

CITY OF MUSKEGON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES

June 6, 2023

Chairperson S. Radtke called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. and roll was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: S. Radtke, J. Huss, T. Emory, G. Borgman

MEMBERS ABSENT: D. Gregersen, excused; K. George, excused

STAFF PRESENT: J. Pesch, W. Webster, J. Eckholm

OTHERS PRESENT: C. Davis (Nelson House); J. Panici (Nelson House)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of May 2, 2023 was made by G. Borgman, supported by T. Emory and approved with S. Radtke, J. Huss, T. Emory, and G. Borgman voting aye.

OTHER BUSINESS

These items were moved to the start of the meeting because no applicant was present for the case under New Business.

Nelson House Update – Staff provided an update regarding current and future efforts to promote the project. J. Pesch introduced C. Davis, a resident of the McLaughlin Historic District that had volunteered his time to create a promotional video on the efforts to save the house and the board reviewed the video. C. Davis explained how he became involved, noting that the message of the video would likely differ now that the City planned to budget for the cost of moving the Nelson House. J. Pesch summarized the City’s plan – in which \$200,000 was included in the proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year – and explained that he and Tim Harvey, another City staff member, had been scheduling walkthroughs of the house with potential house moving contractors.

J. Eckholm, Director of Development Services, provided an overview of the next steps for the project, the first of which would be City Commission approval of the proposed budget. The City planned to put the project out for bid. J. Pesch stated that the Muskegon Public School district was also collecting estimates for demolition work – one with the house included and one without – and planned to have that work completed in the spring of 2024. J. Eckholm added that the vacant lot where the house was proposed to be moved (382 W. Muskegon Avenue) would need to be removed from an existing development agreement that called for new infill housing on the site, but that it would not be an issue. He explained that the costs associated with moving the house would be reimbursed by the new lot’s location in a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district.

The board asked about potential contingencies in the sale of the house and the bay window on the north side of the house that was thought to be removed for the move. J. Pesch stated that he and Tim Harvey would be discussing the bay window with the contractors. J. Eckholm explained that it was likely the purchase agreement would restrict the buyer to an owner-occupant and that it would also be a development agreement that required a construction start date and completion date within a specific timeframe. A reverter clause would allow the City to take the house back should a potential buyer not complete restoration work within that to-be-determined timeframe.

S. Radtke asked if there was a plan for architectural salvage for the remaining buildings on-site that were slated for demolition. J. Eckholm stated that the City was not involved in that side of the work, but that he understood

that the school district was planning to salvage architecturally significant components of the church building, and G. Borgman added that they were also looking for the descendants of the families that originally donated the church's stained-glass windows.

HDC Public Outreach – This topic was moved to this meeting from the May meeting. The board discussed various means of better engaging with residents of the historic districts and the general public and considered the possibility of the HDC having a social media presence. The board discussed the various types of posts that could be created. S. Radtke proposed a committee made up of board members that could meet to plan out content and a schedule for social media posts. S. Radtke volunteered to set up a committee meeting where those from the board that were interested could attend and discuss the topic further. C. Davis noted that he was a marketing manager professionally, and that he would be willing to attend the meeting as well to offer assistance, if desired.

The board also discussed updating the HDC brochure that had not been updated for many years. The board agreed to also discuss the needed revisions at the future committee meeting.

Board members reviewed a draft letter written by staff to be sent to residents of the historic districts. J. Pesch stated that he could incorporate any suggested changes and start mailing the letters.

NEW BUSINESS

Case 2023-09 – 1593 Jefferson St. – Solar Panels

Applicant: Frank Peterson - District: Jefferson - Current Function: Residential

The applicant was seeking approval to install a 20-panel roof-mounted solar array on the south- and west-facing roof surfaces of the detached garage and the flat roof section on the rear of the house. J. Pesch explained that the proposed locations of the panels would be hardly visible from the street, but could be seen from the alley.

The board reviewed the local standards' guidelines for solar panels. S. Radtke stated that the proposed work seemed to meet most of the requirements, but asked if it was shared what color the panels would be. J. Huss noted that the specifications showed an example photo with black panels.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to install a 20-panel roof-mounted solar array on the south- and west-facing roof surfaces of the detached garage and the flat roof section on the rear of the house to the location and installation specifications provided in the June 6th, 2023 HDC staff report as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by G. Borgman, supported by T. Emory and approved with J. Huss, G. Borgman, S. Radtke, and T. Emory voting aye.

OLD BUSINESS

100 Diana Avenue (Case 2023-08) – This case was reviewed and approved at the May meeting. J. Pesch informed the board that the applicant had to narrow the width of the approved 28'x28' detached garage by four feet to meet setback requirements. The board agreed that a 24'x28' garage was acceptable.

621 W. Western Avenue (Case 2022-21) – J. Pesch notified the board that the changes to the replacement window at this property which were listed as a condition of approval at the June 2022 HDC meeting had recently been completed.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:14 p.m.