

NORTHVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
October 21, 2015
Wednesday 7:00 P.M. – Northville City Hall – Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:

Mayor Pro Tem Allen called the Historic District Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Allen, Argenta, Field, Gudritz (7:02 p.m.), Hoffman, Vernacchia
Absent: Johnson, Tartaglia (both excused)
Also Present: Planning Consultant Elmiger, Downtown Development Authority Director Ward

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Downtown Development Authority Director Ward addressed a concern brought to her by George Farah, owner of Le George Mediterranean Bistro, 124 E. Main Street, Northville, MI. Mr. Farah was exploring the idea of changing out the materials of his outdoor dining platform. The materials were very heavy and they found it difficult to find a crew that could install, tear down, and move them. Design guidelines – created for the two such uses in Northville – specified that the outdoor dining platform material had to be made of composite material, in gray or brown. Mr. Farah was wondering if the Board would consider a textured duck slate aluminum product with a non-skid treatment for flooring material on the deck, which would be a much lighter and easier product to use. DDA Director Ward showed samples of the required composite material and the desired aluminum product.

Discussion followed. How would the proposed materials fit tightly one against the other, so that food would not fall below the deck? How would this material appear from a distance, especially vertical surfaces such as the skirting, etc.? The new material would be more expensive than the composite material. It was possible the suggested materials might fit within the guidelines as stated. Construction details would have to be further explored, especially the use of metal edging. Perhaps wood could be used at the edges, etc.

Downtown Development Authority Director Ward said that the outdoor dining platform would be taken down soon and be re-installed next April. She suggested that if the Commission's response was favorable to the requested change of material, Mr. Farah could make formal application to the HDC, requesting either an exception or an amendment to the guidelines.

Commissioner Field suggested that a subcommittee look at this proposed change. After discussion Mayor Pro Tem Allen appointed Commissioners Argenta and Field to this subcommittee.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION Hoffman, support by Gudritz, to approve the agenda as published. Motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES: September 16, 2015

MOTION Vernacchia, support by Argenta, to approve the minutes of September 16, 2015 as published. Motion carried unanimously.

5. REPORTS:

A. CITY ADMINISTRATION: None

- B. CITY COUNCIL:** None
- C. PLANNING COMMISSIONER:** None
- D. OTHER COMMUNITY/GOVERNMENTAL LIAISONS:** None

6. PUBLIC HEARING: None.

7. CASES TO BE HEARD – BY CASE:

CASE #1

**KINDRED SPIRITS/GRAPHIC VISIONS
103 S. CENTER**

SIGN

Sandy Mustonen, Graphic Visions Inc., 16857 Northville Road, Northville MI 48167, was present on behalf of this application, which was to install a new projecting sign on the front facade at 103 S. Center Street. The sign would not be illuminated and no lighting was proposed. Ms. Mustonen referenced the illustrations and schematics in the Commissioners' packets, and presented material and color samples. They were constructing a custom aluminum bracket with an aluminum composite panel, double sided. Instead of paint colors they were doing a digital print, matching Pantone colors 1815C Burgundy and 1550C Gold.

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

Mayor Pro Tem Allen opened the meeting for public comment. Hearing none, he returned the item to the Commission.

MOTION Hoffman, support by Vernacchia, to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as presented, in particular Northville Historic District Design Standards 4-21 materials, 4-24 signs, and 5-18 paint and colors (for ink). **Motion carried unanimously.**

CASE #2

**ALAN LAING (Returning)
525 LINDEN CT.**

**COLOR, DOORS, LIGHTING,
PORCHES, DESIGN CHANGES**

Gregory Presley, Presley Architecture, 108 N. Center, Suite 205, Northville, MI 48167, was present on behalf of this application, which was a returning application. This application was first heard at the August 19, 2015 meeting. At that meeting, the applicant stated that they would return with information regarding the exterior colors, design of pedestrian and garage doors, and lighting.

This submittal also included the following architectural changes:

1. Added a porch east of the master bedroom
2. Added a master suite bump-out on the north side
3. Added a covered porch facing west
4. Redesigned the garage so that it was smaller with no loft storage
5. Redesigned the breezeway to connect the main structure and garage

Mr. Presley distributed drawings that showed a change to the garage.

Mr. Presley described the changes to the original plan. They were adding a sitting porch on the front – doing this did not put them outside the lot coverage limits. Also included were changes to the back deck, a few more windows, and other minor changes. The garage had the stairwell

removed, since the loft had also been removed. Other changes included two separated doors. The cross gable was centered over the two garage doors; this was the same style as proposed at the August 19 meeting, but with the doors as shown. They had also done the height calculation for the garage, and this met height requirements.

Mr. Presley showed color samples for the building as Benjamin Moore HC-168 “Chelsea Gray.” The deck material was Azek 1x6 T&G “Walnut Grove.” Other colors and materials were as listed in Mr. Presley’s letter to the HDC dated September 30, 2015 and which was in the Commissioners’ packets. He presented manufacturer’s specs for the lights and doors. The front porch pillars would be tapered polycarbonate Tuscan Column.

