

CITY OF MUSKEGON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES

March 1, 2022

T. Emory called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. and roll was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: E. Trejo, J. Huss, T. Emory

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

STAFF PRESENT: J. Pesch

OTHERS PRESENT: G. Hansen (Hansons, 1516 Clinton), E. Rodriguez (126 Delaware), A. Briggs (CNS) and R. Badgerow (234 Houston), D. Snyder and E. Schroder (238 Houston)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 1, 2022 was made by E. Trejo, supported by J. Huss and approved with E. Trejo, J. Huss, and T. Emory voting aye.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Case 2022-08 – 1516 Clinton St. – Windows

Applicant: Samuel Ames (1-800-Hansons) - District: Clinton-Peck - Current Function: Residential

J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant was seeking approval to remove and replace four wood windows with vinyl windows of the same size (two on the north elevation, one on the west elevation, and one on the south elevation).

T. Emory asked if the windows that were on the house were the original windows, and G. Hansen stated that he did not know as he was asked to attend the meeting at the last minute as a substitute for the contractor working at this property. He explained that the windows would be installed from the interior so that the exterior of the house would be left intact.

J. Huss asked if the new window on the north elevation would replicate the unequal (2/3) panes of the current window. G. Hansen stated that such a product was available on special order, but it was not included on the specification sheet for the project. T. Emory noted that a number of windows appeared to have already been replaced on the house, and that she thought the original windows all would have had the smaller top pane. The board determined that the first-floor window on the north elevation in question was the only remaining window with the unequal split. J. Pesch stated that there was no documentation of HDC approval for the other windows on the house that had been replaced. E. Trejo stated that the local standards did allow for more flexibility in making changes to the side and rear elevations of the house.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to remove and replace four wood windows – two on the north elevation, one on the west elevation and one on the south elevation – with vinyl windows of the same size as long

as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by E. Trejo, supported by J. Huss and approved with E. Trejo, J. Huss, and T. Emory voting aye.

Case 2022-09 – 126 Delaware Ave. – Fence

Applicant: Ernesto Rodriguez - District: McLaughlin - Current Function: Residential

J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant was seeking approval to construct a six-foot-tall wood privacy fence along a portion of the north property line and along the east property line extending to the front wall of the house. Because the HDC local standards limited privacy fences to no more than four-feet in height beyond the midway point of the front and rear of the house, the final section of fencing, closest to the street could not be approved by Staff as it did not conform with the local standards at the proposed height.

E. Rodriguez explained that he wanted to build the fence in the location proposed to screen the property from the house next door, which was in poor condition, and to address the overgrown bushes which forced cars in the driveway to drive in the lawn to avoid being scratched by the bushes. He did not want to trim the bushes because doing so would further expose the neighboring house. The fence line in along the rear property line would be configured to avoid mature trees. J. Pesch explained that the neighboring house was not located in the historic district, and if it was not for the 20'-30' of fence that went beyond the midway point of the house, he would have staff approved the request.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to construct a six-foot-tall wood privacy fence along a portion of the north property line and along the east property line extending to the front wall of the house as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by E. Trejo, supported by J. Huss and approved with E. Trejo, J. Huss, and T. Emory voting aye.

J. Pesch reminded the applicant to obtain a development permit for the fence from the Planning Department before beginning construction.

Case 2022-10 – 234 Houston Ave. – Windows

Applicant: City of Muskegon CNS - District: Houston - Current Function: Residential

J. Pesch presented the staff report. The proposed work was tied to a lead abatement project through the City of Muskegon's Community and Neighborhood Services Department, and the applicant was seeking approval to remove and replace all remaining wood windows with wood windows of the same size and configuration. J. Pesch noted that the staff report incorrectly stated that the replacement windows would be vinyl.

T. Emory asked if the proposed replacement windows would match the appearance of the existing windows, specifically noting that the front porch contained a window with unequal (2/3) panes. R. Badgerow stated that the replacement window would be custom ordered to match the current one. The board noted that a second window similar to this was also found on the east elevation.

The board asked about the pair of fixed, decorative windows on the east and west elevations, located toward the front of the house. R. Badgerow stated that because they contained unique leaded glass, those windows would be sealed shut and left in place. J. Pesch noted that the windows on the rear elevation were of various sizes, faced an alley, and were likely the result of a series of additions over time. T. Emory asked if the lead paint on the windows could be scraped, leaving the original windows in place; R. Badgerow said that doing so would not be a permanent solution since the lead issues were mainly caused by flaking paint and dust created when the windows were opened and closed. J. Pesch stated that the replacement windows would negate the need for the existing aluminum storm windows, and R. Badgerow concurred.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to remove and replace all remaining wood windows – with the exception of one fixed wood window on the west elevation and one fixed wood window on the east elevation –

with wood windows of the same size and configuration as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by J. Huss, supported by E. Trejo and approved with E. Trejo, J. Huss, and T. Emory voting aye.

