

Historic Preservation Commission Minutes

January 18, 2018

The Historic Preservation Commission met on Thursday, January 18, 2018 at the City Council Chambers, 305 Gay Street. A work session was held from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners Attendance: Ron Berman, Chairman; Sharon Smith, Vice Chair; Susan Morgan; Herschel Johnson; George Vojtech; Herve Hamon, Planning and Zoning Planner I and Historic Preservationist

Commissioners Absent: Janice Olshesky

Other Representatives Attending: Pat Escher, City Planner

Work Session – Historic District Design Guidelines

Mrs. Escher reviewed the revised timeline for completion of the Guidelines. Some preliminary results were received for the on-line survey. Discussion ensued regarding sharing the timeline with the public so they can get a better idea of the effort involved in writing the guidelines.

Commissioner Berman stated that removing the Appendices from the Guidelines was discussed at the last meeting and he recommends making it a separate document. He stated that the Commission needs to develop a rationale behind the Administrative Approvals Process for applications. Mrs. Escher advised that staff has conducted some searches in the HPC files regarding this aspect and will continue.

The Commissioners reviewed the Administrative Review Guidelines for Annapolis to see what items, if any, would apply to Cambridge.

Mr. Hamon was asked to develop further the Administrative Review Items list and Mrs. Escher will try to locate the list LaSara was working on. Mrs. Smith advised that she has a copy of these items from LaSara, and that they were quite detailed. She will forward it to the Commissioners. The list will be reviewed at the next HPC work session.

Chairman Berman called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He began the meeting by conducting roll call and issuing a welcome. Commissioner Berman then conducted the swearing in of persons planning to testify and explained the order of business.

Officer Elections

Commissioner Berman motioned to nominate a person for position of Chair of HPC. Commissioner Smith nominated Ron Berman and Commissioner Morgan nominated George Vojtech. Commissioner Vojtech was elected as Chair via ballot by a 3-2 vote.

Commissioner Berman motioned to nominate a person for position of the Vice Chair of HPC. Commissioner Smith nominated Ron Berman and Commissioner Morgan nominated Sharon Smith. Commissioner Smith was elected as Vice Chair via ballot by a 3-2 vote.

The Commissioners agreed to have Commissioner Berman continue as Chair for the remainder of this meeting.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Hamon stated that the applicant for 1006 Locust Street–Front Porch & Entrance Stoop Renovations had weather related construction issues and was not able to complete the application. This Application was deferred.

A motion by Commissioner Berman to approve the agenda as revised was seconded and carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

December 19, 2017 minutes were approved.

January 3, 2018 Minutes

Mrs. Escher responded to a question regarding the first bullet under General Notes. If it is a commercial operation in an existing residential building, the residential character should prevail. That is the intent of the guidelines. Mrs. Escher responded to Commissioner Smith's question that if someone wanted to make the residential building look like a commercial building it would be at the Commission's discretion. However, the applicant would be directed to maintain a residential character to keep the architectural integrity of the building.

Commissioner Berman reviewed Chapter 3, Guidelines for Primary Facades pertaining to architectural elements within each area, which addresses window materials, etc. This section leaves out a lot of information needed in the guidelines: "we need to add rules and a list for matching existing and replacing supplies, and include them in the Appendix, not in the Chapter". The consultant will be informed of this issue.

A motion by Commissioner Berman was made to approve the minutes as written, with comments above. It was seconded and carried unanimously.

Mrs. Escher announced that even though she would continue to be involved in writing the Design Guidelines, she was now departing from the HPC regular hearing of applications and that the Commissioners would be working with Mr. Hamon.

Old Business

HPC 2018-024 – 203 Choptank Avenue–Entrance Portico at Front Stoop – Michael Wheatley, applicant/owner.

Mr. Hamon reported that the porch rail built in a temporary fashion is not compliant within the Historic District Guidelines. The objective is to now bring the aspect of the front stoop, guardrails, and handrails for the stairs back to an acceptable appearance, as well as enhance the composition of the facade of the house by creating a covered portico and providing a small seating area at the front of the house. Four options, illustrating variations on roof shapes for the front portico were studied and presented to the applicant.

Mr. Wheatley stated that he would like to keep the project simple but also at the same time make it an historically appropriate feature. He proposes to do Option 4. A sketch of Option 4 was presented in the staff report, labelling choices of construction materials.

Option 4-A

Architectural asphalt roof shingles similar to the existing structure, metal trim and fiberglass columns will be used, pressure treated wood rails and balusters will be used, to match the dimension found in the historic district. The stoop is brick and the floor has been completed.

Option 4-B

Vinyl elements will be used as the top of the columns instead of metal, and on the front triangular shallow gable, matching the siding of the house. The rest of the materials to be the same as Option A.

In response to Commissioner Smith's question, Mr. Wheatley stated that he will use Option 4 and use vinyl for the siding and metal for the soffit, painted wooden handrails and balusters. The Commission would prefer a wood treatment for the handrail, baluster, and guardrails. Mr. Wheatley is willing to go with the option recommended by the Commission.

Public discussion ensued regarding the porch.

