

CITY OF MUSKEGON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES

January 12, 2022

T. Emory called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. and roll was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: E. Trejo, T. Emory, D. Gregersen, K. George (arrived late), S. Radtke (arrived late)

MEMBERS ABSENT: A. Riegler, excused

STAFF PRESENT: J. Pesch

OTHERS PRESENT: L. Evans (350 W. Webster), K. Hallman, B. Franceschi, C. Fisk, S. Gerrard (296 W. Webster); B. Spray (1500 Clinton); A. Nulf, B. Nulf (1314 Peck); D. Bos, B. Bos (339 Houston)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of November 2, 2021 was made by T. Emory, supported by E. Trejo and approved with E. Trejo, D. Gregersen, and T. Emory voting aye.

K. George arrived at 4:05 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Case 2022-01 – 350 W. Webster Ave. – Lighting/Bollards/Electrical Upgrade

Applicant: City of Muskegon (Department of Public Works) - District: National Register - Current Function: Park

J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant was seeking approval to complete an electrical upgrade to Hackley Park. As part of the upgrade, a number of features were proposed to be installed above-grade. Three design options were submitted for 36 lighted bollards proposed to be installed at the intersections of the park's walkways. Depending on the style of bollard, some contained electrical outlets for use during park events. The center monument had been up-lighted by a series of ground-mounted light fixtures, but the four statues located at each corner of the park were not. A single lighting fixture would be located within the landscaping at the base of each statue with the beam focused on the front side of the statue. Additional information was provided in an attachment to the Staff Report.

L. Evans added that new up-lighting fixtures were also being proposed for each of the four faces of the center monument and that a couple of power pedestals would be tucked into that monument's landscaping to replace existing ones. He also explained that a few of the existing electrical boxes and all of the short wooden posts containing electric receptacles would be eliminated with the addition of the lighted bollards (which would themselves contain receptacles). The bollards' light temperature would match that of the existing, original light fixtures. J. Pesch presented the three options for the bollards' design, noting that Model 2 matched the bollards already used at Hackley Public Library, and that the library and park already shared matching original light

fixtures. L. Evans noted that there were no changes proposed for the park's original light fixtures. The HDC agreed that Model 2 was the preferred option for the lighted bollards.

L. Evans said that there would be temporary impact to the park during construction, but that the new underground conduit would be directionally drilled, avoiding any open-cut trenches across the park. No date had been slated for the start of construction, but the work would likely take place in the spring or fall season. He emphasized that the lighted bollards and the new up-lighting would be the two permanent changes.

J. Pesch noted that the 1986 *Hackley Park: A Master Plan for Restoration* document was used as the standards for changes at the park, and had been referenced by the City Parks Department since the initial renovations were completed shortly after the document's adoption.

A motion that the HDC approve the request install 36, Model 2, lighted bollards containing electrical outlets at the intersections of the park's walkways in the locations presented in the January 12, 2022 HDC Staff Report and supporting documents, and to install one light fixture within the landscaping at the base of each of the park's four corner statues with the beam focused on the front side of the statue and four new lighting fixtures at the base of the park's center monument as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by E. Trejo, supported by T. Emory and approved with E. Trejo, D. Gregersen, T. Emory, and K. George voting aye.

Case 2022-02 – 296 W. Webster Ave. – Addition

Applicant: Muskegon Museum of Art - District: National Register/Downtown Structures - Current Function: Institutional

J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant was seeking approval to construct a new, two-story addition to the north of the Muskegon Museum of Art's existing building, install a new south entrance on W. Webster Avenue where a window currently exists, and create a landscaped plaza connecting the new addition's north entrance to W. Clay Avenue. The footprint of the new construction would span two current parcels (269 W. Webster and 315 W. Clay) as well as portion of the vacated alley in this block, space completely or partially located in two local historic districts. The building addition was proposed to contain new large and small galleries, event space, a roof terrace, the museum store, classroom and activity space, mechanical space/loading dock, support space, and collections management space. Additional information was provided in an attachment to the Staff Report.

J. Pesch briefly reviewed the proposed addition comparing renderings to photos of existing conditions. S. Gerrard, an architect for the project, presented the proposed changes in greater detail, walking through the supporting documents with the board. D. Gregersen stated that he thought the design of the proposed addition was outstanding and provided the right amount of contrast from the original building and its previous addition.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to construct a new, two-story addition to the north of the Muskegon Museum of Art's existing building, install a new south entrance on W. Webster Avenue where a window currently exists, and create a landscaped plaza connecting the new addition's north entrance to W. Clay Avenue as presented in the January 12, 2022 HDC Staff Report and supporting documents as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by D. Gregersen, supported by T. Emory. The board continued with further discussion of the project.

