addressed questions raised in the consultant's letter as follows:

- Original documents for the house were provided
- Handrails were shown on a *partial first floor plan* and *partial north elevation/ kitchen addition*. Also shown on the plan was a 6" projecting box bay that was being added to the large kitchen window.
- A spec sheet for the skylight window was provided.

Motion Vernacchia, support by Field, to accept the application as complete. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion Argenta, support by Field, to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness, referencing the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular standards 9 and 10, and Northville Historic District Design Standards 3.6 for windows, 3.7 for doors, 3.10 for porches, 5.14 for windows, 5.17 for siding, and 5.18 for paint and color. Motion carried unanimously.

CASE#2

**GREG PRESLEY/MYERS
542 W. MAIN**

ALTERATION

Gregory Presley, Presley Architecture, 412 W. Dunlap, Northville, MI was present on behalf of the homeowners, Frank and Jeanette Myers, who were also present. The homeowners wanted to construct a master suite upstairs by adding a closet and a bathroom to the bedroom there. To do this they needed to add a roof extension on the rear side of the home, and two new dormers were being added: one on the east side and one on the west side of the home.

Mr. Presley addressed questions raised in the consultant’s letter as follows:

- The ridgeline would be equal with the east/west ridge, which was about 6” below the north/south ridge. The roof peak was at 26’6”;

The dormer on the east side helped to expand the existing attic area to make it useable space; the dormer on the west side was to give more light to a second bedroom on the north side of the house.

- The driveway was not a part of tonight’s application; it was included on the drawings in error.

Motion Vernacchia, support by Field, to accept the application as complete. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion Argenta, support by Field, to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness, referencing the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular standards 9 and 10, and Northville Historic District Design Standards 3.16 for mass, 3.17 for height, 3.18 for scale, 3.19 for proportion, 3.21 for materials, 3.23 for dormers, 5.19 for asphalt/shingles, 5.14 for windows, 5.17 for siding, and 5.18 for paint. Motion carried unanimously.

CASE #3

**1ST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH/LAPHAM
200 E. MAIN STREET**

SIGN ADDITION

Charles Lapham, 18412 Blue Heron Drive, Northville, MI, and Ruling Elder, was present on behalf of the 1st Presbyterian Church.

Consultant Elmiger explained that this was considered a new application from the one heard November 13, 2013, because this application presented a different size for the sign. She further explained that for the Applicant to appeal a negative decision to the State, all possibilities with the City had to first be explored and denied. Thus the Applicant was requesting a smaller size for the LED part of the sign. If denied, he would appeal to the State.

Mr. Lapham provided some background material regarding the church's activities, needs, and place in the community. He went on to describe the sign as now proposed: a change to an existing ground sign in order to add a programmable, LED portion, with the LED portion replacing the words "Est. 1829" on the sign.

Per the consultant's letter, the previous application included a 69" x 19" double-sided programmable, LED sign with colored letters. The proposed sign in this application was also a programmable, LED sign. However, it was smaller (64" x 12"), with black background and white-only letters.

Mr. Lapham presented samples of the molding (powder coated) and the LED "bricks" that would make up the sign. The letters would be lit; Mr. Lapham said the sign would actually have a white background with black and colored letters.

The previous application had been denied as "historically inappropriate." Mr. Lapham suggested that a smaller LED sign could be historically appropriate, especially if it helped to save and maintain a historical building such as this church.

Commissioner Field noted that this request was very similar to the one presented last November, except that the LED portion of the sign was now smaller.

Acting Chair Hoffman clarified that Mr. Lapham was asking for colored LED lights to be allowed. Mr. Lapham affirmed that he and the Church would comply with any conditions the Commission set. However, colored lights could help emphasize the sign's message: red for blood drives, green for Christmas, etc.

Commissioner Vernacchia said he thought the LED light as presented was possible; he had supported this proposal when it was heard in November.

Discussion centered on how often the sign might change its message or perhaps its color. A condition might be added to an affirmative motion that the sign not change more frequently than twice a day.

Commissioner Argenta thought that any internally illuminated sign was prohibited by the Zoning Ordinance, and was thus outside of the HDC's purview. He was confused by Building Official Penn's letter of April 16, 2014, saying that "the sign as proposed meets the requirements for signs in the zoning district." Consultant Elmiger suggested that the Commission only deal with the issue of "historical appropriateness." She referred to page 21-7 of the Zoning Ordinance: Section 21.01.d.2) *Illumination* and page 21-9: Section 21.01.d.6) *Signs Prohibited in All Districts*, specifically paragraph (b). The issue of Zoning Ordinance conformance would need to be resolved with the City.

Discussion was held regarding whether Mr. Lapham wanted to have a vote from the four Commissioners this evening, or if he wanted to return when there was the possibility – though no surety – that more Commissioners might be present. He chose to continue this evening.

Referring to the November 20, 2013 minutes that stated: "...if there is an outcry, they will take the sign out," Mr. Lapham further affirmed that if there was an outcry, he personally would take the sign out. In the case of his absence, he would commit his grandson to removing the sign, if there was an outcry.

Motion Vernacchia, support by Argenta, to accept the application as complete. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion Vernacchia, support by Field, to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness, because this is a unique circumstance, this being a long-standing existing sign that is being partially modified, and referencing the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular standards 9 and 10, and Northville Historic District Design Standards 4.24 for signs, with the following conditions:

- a) The sign shall not have flashing, scrolling, or moving letters or messages per the April 16, 2014 letter from Building Official Penn.
- b) The sign present a black background with a single contrasting color in the message. That color can change per message, but only a single color is permitted in each message.
- c) The message change no more than twice per day.

