

CITY OF MUSKEGON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES

June 1, 2021

Vice Chairperson A. Riegler called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. and roll was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: T. Emory, Muskegon, Michigan; A. Riegler, Muskegon, Michigan; D. Gregersen, Muskegon, Michigan, K. George, Muskegon, Michigan; S. Radtke, Newaygo, Michigan (arrived late)

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: J. Pesch; C. Cashin; L. Mikesell

OTHERS PRESENT: V. Thompson, 461 W. Webster; S. Thompson, 461 W. Webster; K. Huss, 421 W. Webster; S. Groeneveld (contractor), 421 W. Webster; D. Hippchen, 325 Houston; D. Engel, 299 Houston; H. Morey, 234 Houston; R. Blake (contractor), 234 Houston; C. Cockream, 557 W. Western

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of April 6, 2021, special meeting of April 22, 2021, and regular meeting of May 4, 2021 was made by K. George, supported by T. Emory and approved with A. Riegler, K. George, D. Gregersen, and T. Emory voting aye.

OLD BUSINESS

Case 2021-18 – 461 W. Webster – Fence

Applicant: Victoria and Steve Thompson - District: Houston - Current Function: Residential

J. Pesch presented the staff report. This was a walk-on case at the May 4, 2021 meeting, but was not reviewed due to time constraints. The applicant is seeking approval to replace an existing chain-link fence with a new five-foot tall white wooden privacy fence. The new fence will run perpendicular to the street, starting in the back yard and ending in-line with the front wall of the house. Staff has approved construction of the rear 64-feet of fence that meets the HDC's local standards for fences, but because those standards limit privacy fences to no more than four-feet in height beyond the midway point of the front and rear of the house, the final eight-feet of fencing, closest to the street cannot be approved by Staff as it does not conform with the local standards at the proposed height.

The HDC discussed how the fencing would look with a change in height from five feet to four feet. A. Riegler, D. Gregersen, and K. George agreed that stepping down the size of the fence for the last eight feet would not be rational. It was verified that the wrought iron fence parallel to the front of the house would remain, and only the chain link fence along the side yard would change.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to construct the remaining eight-feet of five-foot tall painted white wood privacy fence in the location of the existing chain-link fence on the south side of the house as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained, was made by K. George, supported by D. Gregersen and unanimously approved, with A. Riegler, T. Emory, K. George, and D. Gregersen voting aye.

Case 2021-14 – 421 W. Webster – Gutters and Downspouts/Rainchains

Applicant: Kevin & Jacquelyn Huss - District: Houston - Current Function: Residential

J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to add white gutters to three sides of the front and rear porches, installed on the soffits, and include two traditional downspouts at the outer corners of the front porch and two copper rainchains located on the outer corners of the rear porch. The HDC approved a similar request at the May 4, 2021 meeting with the condition that the downspouts be located where the front porch meets the house, but it has since been determined that the slope of the porch roof does not allow for the gutters to drain toward the house.

A. Riegler asked if the front porch roof was hipped style; K. Huss confirmed that it is and the overall porch has a slight slope towards the roadway. S. Groeneveld (contractor) mentioned that because the porch has settled over the years the gutters cannot be configured to drain towards the house. A. Riegler asked what the slope of the gutter was; Scott clarified that the gutters on the front of the house would start in the center of the house then slope down to the outer corners of the porch, and that on the side of the porch the gutters would start at the house and slope to the outer corners of the porch, where the downspouts would then come down the front porch columns.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to add white gutters to three sides of the front and rear porches, installed on the soffits, and include two traditional downspouts at the outer corners of the front porch and two copper rainchains located on the outer corners of the rear porch as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained, was made by K. George, supported by T. Emory and unanimously approved, with A. Riegler, T. Emory, K. George, and D. Gregersen voting aye.

NEW BUSINESS

Case 2021-19 – 325 Houston - Shutters

Applicant: Dollie and Tom Hippchen - District: Houston - Current Function: Residential

J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to install three sets of 15” x 43” shutters on the second story windows on the front facade of the house and another set of shutters on the first story picture window on the front facade of the house (to the left of the front door).

A. Riegler described the correct measurements that should be used for the shutters so that they appear appropriately-sized for the windows. D. Hippchen explained that the shutters in the photo were just an example and that she had a contractor that measured the windows for correct sizing of custom-ordered shutters.

The board and applicant discussed the larger second story windows and where the corner of those windows met the slope of the porch roof. A. Riegler was concerned that there would not be enough room on the inside lower corner of the windows for shutters of the correct size to fit without hitting the porch roof. A. Riegler and K. George agreed that shutters may not be appropriate for this style, D. Gregersen stated that in the south, shutters on this style of home may be appropriate for storm protection. A. Riegler and K. George agreed that if the window frames were painted black, like they were prior to new windows that were recently installed, the architectural detail and contrast on the front of the house would be restored. D. Gregersen suggested that if the shutters were sized to only the size of the glass panes that the shutters might fit without hitting the porch’s roofline.

The board decided to table the case until the contractor could provide actual measurements. The applicant agreed to this option.

A motion for HDC to table Case 2021-19 for 325 Houston was made by K. George and supported by S. Radtke.

