

NORTHVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
October 15, 2014
Wednesday 7:00 P.M. – Northville City Hall – Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:

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

Present: Argenta, Field, Gudritz, Hoffman, Vernacchia
Absent: Johnson - excused
Also Present: Consultant Elmiger
DDA Director Ward
Planning Commission Chair Wendt

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: none

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Vice Chair Hoffman suggested, and it was agreed by consensus, that Case 3 be heard before Case 2.

MOTION Gudritz, support by Argenta, to approve the agenda as amended. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Note: Later in the meeting it was noted that Case #7 would not be heard this evening, but rather was being heard at the Public Hearing scheduled for October 22, 2014.

4. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES: September 17, 2014

In response to a request from Vice Chair Hoffman, Commissioner Argenta reported on the Subcommittee meeting held October 13, 2014 at 6:00 p.m., for the purpose of gathering complete information on the application submitted by Robin Bolitho, 134 N. Center, for *demo wall, planter, stairs & concrete, new wall, porch cap, stairs & rail, replace walkway & awning, install glass panels, paint building*, originally heard on September 17, 2014 by the HDC, but which was found at that time to be incomplete. The subcommittee – made up of Commissioners Argenta, Gudritz and Field – was authorized to gather all the application materials and act on the Commission's behalf regarding accepting the application as complete and then granting a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Commissioner Argenta reported that Commissioners Argenta and Gudritz had been present for this meeting (Field absent), notations made by the Subcommittee on the submitted materials were in the file, and with those notations the Application was found to be complete and a Certificate of Appropriateness was granted. Minutes of this meeting would be presented for approval at a later meeting.

With that report, Vice Chair Hoffman referred the minutes of September 17, 2014 to the Commission for approval.

Motion Gudritz, support by Vernacchia to approve the minutes of September 17, 2014, as published. **Motion carried unanimously.**

5. REPORTS:

A. CITY ADMINISTRATION: none

B. CITY COUNCIL: none

C. PLANNING COMMISSION: none

D. OTHER COMMUNITY/GOVERNMENTAL LIAISONS: none

6. PUBLIC HEARING: None.

7. CASES TO BE HEARD – BY CASE:

CASE #1

**LEE E. HOLLAND
102 E. MAIN STREET**

MURAL

Lee E. Holland was present on behalf of this application, which was to install a mural at 102 E. Main Street, on the Center Street side of the building. He said that he was ready to answer any questions from the Commission.

Vice Chair Hoffman noted that the Commission had heard from Mr. Holland regarding this application before (December 18, 2013).

Commissioner Argenta reviewed the history of this request. After the initial presentation, Chair (and Mayor) Johnson had appointed an ad hoc committee to work with Mr. Holland regarding mural placement. This committee had met on May 6, 2014.

At the request of Commissioner Argenta, Vice Chair Hoffman recognized DDA Director Ward.

DDA Director Ward further explained the purpose of the ad hoc committee, noting that its members were pulled from the Arts Commission, the Historic Commission, and the DDA. Their specific charge was to identify alternative locations other than the one proposed this evening.

DDA Director Ward said the committee had reviewed the January 2006 Art Placement Report and identified criteria for placement, etc. They were able to recommend the best of 8-10 alternative locations to Mr. Holland. However, Mr. Holland had indicated that he wanted the 102 E. Main Street location. At this point the committee disbanded, as their work was complete.

DDA Director Ward gave a brief update on the Exhibit Design and the Wayfinding Project. She reminded the Commission that part of the Wayfinding Project was to suggest a mural roughly 1/3 the size of what was being presented this evening. Additionally, application of that mural was via a thin foil like substance that had the appearance of a painted mural, but which could be removed easily.

The Commissioners expressed concerns regarding this project as follows:

- The Northville Design Standards specifically said “unpainted brick and stone should not be painted.” (5-18) Additionally, the Secretary of Interior Standards spoke directly against sand blasting, power washing, and strongly encouraged retaining the original wall whenever possible. Nova Color (the manufacturer suggested by the applicant) offered “Tips for Painting an Exterior Mural Using Acrylic Paint” on its website. These tips included choosing a north or east facing wall, preparing the wall by sanding or wire brushing, and using trisodium phosphate or bleach and finally, priming. Nova Color also instructed that after the mural was added a top coat of varnish should be applied. Last, Nova Color offered no warranties. It would be difficult approving this treatment to an original historic unpainted brick wall.