S. Radtke arrived at 4:40 p.m.

K. George stated that the project was a big change, and that while the design was stunning, it was difficult to approve a project that was not 100% finished. S. Radtke added that the design was quite good and served as a nice contrast for the existing structure, but that the board had made sweeping approvals on projects in the past then later regretted not having more detail once the work was complete. He asked if there was a way to give approval to move forward with the project while allowing for more detail to be provided to the HDC in the future.

J. Pesch said that the HDC had previously approved proposed work “in concept” with the expectation that an applicant would return to a future meeting with more finalized designs. He stated that he was not sure exactly where the project stood in terms of percentage completed, but that initial renderings do not always perfectly reflect a project’s final appearance. He advised that the HDC approve the project in concept, allowing board members additional time to be more specific in their review of the building’s details.

K. George noted that a detail of interest was how the cornice turns the corner where the new and old buildings would meet, but that the renderings did not depict that detail.

B. Franceschi said that the design team for the project would be willing to provide additional materials to the HDC as the design progressed. J. Pesch responded that approving the proposed addition in concept would assume that the general design of the addition as it had been proposed would not change drastically, and that the HDC would not suddenly change their recommendation as to the current direction of the design. B. Franceschi noted that as long as big moves such as the size, scale, and form of the addition that have a large effect on the cost of the project were approved in concept, they would be comfortable returning to a future meeting when the project is further along. S. Gerrard clarified that design development would be finishing in March, and that the design team could get on the agenda for a meeting in the spring.

S. Radtke stated that the proposed addition followed the HDC’s local guidelines for new construction as well as the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, and that the design did so better than the 1980s addition had. The board members were appreciative of the efforts of the design team to be collaborative and to return for a second meeting.

An amendment to the motion to instead approve the request, in concept, to construct a two-story addition to the north of the Muskegon Museum of Art’s existing building, install a new south entrance on W. Webster Avenue where a window currently exists, and create a landscaped plaza connecting the new addition’s north entrance to W. Clay Avenue as presented in the January 12, 2022 HDC Staff Report and supporting documents with the understanding that at a future meeting the HDC will review additional documents and materials as they become available was made by S. Radtke, supported by E. Trejo. The amended motion was approved with E. Trejo, D. Gregersen, T. Emory, S. Radtke, and K. George voting aye.

Case 2022-03 – 238 Houston Ave. – Demolition

Applicant: City of Muskegon (SAFEbuilt Inspection Services) - District: Houston - Current Function: Commercial

J. Pesch stated that this case was pulled from the agenda. The property owner and City had since agreed on a timeline for getting the property repaired and would not be seeking demolition at this time.

Case 2022-04 – 1500 Clinton St. – Siding

Applicant: B. Spray - District: Clinton-Peck - Current Function: Residential

J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant was seeking approval to install vinyl siding over the existing wood siding on the house and remove one second-story window on the east elevation. Work was started in mid-December without proper review or approvals and a stop work order was issued at that time.

S. Radtke asked if the reason for the request was that the siding was not holding paint. B. Spray said that she had originally intended to paint the existing siding on the house, but that vinyl siding was a back-up option when it became too cold outside to paint. She also noted that lead-based paint had been used on the siding. S. Radtke explained that the HDC discouraged residing of structures with vinyl siding, and that if vinyl siding was approved, it should match the profile of the original wood siding. He continued that when vinyl siding was installed over existing siding, it changed the profile of the details on the house; where the windows and trim were originally proud of the clapboards, the additional siding would cause them to be recessed.

B. Spray noted that her property in the same block had been approved for vinyl siding to be installed on the detached garage, and that another house on the block had vinyl siding as well. J. Pesch noted that the minutes from the case involving the garage noted that, aside from the structure not being original to the property, the garage was not visible from the street. He also explained that the former standards commonly used by the HDC assigned one of two classifications to a historic district, one of which allowed for more lenient approvals; those standards had since been deemed illegal, and the two-tiered system had not been followed for many years.

D. Gregersen stated that, according to the local standards, the house could be painted or resided with wood or composite siding. K. George asked if the siding had been wrapped to contain the lead-based paint. B. Spray stated that it had not. K. George noted that, strictly in terms of safety measures, without being wrapped, the new siding would be an interim measure and would not do much to contain the lead paint.