Motion failed 2-2, with Vernacchia and Field in favor, and Argenta and Hoffman opposed.

Acting Chair Hoffman then offered the following motion:

Motion Hoffman, support by Vernacchia, to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness, because this is a unique circumstance, this being a long-standing existing sign that is being partially modified, and referencing the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular standards 9 and 10, and Northville Historic District Design Standards 4.24 for signs, with the following conditions:

- a) The sign shall not have flashing, scrolling, or moving letters or messages per the April 16, 2014 letter from Building Official Penn.
- b) The sign present a black background with white letters only.
- c) The message change no more often than twice per day.

Motion carried 3-1, with Vernacchia, Hoffman, and Field in favor, and Argenta opposed.

Mr. Lapham said that he might want to return to the Commission to ask for a modification, for a white background with black letters, depending on how the sign looked after it was installed.

Consultant Elmiger reminded everyone that this sign could only be installed if it met the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance regarding illuminated signs in the Historic District. There was still confusion regarding this issue, and the sign did have to conform to the Zoning Ordinance.

CASE #4

**PATRICK MCLAUGHLIN
373 LINDEN**

**CHANGES TO PLAN COLOR, CHIMNEY,
WINDOW, DOORS, TRIM**

Owner and general contractor Patrick McLaughlin referred to the letter he had included in his application, which gave comprehensive details of the changes he was proposing for this project. He presented samples of the previously approved and proposed new colors to the Commission. He noted that he was also proposing using a PVC product instead of cedar for the exterior trim, which would be stained white on site.

Referring to the consultant’s letter, which had called out a change that was illustrated on the drawings, but not included in the list of minor window/door changes, Mr. McLaughlin pointed out where he had drawn a lowered window on the *Garage East Elevation*. He apologized for leaving this off the list of changes.

Motion Vernacchia, support by Field, to accept the application as complete. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Motion by Argenta, support by Field, to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness, provided that the following conditions are met:

Changes to drawings approved May 13, 2013 be as outlined in the “Application for Historic District Commission” submitted at tonight’s meeting, including the lowering of the window on the east elevation of the garage.

The work would then meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular standards 9 and 10, and the following Northville Historic District Design Standards: 5.18 for paint, 3.21 for materials, and 3.22 for details. **Motion carried unanimously.**

The HDC kept the paint color samples for their file.

CASE#5

**LAURA & TRENT CHRISTENSEN GUTHRIE
417 DUBUAR**

FENCE & LANDSCAPING

Homeowner Laura Christensen Guthrie was present and presented information and samples regarding this application, which was for landscaping plans that included installation of plants, brick walkway, patio, and two fence types. Renovations for the home were first approved at the May, 2012 HDC meeting, and modifications to the building plans were approved at the November, 2013 meeting.

Ms. Guthrie noted that they were planning a path in the front yard and a patio in the rear yard. She gave the following information requested in the consultant’s letter:

- The metal fencing would be black, and 5 feet high. This fence was proposed for all sides of the dog run. This was a change from the wording of the request in the April 4, 2014 letter.
- Samples were provided for the front walk, which would be either Fendt Old World Holland in Rustic Red, or New York Irregular Full Color Flagstone. For the backyard patio, the owners proposed Fendt Old World Vintage in Limestone with the color slate as an accent (not sandstone as in the April 4, 2014 letter).
- Photos of large and small boulders for the retaining wall were provided.
- They hoped to begin the project at the end of May and complete it by the end of June, depending on when the frost laws lifted.

Motion Vernacchia, support by Field, to accept the application as complete. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion Argenta, support by Field, to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as proposed, referencing the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular standards 9 and 10, and Northville Historic District Design Standards 3.2 for landscaping, 3.4 for fences, 5.12 for stone, and 3.21 for materials, with materials and descriptions as presented this evening:

- a) Five foot high black metal fence on all sides of the dog run.
- b) The front walk to be either Fendt Old World Holland in Rustic Red, or New York Irregular Full Color Flagstone.
- c) The backyard patio to be Fendt Old World Vintage in Limestone with the color slate as accent.
- d) Boulders for the retaining wall to be as presented in photographs distributed this evening.
- e) Project to begin in May 2014.

Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Guthrie asked if she needed to return to the Commission for approval of new gutters. Consultant Elmiger said since this would be a change to an exterior of a resource, Ms. Guthrie would have to return to the HDC for approval.

8. DISCUSSION

Change to HDC Application and HDC Notice

This discussion was postponed to a future meeting.

Approved HDC Rules & Regulations

Consultant Elmiger said that on April 7 City Council had approved the change to require application materials 16 days before meeting dates. This would go into effect May 7, thus impacting the application process for the June meeting. Further discussion of this item was postponed to a future meeting.

RFP from the Structural Engineer

Commissioner Argenta said that he would like to suggest one or two more qualified structural engineers for residential inspections. Further discussion of this item was postponed to a future meeting.

Acting Chair Hoffman asked the record to show his appreciation to the Commissioners for their good work this evening.

ADJOURN Acting Chair Hoffman adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl McGuire
Recording Secretary

Approved as submitted 05-21-2014