- There were reservations regarding approving a project for a building not owned by the Applicant.
- Any project of this nature should be coordinated with what was already being done in the City regarding art, wayfinding, etc. All decision makers should be on board.
- The size of the proposed mural seemed overwhelming – gigantic – over the top.
- The design as presented tonight was different than that previously received by the Commission, was somewhat repetitive of what was already in downtown Northville, and did not add anything new. It was understood that the final rendering was not presented. It was difficult to approve something for the most prominent location in downtown Northville without knowing what it was going to look like.

Mr. Holland said that Wes Hardin, a noted mural artist, would be the artist for this project. He further explained that murals were popular all over the United States, and showed examples of these murals to the Commission. The mural would be paid for and the sponsor(s) involved would set up a maintenance fund.

At the request of Vice Chair Hoffman, DDA Director Ward went over the process for the murals suggested by the Wayfinding consultant. Those murals would not add paint to a surface, and when removed, would leave no residue. They would last 8-10 years, and a 14 x 20 foot panel would cost about \$8,000.00.

Mr. Holland said that he had not expected this response, that he had worked on this project for a year, and would welcome advice regarding the final design and was willing to work with others, including the original committee mentioned earlier.

Sue Taylor, Ad Hoc Committee member, asked if other locations would again be considered. Vice Chair Hoffman said they would be.

Vice Chair Hoffman reviewed the issues as follows and suggested referring the application back to the applicant:

1. The original committee should be re-engaged
2. Size and scope of the project should be reviewed and modified
3. Application method should conform to Northville Historic District and Secretary of the Interior standards
4. Continuity should be demonstrated with what was already being planned for City art through the DDA's efforts with the wayfinding project, the walkway project, etc.
5. A more complete rendering of the design was needed.

MOTION Vernacchia, support by Argenta, to refer this application back to the applicant. Motion carried unanimously.

CASE #3

**DENNIS & WENDY RICHARDVILLE
543 W. DUNLAP STREET**

GARAGE DEMO

As noted above, the agenda was amended to hear Case #3 before Case #2.

Wendy Richardville, 543 W. Dunlap Street, was present on behalf of this application, which was to demolish their existing garage in preparation for constructing a new garage. The grounds upon which the application was based was that the garage was a deterrent to a major improvement program.

Ms. Richardville explained the current garage was falling apart, and provided photographs of its current state of deterioration, which included rotting siding, studs and sill plates, broken concrete floor, etc.

Ms. Richardville noted that there was nothing in the Historical archives regarding this garage. A date of 1974 was in the concrete floor.

Referencing the Consultant's Review Letter of October 8, 2014, Planning Consultant Elmiger noted the following:

- The applicant had attempted to gather information from the Northville Historical Society's archives.
- Regarding a written narrative description of proposed process, Ms. Richardville indicated that the garage would be demolished as soon as approval was granted.

In response to questions from Vice Chair Hoffman, Ms. Richardville said that they had a contractor for demolition. She was not sure whether the contractor had done work in Northville. However, he had come highly recommended by her neighbors in the Historic District. Additionally, she was aware of the care that needed to be taken in a Historic District as they also owned a cottage and had been involved in historic renovation in the Bayview neighborhood in Petoskey.

Commissioner Argenta said he had visited this property, and he confirmed that the sill plates and studs were rotted and parts of the concrete floor were missing. He wasn't sure the 1974 date in the concrete floor indicated date of construction as it appeared in an area that seemed patched. However, the building appeared to have been altered many times, had a contemporary older overhang door, and additionally had a severe drainage problem. It was difficult to determine the date of construction. The wall sheeting material was planks; these were water damaged. He did not feel the structure was contributing.

Vice Chair Hoffman confirmed with Ms. Richardville that the proposed new construction would be in the same location. Ms. Richardville said that the new construction would be 26 x 22 feet; the garage to be demolished was 24.5 x 20 feet. Therefore the proposed new construction would be virtually the same size and in the same location; this would be shown on new construction plans when these were provided.

Discussion was held whether this structure was historically or architecturally significant. The consensus of the Commission was that it was not significant.

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

Vice Chair Hoffman opened the meeting for public comment. Hearing none, he returned the item to the Commission.

