

CITY OF MUSKEGON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES

December 3, 2019

Chairperson J. Hilt called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and roll was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Hilt, K. George, L. Wood, D. Warren, A. Riegler, K. Panozzo

MEMBERS ABSENT: S. Radtke

STAFF PRESENT: J. Pesch, D. Renkenberger

OTHERS PRESENT: J. Wilder, M. Belt, Architect for 512 W Webster; F. Madrid, Home Depot for 416 W Webster Ave; J. Zappacosta for 315 W. Webster; A. Nulf, 1314 Peck St.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of November 5, 2019, was made by D. Warren, supported by K. George and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Case 2019-27 – 427 W. Muskegon Avenue (Siding). Applicant: Brent Playford. District: Houston. Current Function: Residential. J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to replace all existing siding with a treated engineered wood lap siding. The work has been partially completed. Similar residing work was approved at the November 6, 2018 HDC meeting but for the southwest façade only. The motion from that meeting reads as follows: “A motion that the HDC approve the request to re-side the southwest façade of the structure using a treated engineered wood lap siding with a smooth texture as long as the necessary permits are obtained, was made by A. Riegler, supported by K. Panozzo and unanimously approved, with J. Hilt, S. Radtke, L. Wood, K. Panozzo; D. Warren and A. Riegler voting aye.”

J. Hilt stated that the siding had already been removed, so it was not possible to tell what the condition of it was. B. Playford stated that it was in poor condition; he had not realized that the previous HDC approval on this building was for the southwest façade only. J. Pesch provided photos of the siding before it was removed. D. Warren observed that the new siding looked wider than the old siding. B. Playford confirmed that the new siding was 6 inches wide and the previous siding was 4 inches wide.

A. Riegler arrived at 4:15 pm.

J. Pesch stated that, based on HDC files, the original wood siding was previously covered with asbestos siding. K. George asked if any trim would be replaced. B. Playford stated that he intended to replace the trim with Smart Trim, but the architectural details on the front of the building would not be altered.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to replace all existing siding with a 6-inch treated engineered wood lap siding as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained, was made by L. Wood, supported by K. Panozzo and unanimously approved, with J. Hilt, K. George, L. Wood, D. Warren, A. Riegler, and K. Panozzo voting aye.

Case 2019-28 – 512 W. Webster Avenue (Siding, Porch, Windows). Applicant: Community enCompass. District: Clay-Western. Current Function: Residential. J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to make several changes to the original plans for the house. They would like to 1) replace the three windows on the second floor of the front façade with vinyl windows of the same size and configuration (to match the rest of the house's existing vinyl replacement windows), 2) rebuild the porch columns to their original size and finish the bases with brick veneer, 3) add poured concrete steps and sidewalls to the front porch and finish the sidewalls with brick veneer, 4) replace the rotted wood windows on the rear porch with vinyl windows, 5) replace the side and rear doors with craftsman-style doors, 6) replace the vinyl siding on the house with a treated engineered wood lap siding and side the garage with the same material to match, 7) eliminate the pair of windows on the southwest façade closest to the street (facing 520 W. Webster), and 8) make changes to the door on the northeast façade of the house. The applicant would provide additional information on that. Photographs of the house showing the Webster Avenue façade where the front pair of windows on the left side of the house were proposed to be eliminated, the proposed brick work that had been started on the right side of the front staircase, the view of the rear porch from alley and the door on northeast façade were provided and reviewed by the board.

K. George discussed the requests as listed in the above staff report. She stated that all windows except the three on the 2nd floor of the front façade had already been replaced with vinyl windows before the house was moved into a historic district. During the move, the porch was compromised and the support posts were no longer sufficient to support the roof. She stated that they would like to install poured concrete steps instead of wood, and that the steps on most houses in this area were poured concrete. The homeowner also wanted to add brick to the front porch to match the porch supports. K. George stated that the house was in between two larger old homes, and she thought the brick would help this house fit in better. The rear porch also needed work to stabilize it after the move. The wood windows were damaged and they wanted to replace them with vinyl to match the rest of the windows. She stated that, regarding item #5, the side door no longer worked so it needed to be replaced; they wanted to replace the back door also, to match the new side door, as the back door was not original. The front door would remain. The house had been sided with vinyl before being moved to the historic district, and they had originally wanted to side the garage with vinyl to match the house. However, some of the vinyl siding was damaged during the move and they now wished to side the house and garage with a treated engineered wood lap siding. There was no lap siding underneath the vinyl, as it had been previously stripped off. Per item #7, the homeowners wanted to remove the two windows near the front of the house on the SW façade, as they were only a few feet from the neighbor's house, and they preferred to install a fireplace inside on the wall where the windows were located. She stated that fireplaces were common in Craftsman-style homes. A. Riegler asked if the windows were original to the house. J. Wilder stated that they were, and if removal was approved, they would be covered with siding when the house was re-sided. K. George explained #8 of the request: to make changes to the door on the NE façade of the house. When the house was placed