With regard to the removal of the second story window, S. Radke noted that the HDC was typically more willing to allow for changes to existing windows on the back of a structure. The board determined that siding over the former window opening with siding to match the existing wood siding on the house would be appropriate.

A motion that the HDC deny the request to install vinyl siding over the existing wood siding on the house was made by D. Gregersen, supported by E. Trejo and approved with K. George, S. Radtke, T. Emory, D. Gregersen, and E. Trejo voting aye.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to remove one second-story window on the east elevation with the condition that the opening be covered with siding similar to the house's existing wood siding as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by E. Trejo, supported by D. Gregersen and approved with K. George, S. Radtke, T. Emory, D. Gregersen, and E. Trejo voting aye.

The board and applicant discussed options for the needed repairs after the vinyl siding is removed. After discussing the possibility of approving residing with engineered wood siding the HDC considered making another motion. B. Spray stated that another motion would not be necessary.

Case 2022-05 – 1314 Peck St. – Siding

Applicant: A. Nulf and B. Nulf - District: McLaughlin - Current Function: Residential

J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant was seeking approval to remove the existing, damaged wood siding and reside the house with new wood siding. The house currently contains three different patterns of wood siding, and the replacement siding would match the most common siding pattern currently found on the house.

A. Nulf explained that the majority of the existing siding was in poor condition, having been inappropriately cleaned at some point by a previous owner; it also contained lead paint. While they did attempt to patch and repair the damaged wood siding in some areas, it did not make sense for them to do so on the entire house. B. Nulf stated that they had difficulty securing a contractor to complete the work as well, and that the possibility of engineered wood siding was something they would consider in place of new wood.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to remove the existing, damaged wood siding and reside the house with new composite or wood siding to match the most common siding pattern currently found on the house with the conditions that all decorative trim and woodwork be retained and that a new trim piece be installed at the base of the front porch windows as long as the work meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained was made by E. Trejo, supported by D. Gregersen. The board continued with further discussion.

D. Gregersen asked about what appeared to be missing trim boards below the windows on the front of the front porch. J. Pesch stated that older photos of the house revealed that had been planters below the windows. B. Nulf stated that he had no issue with adding a trim in those locations since the siding pattern would be changed anyway.

An amendment to the motion to also include a condition that all trim work and architectural details on the gables be retained and that a new trim board be added below the windows on the front of the front porch was made by D. Gregersen, supported by E. Trejo. The amended motion was approved with T. Emory, S. Radtke, D. Gregersen, K. George, and E. Trejo and voting aye.

E. Trejo left at 5:30 p.m.

Case 2022-06 – 339 Houston Ave. – Addition

Applicant: D. Bos - District: Houston - Current Function: Residential

J. Pesch presented the staff report. The applicant was seeking approval to construct an addition to the house that extended the garage eight (8) feet toward the front property line and add second story living space above the garage. The addition would utilize the same siding, windows, and roofing materials used on the rest of the house. Additional floorplans and elevation drawings were provided.

D. Bos stated that the garage will be four (4) feet back from the existing front wall of the house. S. Radtke asked about how the addition would relate to the existing house. D. Bos stated that the addition's roof would be slightly lower than that of the existing house. K. George stated that considering the neighboring houses were constructed at the same time for the most part, the scale of the addition would not stand out in a negative way.

D. Gregersen pointed out that the height of the addition would leave a large area of plain siding between the top of the garage door and the bottom of the addition's new windows. The board suggested that a trim board or some other architectural detail (an awning with a shed roof or a trellis) be added to break up that expanse.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to construct an addition to the house that extends the garage eight (8) feet toward the front property line and adds second story living space above the garage utilizing the same siding, windows, and roofing materials used on the rest of the house and with additional trim details (similar to those found on the existing structure) between the garage door and the new addition 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 approved with S. Radtke, D. Gregersen, T. Emory, and K. George voting aye.

OTHER BUSINESS

HDC Openings – Staff noted that A. Riegler had resigned from the HDC, leaving two openings on the board. The board's composition requirements called for the open positions to be filled by a registered architect and a member of a local preservation society. J. Pesch explained that if an architect that is also a resident of the city cannot be appointed, an architect that does not live in the city could be appointed in an advisory, non-voting capacity. Board members made a few recommendations for individuals that may be interested in serving on the HDC and J. Pesch agreed to contact them with an application.

2021 Staff Approval Update #3 – J. Pesch shared an update on the 18 Staff approved projects in the historic districts that had taken place between the last update in July 2021 and the end of the year. He explained that a few of the projects had been discussed with HDC Chairperson, S. Radtke, prior to approval.

ADJOURN

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

JP