MOTION Field, support by Vernacchia, that the Commission find that the structure is not historically or architecturally significant. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION Vernacchia, support Field, to grant a Notice to Proceed with the demolition of the structure, based on tonight's discussion of the deterioration evident throughout, and the finding that the structure is not historically or architecturally significant. Motion carried unanimously.

CASE #2

**DENNIS & WENDY RICHARDVILLE
543 W. DUNLAP STREET**

GARAGE

As noted above, the agenda was amended to hear Case #3 before Case #2.

This case was postponed at the request of the applicant to give them time to correct architectural plans.

CASE #4

**DAVID C. MARINO
528 RANDOLPH**

FENCE

David C. Marino was present on behalf of this application, which was to install a new fence along the south and east boundaries at 528 Randolph Street. Noting that he already had a fence permit, Mr. Marino requested a Notice to Proceed.

Mr. Marino said he was proposing to replace an existing chain link fence with steel fencing as shown in manufacturer's documents provided this evening. He provided a sample of the fencing to the Commission. The new fencing would improve the value of the property and foster civic beauty. Mr. Marino noted that similar fencing was installed in several locations in the Historic District.

Vice Chair Hoffman referred to the Planning Consultant's review letter of October 8, 2014:

We assume that the fence will be located on the vacant lot (given the submitted photograph). A scaled and/or dimensioned site plan, printed to scale, showing the proposed location of the new home, driveway and other site improvements needs to be provided.

Mr. Marino said that Planning Consultant Elmiger had not been aware he already had a fence permit; therefore this information was not needed.

Consultant Elmiger said that the comment just quoted did not relate to the permit. Instead it related to the HDC's understanding of what was going to happen on the property. Additionally, the second comment was still relevant:

An elevation drawing of the proposed home also needs to be provided to assist the Commission in determining if the proposed fence design is appropriate for the proposed structure.

Mr. Marino said that he was not fencing a home on the vacant property; he was enhancing the entire property.

In response to a question from Commissioner Field, Mr. Marino said that currently there was no sidewalk. Additionally, he had spoken with Public Works Director Gallogly about – in the future – giving cash in lieu of a sidewalk. It would actually be very difficult to put a sidewalk there.

In response to a further question from Commissioner Field, Mr. Marino agreed it was likely he would sell the vacant lot.

Commissioner Field commented that if a house were already on the property, the Ordinance would not permit the fence in the front yard.

Mr. Marino repeated that he already had a permit, and further, had ordered the fence.

Commissioner Argenta gave some history of this property and of the Zoning Ordinance regarding fences. At the August 17, 2011 HDC meeting, neighbor Michael Rowan had brought a concern to the HDC regarding the fence on the subject property. Prior to 2009, the Ordinance allowed front yard fences no greater than 36” high on parcels in excess of 2 acres and with 200 feet of frontage. In 2009 the Zoning Ordinance was revised and this language was omitted. In July 2010 Mr. Marino applied for a variance from the BZA; he was turned down twice. In June 2011 the Planning Commission amended the Zoning Ordinance to include the omitted language.

Commissioner Argenta referred to the Consultant’s letter regarding a lot split on this property:

Lot 305 contains a residential building and is 2.3 acres in size; Lot 306 is vacant and is 1.07 acres in size.

To determine allowable location of the fence, the applicant needs to provide the most recent survey of the lot that will contain the fence, and the size of the lot.

Mr. ~~Marino~~ Marino said that he was fencing the entire property, and the permit was for the entire property. It was taxed as a single property. He referred the Commission to the drawing submitted this evening.

Commissioner Argenta noted that the drawing was dated 2/2/95. The most current property boundaries were shown on a map Mr. Argenta had picked up from the City yesterday, and showed “Parcel D” divided into two lots: 455-305 and 455-306. This would be the only lot in the Historic District that allowed a fence in the front yard. Was the permit issued before or after the lot split? He was concerned that the HDC would be approving something that was in violation of the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. ~~Marino~~ Marino said that these were two individual lots contained in a larger lot. He reiterated that he had a fence permit. The lot was still recorded as a single lot.

In response to a question from Commissioner Argenta, Planning Consultant Elmiger said that the permit was issued August 29, 2014.

Vice Chair Hoffman said that the HDC was concerned with the appropriateness of fence material and style. Vice Chair Hoffman asked Planning Consultant Elmiger to follow up with City staff regarding concerns about the Zoning Ordinance and the permitting process in this case.

