

CITY OF MUSKEGON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES

February 7, 2023

S. Radtke called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and roll was taken.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: K. George

STAFF PRESENT: J. Pesch

OTHERS PRESENT: K. Jawor, D. Black, and S. Dahlstrom (511 W. Clay); T. Kittle (432 W. Muskegon); Scott (460 W. Clay)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of January 10, 2023 was made by J. Huss, supported by G. Borgman and approved with S. Radtke, J. Huss, D. Gregersen, T. Emory, and G. Borgman voting aye.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Case 2023-01 – 511 W. Clay Ave. – Accessible Ramp

Applicant: Katherine Jawor/Steve Dahlstrom - District: National Register - Current Function: Residential

The applicant was seeking approval to remove and replace an existing paved walkway to the rear porch with a four-foot-wide by 27-foot-long ADA-compliant ramp finished to match the foundation of the house, and add new stairs to the rear porch in a new location. J. Pesch added that the existing porch stairs had received HDC approval in 2021.

S. Radtke asked if the height of the porch and ramp would require a railing. S. Dahlstrom stated that because the height was less than 30”, it would not require a railing, but a railing that matches the appearance of the railing that was previously approved by the HDC was planned. G. Borgman asked if the ramp would be cement. S. Dahlstrom noted that the ramp would consist of a cement cap with brick on the side to match the foundation of the house. He added that the ramp was proposed to be four-feet-wide and 27-feet-long to meet the slope requirement for accessibility, and that the steps would be relocated to the side of the porch.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to remove and replace an existing paved walkway to the rear porch with a four-foot-wide by 27-foot-long ADA-compliant ramp finished to match the foundation of the house, and add new stairs to match the existing to the rear porch in a new location 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 S. Radtke, J. Huss, D. Gregersen, T. Emory, and G. Borgman voting aye.

Case 2023-02 – 432 W. Muskegon Ave. – Windows

Applicant: Tommie and Julie Kittle - District: Houston - Current Function: Residential

The applicant was seeking approval to replace 10 existing windows of varying materials with new vinyl windows. Windows proposed to be replaced include three second floor windows on the east (right) elevation, two second

floor windows on the south (front) elevation, three first floor windows and one second floor window on the west (left) elevation, and two first floor windows on the north (rear) elevation. J. Pesch corrected the request to include replacement of 11 total windows, not 10.

G. Borgman asked if the windows with the vertical mullions on the first floor of the front elevation had already been replaced. T. Kittle stated that the upper sashes were original, but that the lower sashes appear to have been replacements. G. Borgman stated that he thought all the windows in the house had originally appeared as those on the second floor of the front elevation. S. Radtke estimated that the house dated to the 1870s, and that the front entrance was under the gable roof on the side of the house where the current side porch was located which itself likely was added between 1900 and 1920. The board noted that it was possible that, at some point, all of the windows on the first floor had been replaced.

J. Pesch added that currently many of the windows did not match, one was vinyl, and some windows were missing entirely, leaving only a storm window in the window opening. T. Kittle stated that the proposed vinyl replacement windows would be plain, double-hung windows to match the one that was installed near the rear of the house on the first floor of the east elevation, and that the remainder of the windows would be retained, and painted white to match. He added that all the three-over-one windows on the first floor and side porch would be repaired and retained.

D. Gregersen stated that the various, mismatched windows bothered him most, and that he would prefer that one style be selected for all replacement windows. S. Radtke noted that when the house was originally constructed, two-over-two windows would have been more expensive than the existing, two-over-one configuration because the added cost of larger sheets of float glass which, at the time, were considered a status symbol.

A motion that the HDC approve the request replace three second floor windows on the east elevation, two second floor windows on the south elevation, three first floor windows and one second floor window on the west elevation, and two first floor windows on the north elevation with new vinyl windows of the same size and shape of the existing windows but with a one-over-one configuration as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by D. Gregersen, supported by T. Emory and approved with S. Radtke, J. Huss, D. Gregersen, T. Emory, and G. Borgman voting aye.

Case 2023-03 – 460 W. Clay Ave. – Siding, Windows, and Addition

Applicant: Nick Schippers - District: Clay-Western - Current Function: Residential (vacant)

The applicant was seeking approval to install vinyl siding with a 4.5” exposure, install vinyl replacement windows, and replace the cellar door with a small building addition to serve as a basement entryway. Drawings were provided to the HDC prior to the meeting. J. Pesch reminded the board that, at the June 2022 HDC meeting, a previous owner had requested approval for a number of improvements for this house. The approval from that meeting included installation of composite siding and black fiberglass windows within the same openings on the side and rear elevations, retaining the and restoring the windows on the front elevation. Ultimately, that owner completed some interior demolition work, removed a dilapidated chain-link fence in the front yard, and removed an exterior fire escape on the east elevation of the building.

