

CITY OF MUSKEGON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES

February 4, 2025

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: S. Radtke, G. Borgman, C. Davis, K. Kochin, D. Gregersen

MEMBERS ABSENT: J. Huss, excused

STAFF PRESENT: J. Pesch, W. Webster, A. Petty (CNS), R. Kleyn (CNS)

OTHERS PRESENT: S. Dahlstrom and D. Black (511 W. Clay); J. Puffer (427 W. Muskegon)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of January 7, 2025 was made by G. Borgman, supported by D. Gregersen and approved with C. Davis, D. Gregersen, G. Borgman, K. Kochin, and S. Radtke voting aye.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Case 2025-03 – 115 E. Isabella Ave. – Siding, Windows, Doors, Trim Wrapping

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

J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to 1) install vinyl siding over backer board on the exterior of the house, 2) replace seven existing wood basement windows with glass block windows containing vents, 3a) replace 30 existing wood double-hung windows on the house and one fixed wood window on the second story of the east elevation with vinyl double-hung replacement windows of the same size using obscured glass where necessary, 3b) replace one fixed wood window on the second story of the west elevation with a fixed vinyl window of the same size, 4) wrap all rafter tails, posts, beams, brackets, fascia, soffit, porch ceiling, and window and door trim with aluminum, and 5) replace the wood exterior door on the west (side) elevation with a steel or fiberglass, half-light door.

J. Pesch explained that this was a lead remediation project being handled by the City of Muskegon Community and Neighborhood Services Department (CNS). A. Petty and R. Kleyn from CNS were present to answer questions, and R. Kleyn explained that all proposed work was to address lead hazards at the house which were negatively impacting the residents of the house.

The board chose to break the motion into parts as related to the numbers above:

- 1) The HDC noted that the existing wood siding appeared to be in good condition, and G. Borgman asked why residing with vinyl siding was being proposed instead of scraping and painting the existing siding. R. Kleyn noted that painting was considered an interim control for lead and is expected to last up to five years while abatement is more permanent. She explained that with a lack of maintenance, CNS has been having to return to projects in shorter timeframes to address issues again. J. Pesch explained that, following review, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) called for retaining the original wood siding and stated that if the siding was beyond repair, then the replacement siding must match the size, design, proportions, profile, and where possible, materials of the existing original siding. It was noted that the SHPO review aligned with the HDC's local standards.

A motion that the HDC deny the request to install vinyl siding over backer board on the exterior of the house with a reveal to match that of the original wood siding was made by K. Kochin, supported by G. Borgman and approved with S. Radtke, C. Davis, G. Borgman, D. Gregersen, and K. Kochin voting aye.

- 2) J. Pesch explained that the SHPO specified replacing basement windows with glass block was acceptable but vents should not be used in windows facing the street. He added that the existing basement windows were in poor condition if they were existing at all. The HDC discussed the reasons they would be comfortable allowing glass block, noting that they were commonly at grade, typically utilitarian, and were often not defining architectural features of the house.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to replace seven existing wood basement windows with glass block windows containing vents with the exception of the window on the front elevation which should not have a vent as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by D. Gregersen, supported by K. Kochin and approved with S. Radtke, C. Davis, G. Borgman, D. Gregersen, and K. Kochin voting aye.

- 3) R. Kleyn explained that CNS often proposed vinyl windows for lead abatement projects as a means of reducing costs, but acknowledged that previous lead abatement projects in the historic districts have used wood windows when the HDC specified that in their approval. K. Kochin stated that replacement windows seemed to be a priority as they were a lead risk more within reach of children. J. Pesch explained the specifications listed in the SHPO review.

- a) A motion that the HDC approve the request to replace 30 existing wood double-hung windows on the house and one fixed wood window on the second story of the east elevation with wood double-hung replacement windows of the same size, design, proportions, and profile including grill patterns that match the existing windows' grill patterns and with the condition that grills must be permanently affixed to both the interior and the exterior of the windows was made by G. Borgman, supported by K. Kochin. D. Gregersen proposed an amendment to the motion on the table to also allow for fiberglass-clad wood windows. S. Radtke proposed an amendment to the motion to allow the second floor bathroom window on the west elevation to be fully composite or fiberglass and have frosted glass. G. Borgman accepted the proposed amendments. R. Kleyn asked about the differences for the bathroom window and the HDC discussed options to address specific issues with windows in bathrooms, ultimately deciding that staff could handle any proposed deviations from the approval, if necessary. The amended motion to approve the request to replace 30 existing wood double-hung windows on the house and one fixed wood window on the second story of the east elevation with fiberglass-clad wood double-hung replacement windows, with the exception of the second floor bathroom

window on the west elevation which may be fully composite or fiberglass and have frosted glass as long as the replacement windows are of the same size, design, proportions, and profile including grill patterns that match the existing windows' grill patterns and with the condition that grills must be permanently affixed to both the interior and the exterior of the windows as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was approved with C. Davis, G. Borgman, D. Gregersen, K. Kochin, and S. Radtke voting aye.