Commissioner Vernacchia thought the HDC was bound by the issued permit. Commissioner Field was concerned that the permit was issued in error. The vacant lot was going to be sold. If a property owner came in and asked for a fence on that lot while or after a house was being built, they would be denied. The City should look at this permit again and make sure it did not result in an ordinance violation.

Mr. ~~Marino~~ Marino asked for a conditional approval, based on tonight’s discussion.

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

Vice Chair Hoffman opened the meeting for public comment. Hearing none, he returned the item to the Commission.

Motion Vernacchia, support by Gudritz, to grant a Notice to Proceed, referencing the Northville Historic District Design Standards 3.4 fences and 3.21 materials, with the following condition:

- Fence permit be reviewed by the City for compliance with the Zoning Ordinance.

Motion carried 4-1 (Argenta opposed).

CASE #5

**MISHELLE LUSSIER
102 E. MAIN**

PAINT

Mishelle Lussier was present on behalf of this application, which was to repaint the façade of the building at 102 E. Main. She presented a photograph of the existing building, and showed sample proposed colors, which were Benjamin Moore Kendall Charcoal (HC 166) and Benjamin Moore Wickham Gray (HC-171).

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

Vice Chair Hoffman opened the meeting for public comment. Hearing none, he returned the item to the Commission.

MOTION Argenta, support by Vernacchia 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 5.18 paint colors as indicated on the application. Motion carried unanimously.

CASE #6

**LISA & JOSH MILITELLO
523 W MAIN STREET**

ROOF

Lisa Militello, 521 West Main Street, was present on behalf of this application, which was to replace the entire roof on a small cottage at 523 West Main Street. Ms. Militello explained that 521 and 523 West Main Street were the same tax parcel. The roof of the cottage had caved in.

Ms. Militello showed photographs of the existing roof, and handed out a roof estimate by A.D.S. Construction L.L.C. She showed a sample of the three tabbed shingles that would be used, and noted that the color was Timberline Pewter Gray.

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

Vice Chair Hoffman opened the meeting for public comment. Hearing none, he returned the item to the Commission.

MOTION Argenta, support by Vernacchia 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 5.9 asphalt shingles and 5.18 color, for the Timberline Pewter Gray color as presented this evening. **Motion carried unanimously.**

CASE #7

**MIKE MALLOURE
500 W. CADY STREET**

DEMOLITION

As noted above in Approval of Agenda, Vice Chair Hoffman explained that this case was not being heard this evening. This case would be heard at the Public Hearing scheduled for October 22, 2014.

8. DISCUSSION

Sitting generators/air conditioning condensers

Planning Consultant Elmiger led the discussion on this item. At the HDC’s request, she had gathered information from other communities regarding their placement regulations for sitting generators and air conditioning condensers in historic districts. She distributed information from Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, New Baltimore, Stevens Point and Ypsilanti. All the Historic District Guidelines for these communities addressed mechanical equipment including generators, AC units, and satellite dishes. In all these communities the main strategy was to keep the equipment from being observed from the road, so that the equipment was either placed in the rear yard or was screened by landscaping, etc. Each community had its own differences, and these were probably coordinated with their individual zoning ordinances. Some prohibited satellite dishes from being affixed to or damaging historic structures.

From the audience, Planning Commission Chair Wendt commented that the Planning Commission was currently looking at the Northville ordinance regarding generators and air conditioning units. Vice Chair Hoffman suggested that the efforts of the HDC and the Planning Commission be coordinated. One question the HDC would like resolved was whether the equipment had to stay in the rear yard, or were side yard installations with appropriate screening also permitted.

Commissioner Field raised the issue of purview. Was the HDC excluded from approving equipment location, appropriately leaving this to Zoning Code enforcement by the City Building Inspector?

Commissioner Argenta noted that Bloomfield Township had clear diagrams of where such equipment could be placed and how it must be screened.

Vice Chair Hoffman spoke to the screening and noise issues involved. He thought the HDC would like for the Ordinance to reflect the fact that sitting generators had to cycle once a week or so for maintenance purposes. He wondered if the units should be screened in the rear yard as well as the side yard.

Commissioner Vernacchia thought the City, not the Historic District, should handle noise complaints. Commissioner Gudritz thought that the HDC’s purview was limited to whether the installation of any mechanical system detracted from or harmed the Historic District. The City should handle noise levels and nuisance complaints.