Case 2022-11 (Walk-on) – 238 Houston Ave. – Rehabilitation

Applicant: Joseph Heeren - District: Houston - Current Function: Vacant

The board agreed to review a walk-on case regarding a building rehabilitation project at 238 Houston Avenue that had previously been reviewed at the December 1, 2020 HDC meeting. The approved motion from that meeting had expired after one year from the date of approval, and the applicant was seeking an extension of that approval, with some changes.

J. Pesch shared the meeting minutes and approved motion from the December 2020 meeting. He explained that the photos of the building kept on file were outdated, and that the roof trusses were badly burned and had since been removed. D. Snyder said that the property owner had been working with the City to enter into a consent agreement dealing with the deficiencies cited at the building. In addition to the extension, changes being requested involved new windows, sills, siding, trim, and soffits.

The HDC discussed the proposed vinyl windows. Previous approval had called for replacement of destroyed, 24"x54" wood windows on the second floor in the front of the building by relocating the building's existing wood windows of the same size and appearance, and replacement of missing/damaged 24"x54" wood windows on the east and west elevations with vinyl windows with a faux-wood textured finish of the same size and appearance. D. Snyder explained that there would not be enough existing wood windows to reuse in the building, adding that the proposed vinyl replacement windows would have a smooth finish (the faux-woodgrain finish was no longer being manufactured), and they would match the mullion grid pattern found on the remaining wood windows.

The board moved on to discuss the proposed vinyl siding, trim, and sills, as well as the proposed aluminum soffits. Previous approval had called for installation of new engineered wood siding over the current siding with a profile that matched the existing 4" profile. E. Schroder, contractor for the project, stated that they were now requesting to install smooth, vinyl siding with a 3" reveal, a 6" vinyl exterior corner with a faux-woodgrain finish, vinyl sills, and beaded aluminum soffit vents. D. Snyder stated that all fire damaged materials would need to be removed, so they were still working through the process of determining the affect that would have on how the proposed vinyl siding would be installed. T. Emory noted that the asbestos siding on the building would need to be removed prior to installing any new siding because a nail could not be driven through it.

D. Snyder explained that they were seeking approval of these materials so that they could start ordering the building supplies factoring in time for potential supply chain delays. E. Trejo asked if the proposed vinyl siding had been used previously in the historic districts. J. Pesch stated that it had, but was approved specific to the house on which it was installed and was not precedent-setting. J. Huss noted that the previous approval called for siding with a 4" reveal to match the sections of wood siding still visible on the building. E. Schroder explained that siding with a 2 ½" to 3" reveal was common on historic houses in the area which led them to the proposed product. J. Pesch stated that, based on historic photos of the building from the HDC's files, it appeared that the wood siding that was visible on the building today was original.

A request to box in the eaves was denied at the December 2020 meeting, and J. Pesch shared a drawing submitted at that time that showed how the appearance of the building would differ with the proposed change. E. Schroder explained that the energy code would require that the roof be appropriately ventilated, and that this was the method that they were exploring.

The board members stated that they did not feel comfortable with making a motion with this being a walk-on case and without having more members in attendance that had been present at the December 2020 meeting. E. Schroder asked if the HDC would be willing to approve the request to install replacement windows, since that order would

be 16 weeks out. The board discussed the request, and decided that the windows that did remain after the fire were unlikely to be salvageable. E. Schroder requested that the board only require applied mullions installed on both the inside and outside of the glass for the three second-story windows on the front elevation of the building, rather than for all the replacement windows. The board agreed, and in reviewing the previously approved motion, continued discussing what they preferred to see changed in the request along with which items would be tabled for review at a future meeting.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to install a new egress window on the south elevation, replace missing/damaged 24"x54" wood windows on the east, west, and south elevations with vinyl windows of the same size and appearance with applied mullions installed on both the inside and outside of the glass for the three second-story windows on the south elevation, uncover and replace the storefront windows on the first floor with windows of the same size and appearance, and extend the height of the chimney using reclaimed brick from the building to meet code for venting as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by J. Huss, supported by E. Trejo and approved with E. Trejo, J. Huss, and T. Emory voting aye.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Election of the chairperson and vice-chairperson was tabled until a future meeting due to a number of board members being absent.

OTHER BUSINESS

Updating/Expanding Muskegon Homeowners' and Citizens' Guide for Historic Preservation – Staff said that the board could begin to review this document in sections at future meetings.

2022 HDC Goal Setting – Staff stated that a draft letter to be mailed to property owners within the historic districts containing information on the historic districts and HDC procedures was not available for this meeting, but would be emailed out prior to the next meeting. Additionally, the Planning Department was updating the City of Muskegon Master Land Use Plan's Historic Districts/Preservation Plan and Staff explained that the HDC would be asked to review the existing chapter of the 1997 Master Plan at a future meeting.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

JP