The new property owner was not available to attend the meeting, but his contractor attended to answer any questions from the board. G. Borgman stated that he was not in favor of the request to install vinyl siding on the house. The contractor asked if a composite siding would be approved instead, and S. Radtke noted that this siding material was already approved with a 4.5” exposure with a smooth finish, as well as composite trim with a smooth finish to match the neighboring house to the west. The board explained the discussion that took place at the June 2022 meeting and how the previous approval came to be.

J. Pesch explained that the present application called for replacement of one window on the third story/attic of the front elevation with an egress window that was larger than the existing window. He added that, based on the drawings submitted, there also appeared to be changes proposed for the decorative gable end on this elevation.

The contractor stated that the proposal had since changed, and that additional living space was no longer planned in this area, negating the need for the egress window. The board noted that, for the existing windows on the side and rear of the house, they were comfortable approving wood or fiberglass replacement windows of the same size and appearance and within the original openings.

The contractor asked if the colored glass could be repaired and retained, if the lower non-decorative portion of the window be replaced with a fiberglass window, and if a storm window installed over the top of the window to protect the colored glass. The board agreed that this would be acceptable as the storm windows would not damage the existing window and could be removed in the future, if desired.

The board moved on to discuss the proposed, small building addition to replace an existing cellar door on the east elevation and provide access to the basement. J. Pesch added that because the addition would bring the building closer to the side property line, the applicant was likely to have issues meeting the current setback requirements of the zoning ordinance, but acknowledged that the HDC would not be reviewing that issue. D. Gregersen explained his concerns with the style of the proposed steel entry door, noting that a fiberglass door may offer more design options. He offered a series of examples of Victorian door styles that would be appropriate, adding that the door should have a relatively simple panel design as it would not be a primary door. S. Radtke noted that the two-foot roof cantilever on the addition seemed as if it should have some type of decorative bracket that appears to support the roof above, and the board advised that some inspiration could be drawn from other details on the house to make the addition fit in well.

G. Borgman asked what the plan was for the damaged lattice on the side porches. The contractor stated that he was not sure if this would be addressed at this time aside from possibly repairing what was there or replacing it with matching materials; the board agreed to review any potential changes to the appearance of these porches at a future meeting.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to install composite siding with a 4.5" exposure with a smooth finish and composite trim with a smooth finish using the neighboring house for reference and retaining the decorative gable end, install fiberglass or wood replacement windows of the same size and appearance and within the original openings on the side and rear elevations retaining the decorative stained glass windows on the front elevation, and replace the cellar door with a small building addition as presented at the February 7, 2023 HDC meeting but with a decorative smooth fiberglass two-panel door of a Victorian style (below drawing) and decorative brackets to provide the illusion of supporting the new roof overhang as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by J. Huss, supported by G. Borgman and approved with S. Radtke, J. Huss, D. Gregersen, T. Emory, and G. Borgman voting aye.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

J. Pesch noted that S. Radtke was the current Chairperson and former board member E. Trejo was previously the Vice Chairperson. In September 2022, the HDC agreed to postpone electing a new Vice Chairperson until 2023, and various board members had since run meetings in the event of S. Radtke's absence.

G. Borgman made a motion to retain S. Radtke as Chairperson supported by T. Emory; S. Radtke accepted the nomination S. Radtke nominated D. Gregersen as Vice Chairperson supported by T. Emory; D. Gregersen accepted the nomination. A vote was taken and unanimously approved, with S. Radtke, D. Gregersen, T. Emory, J. Huss, and G. Borgman voting aye.

OTHER BUSINESS

1292 Jefferson – J. Pesch explained that he had met with other City staff and their plan was to present a proposal to the City Commission for the City of Muskegon to acquire and move the Nelson House to the City-owned vacant lot at 382 W. Muskegon Avenue. The presentation of this proposal would likely happen sometime in March.

J. Pesch reminded the board that SHPO had confirmed that the cost of moving the house would be eligible for potential future CLG grant funds, but cautioned that, if awarded a CLG grant, funds may not cover the full cost of the house move. It was also possible that this project would not be the only one in Muskegon seeking CLG grant funds in the next grant cycle. The house would also need to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places in order to be eligible for CLG grant funds, and staff had recently heard back from SHPO regarding this process.

At this time, the research done on Charles D. Nelson and the Nelson House was inconclusive on whether the house would be eligible for listing in the National Register. The next step would be to complete a Preliminary Questionnaire to better understand the potential of the property to be listed.

J. Pesch stated that he would keep the HDC updated as the presentation date gets closer, and encouraged board members to attend if they wished to show support for the project.

CRC Attendance Policy – Staff and the board reviewed the updated City of Muskegon Community Relations Committee (CRC) attendance policy for the City's boards, commissions, and committees. The board also discussed possible means of filling the open position on the board

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

JP