Commissioner Field asked about the breezeway. Mr. Presley said that this was a covered walkway, with no windows at this point. This would not be habitable space.

Brief discussion followed regarding what was defined as habitable space. Planning Consultant Elmiger read the definition in the Ordinance of habitable space as: “Is a space in a structure for living, sleeping, eating or cooking. Bathrooms, toilet compartments, closets, halls, storage or utilities spaces and similar areas are not considered habitable spaces.” Ultimately this zoning issue – whether the breezeway was a hallway, for instance – would be decided by the Building Official.

MOTION Gudritz, support by Hoffman, to accept the application as complete. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Pro Tem Allen opened the meeting for public comment. Hearing none, he returned the item to the Commission.

MOTION by Argenta, support by Gudritz, to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the materials as presented this evening, referencing the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular Standards 9 and 10, and Northville Historic District Design Standards 3-8 doors, 3-10 porches, 3-14 garages and carports, 3-17 height (for the garage), 3-21 materials, 3-23 decks (for the porches), and 5-18 paint and colors. Motion carried unanimously.

CASE #3

**NORTHVILLE DDA
COMERICA COMMUNITY CONNECTION**

**COMMUNITY CONNECTION
BRICK REPLACEMENT**

Downtown Development Authority Director Ward was present on behalf of this application, which was to repair an area of exterior brick near the parking lot entrance to the Comerica Walkway, located at 125 E. Main Street. The area in need of repair was on the west wall outside the double doors to the vestibule area. This application fell under the category of “Porch Reconstruction and Other Repairs.”

DDA Director Ward referred to photographs in the Commissioners’ packets of deteriorating brick and to brick samples that she had brought this evening. This wall was originally an interior wall. Exposure to the elements had caused the damage to the brick. They did not have enough historic brick to make the repairs and were proposing to use the same brick and mortar that had already been used on the east wall, exterior vestibule, near the parking lot doors. This would be a floor to ceiling repair.

Commissioner Field pointed out the decorative rows of vertical brick on the photographs on Attachment 1b. Could the repair work follow this same pattern?

Commissioner Argenta thought that there might be an interior water leak from the roof of the structure causing the bricks to pop out. Water leakage could also be related to the construction of the downspout adjacent to this wall. DDA Director Ward said she would follow up on this.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hoffman, DDA Director Ward said the entryway would not have to be removed for this repair.

**MOTION Argenta, support by Hoffman, to accept the application as complete.
Motion carried unanimously.**

Mayor Pro Tem Allen opened the meeting for public comment. Hearing none, he returned the item to the Commission.

MOTION by Hoffman, support by Gudritz, 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 4-21 materials and 5-4 preserve masonry. Motion carried unanimously.

CASE #4

**NORTHVILLE DDA
VARIOUS LOCATIONS DOWNTOWN**

**PEDESTRIAN/CYCLIST
DIRECTIONAL DECALS**

Downtown Development Authority Director Ward was present on behalf of this application, which was to install pavement decals on sidewalks along six roads within the City. The purpose of the decals was to direct pedestrians and cyclists between Hines Park and Maybury State Park.

DDA Director Ward said the purpose of The Link was to familiarize users with the short 2.5 mile connection between Maybury State Park and Hines Park. It was designed to assist users in identifying routes to destination, and was meant to support the development of a healthy community by promoting non-motorized transportation. The sidewalk decals would be 12” circles with associated arrows to support destinations; their small size would exempt them from the permitting process. The stickers would be placed in various places as shown on the map (Attachment 1a) in the Commissioners’ packets. The locations in the Historic District would include Randolph, Wing, Center, Main, Cady and Griswold Streets.

The decals would be made out of outdoor vinyl/Streetgrip material, with a life expectancy of 5-7 years. They would be similar in color to the example indicated in the circled illustration on Attachment 1b in the packets.

The cost was \$40.00 per application.

Commissioner Field wondered if these should be added to existing vertical signs rather than putting them on the ground. This made more sense to him than having 2-3 different sign systems in the District. DDA Director Ward said that they didn’t want to add too many things to the new wayfinding signs. For pedestrians the orientation was down.

Commissioner Argenta said that these signs were components of a non-motorized path, done by the group creating The Link project. There would be five in the downtown area, spaced far apart, and were small. He did not have a problem with these signs.

There was brief roundtable discussion regarding the pedestrian and cycling paths available as a result of this project. This promoted easy connection from Hines to Maybury Parks and was part of a larger regional system.

Planning Consultant Elmiger advised that these signs were considered directional signs, and thus came under the HDC's jurisdiction.

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

Mayor Pro Tem Allen opened the meeting for public comment. An audience member said that as a cyclist, he would like to familiarize himself with this new pathway/sign system.

MOTION by Hoffman, support by Field, to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness, referencing the Northville Historic District Design Standards 4-24 signs and 5-18 paint and color. Motion carried unanimously.