Case 2021-20 – 299 Houston – Garage Door, Entry Door, Exterior Lights, Roof Structure

Applicant: David Engel - District: Houston - Current Function: Residential

J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to 1) remove the existing overhead garage doors and replace them with stained mahogany overhead garage doors of the same size and panel configuration, 2) replace the existing metal, side entry door with a salvaged mahogany paneled entry door with an arch window above, 3) remove the existing carriage lights and install new carriage lights on both sides of the garage doors, and 4) remove the double roof detail above the side entry door and replace it with siding to match the house.

The HDC discussed the garage doors. A. Riegler, K. George and D. Gregersen agreed that the mahogany garage doors would be fine. S. Radtke mentioned that there was not a lot of documentation about what the garage doors looked like in the past, so the proposed doors would be a vast improvement from the current doors.

The board moved on to discuss the entry door. K. George was concerned about the proposed door's arched transom window and suggested that that arched window be removed to allow the new mahogany door to better match the architecture. A. Riegler mentioned that the standards avoid creating historical conjecture, meaning that modern changes should minimize the addition of faux-historical architectural details. D. Gregersen mentioned possibly using a rectangular transom window instead of the arched window.

S. Radtke mentioned the possibility of bringing the doors and roofline together to create a single composition, visually linking the entry door with wide trim and a rectangular transom window to the roofline above the door, installing wider trim on the far-right side of the garage door, and moving the carriage lights onto the wide trim on the right side of the garage door and the left side of the entry door.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to remove the existing overhead garage doors and replace them with stained mahogany overhead garage doors of the same size and panel configuration as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained and that all other work be tabled pending additional drawings was made by S. Radtke, supported by K. George and unanimously approved, with S. Radtke, K. George, T. Emory, A. Riegler, and D. Gregersen voting aye.

Case 2021-21 – 234 Houston – Siding

Applicant: Heidi Morey - District: Houston - Current Function: Residential

A. Riegler presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to install vinyl siding on the house.

K. George asked why they applicant wanted to re-side the house. H. Morey stated that SAFEbuilt requested that they either paint or cover their current siding, due to chipping/peeling paint. A. Riegler mentioned that adding vinyl siding will destroy the detail at the corners of the porch. S. Radtke added that installing vinyl siding goes against the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as well as the HDC's local standards.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to install vinyl siding on the house as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by S. Radtke, supported by T. Emory and denied, with S. Radtke, K. George, T. Emory, A. Riegler, and D. Gregersen voting nay.

Case 2021-22 – 557 W. Western – Sign

Applicant: Corrine Cockream - District: Clay-Western - Current Function: Commercial

A. Riegler presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to install a new 1'-3" x 9'-4" wall sign and an interior neon tube "OPEN" sign.

D. Gregersen asked if the letters of the wall sign were individual letters. C. Cockream said that the sign will be black painted plywood with letters either painted or screen-printed in a copper-color onto the board. A. Riegler was concerned with how the sign would be mounted. S. Radtke mentioned that in a previous case the HDC required the sign be mounted into the mortar, not the brick.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to install a new 1'-3" x 9'-4" wall sign as proposed in the June 1, 2021 HDC Staff Report with the condition that the sign be mounted in such a way that it only ties into the mortar joints of the facade (rather than the brick units) as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by S. Radtke, supported by D. Gregersen and unanimously approved, with S. Radtke, K. George, T. Emory, A. Riegler, and D. Gregersen voting aye.

Case 2021-23 – 609 W. Western – Sign

Applicant: Michael Kordecki - District: Clay-Western - Current Function: Commercial

J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to install a new, 2'-0" x 11'-9" channel individual letter sign. A temporary banner sign was recently installed on the building.

The HDC discussed how the building had already strayed from its historic appearance and did not have many historic details or architectural significance. A. Riegler stated that the proposed size and design of this sign fit into the local standards, aside from the neon lighting.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to install a new, 2'-0" x 11'-9" channel individual letter sign on the front facade of the building with the condition that the sign be mounted in such a way that it only ties into the mortar joints of the facade (rather than the brick units) as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by S. Radtke, supported by T. Emory and unanimously approved, with S. Radtke, K. George, T. Emory, A. Riegler, and D. Gregersen voting aye.

OTHER BUSINESS

Future Meetings Policy - The April 1, 2021 Muskegon City Commission's approved resolution declaring a local state of emergency for the purpose of permitting the City Commission and other public bodies of the city to meet by electronic and telephonic means expired on May 31, 2021. That, combined with the first floor of City Hall having reopened to the public, and the recent changes to the statewide social distancing requirements, leaves the HDC with a number of options for how the board meets going forward:

1. Fully virtual meetings can continue through at least the end of 2021 under the emergency orders of the Muskegon County Commission.
2. Hybrid meetings where any combination of Historic District Commissioners, City Staff, applicants, and the general public could choose to meet in-person while those that do not wish to meet in person can participate virtually as long as meetings continue to be publicly broadcast live online using electronic and telephonic means.
3. Fully in-person meetings with Commissioners, Staff, applicants, and the public meeting in City Hall.

Staff is requesting that the HDC discuss and determine their preferred method of meeting.

A motion that the HDC begin meeting using a hybrid format at the next HDC meeting was made by S. Radtke, supported by A. Riegler and unanimously approved, with S. Radtke, K. George, T. Emory, A. Riegler, and D. Gregersen voting aye.

Public Comment Period – Time was allotted for public comment with contact information provided. No comments were received.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

CC