Planning Commission Chair Wendt noted that the new ordinance language would probably include a reference to noise level being no more than 65 decibels at the lot line. He also affirmed that the

proposed ordinance regarding generators and air conditioners would be shared with the HDC before final action was taken.

Consultant Elmiger said that once an Ordinance was approved by City Council she would work on Historic District Guidelines language regarding this issue.

Intensive level Historic District Survey

Planning Consultant Elmiger gave the background for this discussion item, explaining that the HDC had asked at the last meeting if she would research the possibility of applying for an Intensive Level Survey Grant with SHPO (Michigan State Historic Preservation Office), since SHPO did not provide grants for Reconnaissance Level Surveys.

Consultant Elmiger spoke with Historic Consultant Kristine Kidorff, who indicated she could complete an Intensive Level Survey, which survey would be a great help to the Historic District. Intensive Level Surveys found out information about each property, such as the date constructed, the original owners, and subsequent history. Intensive Level Surveys were also used to finalize boundaries. According to Ms. Kidorff, such a survey would aid the HDC in making better determinations of what properties in the Historic District were contributing.

Consultant Elmiger said according to Ms. Kidorff, an Intensive Level Survey would be at least \$20,000. The next step was to research what was involved in preparing a grant application and how much of the cost of the survey a grant would cover.

In response to a question from Commissioner Gudritz, Consultant Elmiger said that if a grant for an Intensive Level Survey was received, and if Ms. Kidorff was contracted to do the work, Ms. Kidorff would roll the work of a Reconnaissance Level Survey and an Intensive Level Survey into one effort.

Vice Chair Hoffman asked if a product of the survey was to give information on all structures or actually make a determination of what structures were contributing or non-contributing, historic or non-historic. Consultant Elmiger said that the survey would give information whereby recommendations could be made for determining a structure as contributing or non-contributing. As previously discussed by the HDC, property owners should also be able to weigh in, and the ultimate determination would be up to the HDC.

Commissioner Field said he understood that a determination of contributing did not equal a determination of historic. Consultant Elmiger thought this was correct but would need to verify. She added that one very strong positive for having a survey done was the benefits – in terms of federal tax credits – to a commercial building that was deemed contributing.

Vice Chair Hoffman asked if SHPO could provide the criteria they would use to determine contributing structures. Was the criteria set by the Secretary of Interior and thus consistent across the country or would the HDC be able to weigh in on the criteria used?

After brief further discussion, Vice Chair Hoffman thanked Consultant Elmiger on her work in this area.

Consultant Elmiger mentioned that she had modified the language in the Demolition Application to include the new information on structural engineers that had been discussed at the last HDC meeting. She handed out a copy of the revised document and suggested that the HDC add this as a discussion item in November.

In response to a question from Commissioner Argenta, Consultant Elmiger said that the Begonia Brothers Landscape Services and Supplies on Center Street was outside the Historic District.

In response to a question from Commissioner Field regarding construction at 208 Randolph Street, Consultant Elmiger said this also was outside the Historic District.

At this time audience member Bruce Michael of Trowbridge Companies asked to address the HDC. Vice Chair Hoffman recognized Mr. Michael, while noting that Mr. Michael was not on the agenda and the time for Public Hearing had passed.

Mr. Michael said that Trowbridge Companies had a purchase agreement on the Foundry Flask property and were seeking direction from the HDC regarding redeveloping the property. He said they planned to totally demolish before redeveloping.

It was the consensus of the Commission to hear Mr. Michael for a brief period, about five minutes. After brief discussion the comments from the Commission, as summarized by Vice Chairman Hoffman, included:

- Demolition required specific and significant due diligence, and was not a given. There was great reluctance to demolish anything within the Historic District.
- Mr. Michael should consider presenting conceptual plans for review, where no action would be taken.
- Mr. Michael should research the Historical Society archives for the history of that building and the history of manufacturing generally within the Historic District.
- Mr. Michael might want to attend the Public Hearing on ~~September~~ *October 22* regarding another proposed demolition.
- Mr. Michael could discover correct process by checking with City Hall staff. Consultant Elmiger said all the information regarding process was on the City's website.

ADJOURNMENT

Seeing that there was no further discussion, and after thanking the Commission for their good work this evening, Vice Chair Hoffman adjourned the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl McGuire
Recording Secretary

Approved as amended 11-19-2014