CASE #5

**NORTHVILLE DDA
VARIOUS LOCATIONS DOWNTOWN**

**RAINWORKS SIDEWALK
APPLICATION**

Downtown Development Authority Director Ward was present on behalf of this application, which was to provide information regarding a potential art project involving temporary sidewalk art installations at various locations downtown. DDA Director Ward referred to materials in the packets, including examples of patterns and art.

After a brief roundtable discussion, the Consensus of the Commission was that DDA Director Ward return to the HDC with further details of this project at a future meeting.

HISTORIC DISTRICT SURVEY STATUS

Referring to her memo of October 13, 2015, Planning Consultant Elmiger gave an update on the Historic District Survey Status. The memo summarized previously provided information. If the HDC wanted to pursue a Historic District Survey, they should consider requesting that the City Council consider applying for a State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) grant for an intensive-level survey.

Mayor Pro Tem Allen supported moving forward with this City Council request.

MOTION by Vernacchia, support Gudritz, that the Historic District Commission recommend that the City Council consider applying for the SHPO grant for an intensive level survey. Motion carried unanimously.

7. DISCUSSION:

PROCESS TO MODIFY HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

Mayor Pro Tem Allen introduced this item by discussing two properties that had been considered for additions to the Historic District:

- Large parcel on Randolph Street. Mayor Pro Tem Allen commented that there wasn't anything really historical around this property and more importantly there were slope issues that affected a developer's ability to construct homes with a Victorian caliber. Right now for the sale price a developer would need to build 7 homes to make the parcel work financially, but 7 homes required a different road design pattern, including 6% slopes. So far developers felt the costs were too high to move that much dirt for 7 homes. Five homes would be more doable, but those homes would have a 15 % slope and would probably require an orientation of house and garage that would make building to Historic District standards very difficult.
- Foundry Flask parking lot. Mayor Pro Tem Allen explained that the actual building was in the Historic District, but the parking lot that was not. Building and parking lot were being marketed as one piece, and really could not be marketed any other way because one parcel was the building itself. Because of Master Plan designation there was a very strong chance that a developer would propose a Planned Unit Development, which gave the Planning Commission control as well as the HDC having its jurisdiction over the part of the property in the Historic District. There was virtually no other way to develop this parcel.

Planning Consultant Elmiger said that the process to change the boundary of a Historic District was the same as establishing a new district. She showed a schematic from the Assessor showing what part of the Foundry Flask area was in the Historic District. Should the HDC wish to move forward with changing the Historic District Boundary, the process for doing this was laid out in Consultant Elmiger's October 13 memo to the Commission.

Roundtable discussion followed and discussion items – all of which were directed toward the Foundry Flask parking lot – included:

- The division between the HDC District and the parking lot by Foundry Flask was at the actual parcel line. Previous drawings seemed to show the Historic District cut Lot 68 in half, but this did not appear to be the case.
- It appeared that the cost for making a change in the District was negligible and was basically the work of a committee.
- It appeared that an amendment to the Historic District would not be particularly time consuming.
- The only thing that had to be researched for this amendment would be the parcels under consideration. However, Planning Consultant Elmiger said she would verify this with SHPO.
- Perhaps the HDC should act regarding the Foundry Flask parking lot before a viable proposal came in for development. Moving forward on this would provide the City with insurance against inappropriate development and could potentially eliminate future battles regarding lighting, signage, etc.
- Requesting that the parking lot be included in the Historic District would have to be based on sound rationale. This research had yet to be performed. Assessment standards were outlined on page 2 of Consultant Elmiger's October 13, 2015 memo under *Step 4: Evaluate the Resources in the Proposed District*.
- Process included making a recommendation to City Council to appoint a committee to study this, which would include 5-7 members, one of which would be from the HDC.
- One advantage to a property owner of a commercial building in an Historic District was that certain Federal tax credits might be available. This would probably not apply to new construction or a parking lot, however.
- Perhaps someone should approach the property owner regarding this issue.
- The HDC's charge was to protect the Foundry Flask building. The front piece by the sidewalk was definitely historic, but there were holes in the roof allowing the elements to cause

demolition by neglect. The back part of the building was built in the 1960's – 1970's. The HDC could order the building secured, as could the Building Official

Mayor Pro Tem Allen emphasized that the two parcels had to be marketed together and could not practically be separated. A Planned Unit Development would give control to the City regarding design and architecture for a new development.

Commissioner Field indicated he was ready to make a motion. He supported studying the annexation of the parking lot adjacent to the Historic District.

MOTION by Field, support by Hoffman that the Historic District Commission ask City Council to approve a study committee for purposes of looking at the Historic District possible annexation in particular of the piece of property known as Foundry Flask parking lot. **Motion carried 5-1 (Allen opposed).**

8. ADJOURNMENT:

Seeing that there was no further comment, Mayor Pro Tem Allen adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl McGuire
Recording Secretary

Approved as published 11/18/15