- b) A motion that the HDC approve the request to replace one fixed wood window on the second story of the west elevation with a fixed fiberglass-clad replacement window of the same size, design, proportions, and profile including grill patterns that match the existing window's grill patterns and with the condition that grills must be permanently affixed to both the interior and the exterior of the window as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by K. Kochin, supported by D. Gregersen and approved with C. Davis, G. Borgman, D. Gregersen, K. Kochin, and S. Radtke voting aye.
- 4) There was discussion among HDC members on what qualified as a "beam" and it was decided that these were the wood members spanning between columns in some areas. S. Radtke asked how the wood members were being wrapped, noting that it would be preferred that each individual member be wrapped independently retaining as much detail as possible. R. Kleyn explained that the rafter tails and brackets would be boxed-in. The HDC stated that this was not clear in the application nor the work specification documents. K. Kochin asked if it would be possible to require that all wood members be individually wrapped; further discussion settled on that proposal being more difficult than scraping and repainting. K. Kochin stated that she would prefer that the door trim be wrapped as it was more accessible than the other items discussed.

A motion that the HDC deny the request to wrap all rafter tails, posts, beams, brackets, fascia, soffit, porch ceiling, and window and door trim with aluminum was made by G. Borgman, supported by C. Davis and approved with G. Borgman, D. Gregersen, S. Radtke, and C. Davis voting aye and K. Kochin voting no.

- 5) J. Pesch explained which door was proposed to be replaced, noting that it was minimally visible from the street and likely a replacement itself. The board discussed basic design features that were preferred for the replacement and decided that one of the half-light doors in the HDC guidelines would be acceptable.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to replace the wood exterior door on the west elevation with a steel or fiberglass, half-light door as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by K. Kochin, supported by G. Borgman. S. Radtke proposed an amendment to the motion on the table to require that the replacement door match the design specifications in the HDC guidelines. K. Kochin accepted the proposed amendment. The amended motion to approve the request to replace the wood exterior door on the west elevation with a steel or fiberglass, half-light door matching the design specifications in the HDC guidelines as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was approved with S. Radtke, C. Davis, K. Kochin, D. Gregersen, and G. Borgman voting aye.

G. Borgman left at 5:05p.m.

Case 2025-04 – 511 W. Clay Ave. – Gazebo

Applicant: Katherine Jawor - District: National Register - Current Function: Residential

J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant was seeking approval to place a 12'-6" (hexagonal), 20' tall cast iron gazebo in the rear yard of the property.

S. Dahlstrom clarified that the gazebo would be sited in the side yard toward the rear of the property. After discussion, it was also determined that the height of the gazebo was incorrect and likely not to be 20’.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to place a 12’-6” (hexagonal), roughly 20’-0” tall cast iron gazebo in the rear yard of the property as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by K. Kochin, supported by D. Gregersen and approved with K. Kochin, D. Gregersen, C. Davis, and S. Radtke voting aye.

Case 2025-05 – 427 W. Muskegon Ave. – Doors

Applicant: Laketon Forest Properties – Terry Puffer - District: Houston - Current Function: Residential

J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant was seeking approval to replace two wood front doors with doors of a similar style.

J. Puffer explained the issues with glass being repeatedly broken in the doors, and that they had considered a replacement door that did not contain a window. Instead, they settled on the option included in the staff report. D. Gregersen noted that the false mullions within the glass were not appropriate for the building and stated that he preferred a door style with a single pane of glass without mullions.

The HDC discussed alternative options for addressing the repeated issue of broken glass in the doors and recommended installing tempered glass. It was thought that this would be more appropriate than full replacement of the doors, which appeared to be original based on photos on file with the HDC and the detailing on the doors which was noted as being typical of the era and the building’s architecture.

S. Radtke stated that the option of installing tempered glass should be explored, and if infeasible, the case could be revisited at a future meeting. D. Gregersen noted that the molding around the window on the left side door made that window smaller, and that when looking into replacement glass, the company completing the work could reduce the width of that molding so that the doors matched.

J. Puffer stated that this would be possible, and the HDC decided that the work required to address the issue was basic maintenance and therefore did not require formal approval from the HDC.

OTHER BUSINESS

2025 Historic Preservation Goals – J. Pesch explained that the State Historic Preservation Office requires that all Certified Local Government (CLG) communities submit an annual report to be in good standing and remain eligible for grant funding and technical assistance activities. SHPO had created a template for CLG communities to follow when completing their annual report, and the HDC briefly reviewed the report template as well as the previous year’s annual report.

Some board members had shared their thoughts and responses to these questions with staff prior to this meeting, and J. Pesch created a summary using their comments as a starting point for further conversation. The HDC decided to schedule a special meeting to discuss the items contained in the report in more detail.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:44 p.m.