on its foundation after the move, the indoor stairway to the basement did not meet current building code. There was not enough space to meet the code now, because it required that the steps be wider, but the chimney was in the way. They proposed to add a bump-out where the east side door was, to accommodate a landing for the stairs. J. Wilder stated that the door would then face the rear of the house. M. Belt stated that the headroom, run, and rise of the basement stairway could not meet the current building code requirement, as there was not enough room to accommodate the space required. D. Warren asked if the house was in a historic district prior to being moved to its current location, and if they knew the age of the home. K. George stated that the house was estimated to be about 100 years old and it was not previously located in a historic district; it sat on a corner lot in the Nims neighborhood. A. Riegler stated that, although HDC standards did not allow for the removal of windows, this house was not in a historic district before. K. George stated that one side of the house only had 3 small windows, so she didn't think that removing the two requested would throw off the aesthetic of the home. Regarding the addition of a bump-out on the side to accommodate the new stairwell, A. Riegler suggested widening the bump-out to match the size of the dormer above it. J. Wilder stated that he planned to enclose the side yard with a fence in the future, and the bump-out wouldn't be very visible. K. George stated that the side proposed for the bump-out was currently flat and plain with few windows, so a bump-out would add some interest. Board members and the applicant discussed the request to eliminate the two side windows, and what affect the standards would have on a house that was just moved into a historic district. A. Riegler asked if the motion could be split into multiple motions; staff affirmed that it could.

A motion that the HDC approve requests 1 through 6 as follows: 1) replace the three windows on the second floor of the front façade with vinyl windows of the same size and configuration which will match the house's existing vinyl replacement windows, 2) rebuild the porch columns to their original size and cover the bases with brick veneer, 3) add poured concrete steps and sidewalls to the front porch and finish the sidewalls with brick veneer, 4) replace the damaged, rotted windows on the rear porch with vinyl windows, 5) replace the side and rear doors with craftsman-style doors as shown in the December 3rd, 2019 HDC Staff Report, and 6) replace the vinyl siding on the house with a treated engineered wood lap siding and side the garage with the same material to match with the conditions that the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained, and to have a separate vote on items 7 and 8 was made by A. Riegler, supported by K. Panozzo and unanimously approved, with J. Hilt, L. Wood, D. Warren, A. Riegler, and K. Panozzo voting aye. K. George abstained from voting, as she was representing the applicant.

A motion that the HDC approve request #7 as stated in the staff report, to eliminate the pair of windows on the southwest façade closest to the street (facing 520 W. Webster), was made by D. Warren and supported by K. Panozzo and was denied, with D. Warren voting aye and J. Hilt, L. Wood, A. Riegler, and K. Panozzo voting nay. K. George abstained from voting, as she was representing the applicant.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to build a bump-out on the northeast side of the home where the current side door is located, with the suggestion that the size of the bump-out match and align with the existing dormer above it and that a hip roof be considered with the conditions that the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained, was made by A. Riegler, supported by L. Wood and unanimously approved, with J. Hilt, L.

Wood, D. Warren, A. Riegler, and K. Panozzo voting aye. K. George abstained from voting, as she was representing the applicant.

D. Warren left at 5:00 PM.

Case 2019-29 – 315 W. Webster Avenue (Sign). Applicant: Hackley Public Library. District: National Register. Current Function: Institutional. J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to install a new, 36” wide by 48” tall aluminum panel ground sign supported by 4” x 4” wood posts in the yard facing the intersection of W. Webster Avenue and Third Street. A rendering showing the proposed location with the post and panel sign as viewed from the corner of W. Webster and Third Street was provided.

Board members concurred that the sign met HDC standards and had no questions.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to install a new, 36” wide by 48” tall aluminum panel ground sign supported by 4” x 4” wood posts in the yard facing the intersection of W. Webster Avenue and Third Street as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained, was made by L. Wood, supported by J. Hilt and unanimously approved, with J. Hilt, K. George, L. Wood, A. Riegler, and K. Panozzo voting aye.

Case 2019-30 – 416 W. Webster Avenue (Windows). Applicant: Home Depot USA, Inc. (Robert Lusby, Property Owner). District: National Register. Current Function: Residential. J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to remove and replace five wood windows on the house (one 53”x77” picture window on the front façade and four 29”x70” double hung windows on the second floor) with ~~vinyl~~ vinyl-wrapped wood windows (Staff was notified of this window specification and the motion has been updated to reflect this). The applicant is also requesting to remove and replace four basement windows with new windows. Pictures of the house showing the windows proposed to be replaced were provided to board members.

F. Madrid from Home Depot, who had provided a quote for replacing the windows, spoke on behalf of the applicant. He stated that the picture window was a 70/30 split and that style of window was no longer made. The material on the new windows would be a wood-look Fibrex and they wished to replace the picture window with a fixed picture window with no separation. K. Panozzo asked if the picture window was original. J. Pesch stated that he was unsure; the photo he had was from 1946 and it showed the picture window. K. George stated that she was not comfortable replacing a front-facing window with a different style, and asked what condition the window was in. F. Madrid stated that there were dry-rotting issues with the wood. J. Hilt asked if the windows were repairable. F. Madrid stated that it was not something that Home Depot could do. F. Madrid stated that it might be possible to join two picture windows to form a divided window, but that doing so would create a six-inch-wide mullion where the frames meet. K. Panozzo asked if they intended to remove and replace the entire basement windows, and if they could be opened and were operable. F. Madrid stated that they would save as much of the surrounding wood as possible, but some would not be salvageable due to the removal process. The replacement windows would not open, but would look the same as the windows currently in place.

Board members discussed the front picture window and decided to separate that request from the others, for the purpose of making a motion.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to remove and replace four wood double hung windows on the house (the four 29"x70" double hung windows on the second floor) with vinyl-wrapped wood windows of the same size and configuration and to remove and replace four basement windows with new windows with two glass panes of the same appearance as the current windows and with sculptured mullions, as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained, was made by K. George, supported by J. Hilt and unanimously approved, with J. Hilt, K. George, L. Wood, A. Riegler, and K. Panozzo voting aye.

A motion that the HDC deny the request to remove and replace one 53"x77" picture window on the front façade of the house was made by K. George, supported by K. Panozzo and approved, with J. Hilt, K. George, and L. Wood voting aye, and A. Riegler and K. Panozzo voting nay.

L. Wood left at 5:35 pm.

Case 2019-31 – 1314 Peck (Trim/Cladding). Applicant: April Nulf. District: McLaughlin. Current Function: Residential. J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to install vinyl soffit and aluminum trim to the fascia of the house and the garage. The two window bays on the north and south facades will not be altered.

A. Nulf stated that there was not much of the original workmanship left on the inside of the house. She needed to repair the outside soffit and fascia, as animals were getting in through holes. K. George stated that the HDC preferred to see repairs made to the current structure rather than replacing items, as even minor changes to the architectural details would change the look of the house. A. Nulf explained that she had been trying to find a contractor to do the repairs, but she had been unable to get any of them to call her back. K. George stated that she could help her find a contractor, and suggested that this request be tabled.

A motion that the HDC table the request to install vinyl soffit and aluminum trim to the fascia of the house and the garage was made by K. George, supported by J. Hilt and unanimously approved, with J. Hilt, K. George, A. Riegler and K. Panozzo voting aye.

OLD BUSINESS

Case 2019-20 – 1575-79 Peck (Doors). J. Pesch stated that he noticed that the property owner had replaced the unapproved replacement doors that had been installed on this house with new doors more in line with the HDC local standards. Photos of the doors were provided, offering a side-by-side comparison of the original doors, the denied replacement doors, and the doors currently on the house. The homeowner had been denied approval to install the previous, windowless doors, after they had completed the work without HDC review. The new doors with windows were closer in appearance to the original doors and samples provided in the HDC local standards.

OTHER

HDC Enforcement – A number of recent cases, unfortunately dealing with both unapproved and denied work, have led to a review of Historic District Commission’s procedures for enforcement on such work. Staff continues to evaluate this process. J. Pesch provided a sample enforcement letter that he had created followed by a brief discussion. H. Mitchell was also present, and stated that she was a Planning staff member who could assist J. Pesch with enforcement issues. H. Mitchell shared a sample of a municipal civil infraction ticket that the HDC is empowered to issue for unapproved work as part of enforcement procedures.

Public Art – The HDC local standards do not cover the topic of public art, although an assortment of public art pieces have been installed in Muskegon’s historic districts in recent years. The topic has been brought to staff, requesting discussion with the board. Because of the late hour, it was decided that this topic would be discussed at the next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.