Commissioner Smith motioned to close the public discussion; Commissioner Morgan seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Smith motioned to accept the application for the addition of a portico to include architectural asphalt shingles, metal soffits, white vinyl trim, round fiberglass columns, handrail and balusters to be painted pressure treated wood. Commissioner Morgan seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

HPC 2018-027 – 303 Oakley Street–Porch Renovations/Handrail Re-submission – Jason Coulborne, contractor/applicant.

Mr. Hamon reported this is a bank-owned property that had a deteriorating handrail and guardrail along the porch. The handrail balusters were removed at the beginning of the renovation of the house and a pressure-treated handrail was placed instead. There was neither a building permit nor historic district application at the time. There were cost procedural issues which the applicant expressed and he tried “to move forward to getting the work done”. The property is a significant historic home and has a lot of character. In several work sessions with the contractor and realtor at DPW with staff, solutions were discussed. At the last HPC hearing the contractor talked about trying to match the profile of the vinyl handrail closely with the original handrail. At that time, the Commission felt that the profile was not close enough in terms of proportion nor did they recommend that vinyl be used in place of wood. However, the contractor since found a vinyl profile that matched closely what was in wood on the house (illustrated in the staff report). If the vinyl handrail was not approved, the contractor stated he would discuss with the bank to perform a repair of portions of the original wood handrail, one piece at a time, **not** redoing the entire wood handrail because it would be too costly.

Jason Coulborne, contractor, testified that the bank advised him just before this meeting to repair the wood rail the best he could, within his budget. “The bank is not willing to put any more money into this”. Mr. Coulborne then stated that at this point, the vinyl handrail was probably off the table.

Commissioner Smith asked Mr. Coulborne for clarification on what he will be doing. Mr. Coulbourne stated he will take the old handrail (already down), remove the rotten portions, fabricate new sections in wood to match the existing profile, and use them to fill in where needed. He will then re-install the original handrail, disposing of the temporary pressure treated handrail currently in place.

Public discussion ensued. Commissioner Smith motioned to close public discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Vojtech motioned to approve the repair of the original handrails by using as much of the existing sections as possible and then recreating the profile and adjoining it to the existing rails. The repaired original handrail and balusters will be re-affixed to the front porch, without change in guard rail height.

Commissioner Smith seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

New Business

HPC-2018-030 – 1006 Locust Street–Front Porch & Entrance Stoop Renovations (Deferred)

HPC 2018-031 – 308 Mill Street–Front Yard Fence & Porch Repairs, 2nd Floor Balcony. George Vojtech, owner/applicant. Mr. Vojtech recused himself from the discussion.

Commissioner Vojtech recused himself. Mr. Hamon reported that the applicant wants to repair the front porch, its floor & ceiling, the handrails & balusters, the yard fence & gate, and to restore a second-floor balcony which has been enclosed.

The applicant has found a Douglas Fir floor board that would be appropriate in terms of historical character for the floor of the porch. The spindles and balusters can be custom-made to match what needs to be replaced. On the second-floor balcony, there are two windows which should be placed back in their original location, and a central door to access the balcony should be introduced. Inside there are some clear remnants of what used to be a seating porch or outdoor space. The intent is to bring the second-floor balcony back to its original design and use.

Patricia Kaczmarek addresses Commissioner Smith's question: the metal fence will be similar to the neighbor's, but will the fence will be straight across at the top instead of alternating spike heights.

Mrs. McCoy, who lives on High Street behind the property, asked what is the standard height of a fence. The standard fence height is 42". Mrs. McCoy feels that Mr. Bishop's 46" fence is too high and is intrusive.

Commissioner Berman motioned to close public discussion and was seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Morgan motioned to approve the 42" front fence, porch repairs done in wood as appropriate, second-floor balcony as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

HPC 2018-032 – 311 Glenburn Avenue–Demolition in phases, Garage Roof, Porch Repairs - George Vojtech owner and applicant. Mr. Vojtech recused himself from the discussion.

Mr. Hamon reported that the house was expanded into a nursing home in later years, while the original single-family structure was built around 1905. The applicant is requesting to repair the garage and the front porch, to demolish the two nursing room wings in stages, and recreate a more single family residential look.

Patricia Kaczmarek, 315 Belvedere Avenue, testified.

The garage roof would be re-shingled (architectural grade asphalt shingles). In terms of historic aspect, the applicant is considering repairing and restoring all the elements of the front porch of the main house to match its original design.

Mr. Hamon stated that the first step of the project is separating the garage roof and structure from the nursing home wing, the second step is to demolish nursing home wing #2 (furthest away from the main house), and the third step is to demolish nursing home wing #1 (closest to the house) after its use as a temporary construction “trailer” is no longer required.

Commissioner Johnson motioned to approve the demolition in phases, the garage roof replacement, and the porch repairs; motion was seconded by Commissioner Smith.
Motion carried unanimously.

Administratively Approved/Routine Maintenance


AA 2018-019 – 119 Choptank Avenue-replacement of 7 windows on 3rd floor-in kind
(Case was not reviewed and placed on New Business Agenda for February 15, 2018)

Adjournment

Commissioner Berman asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion by Commissioner Vojtech to adjourn the meeting was seconded and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Herve Hamon
Planning & Zoning
Historic Preservationist

Signature:  Date: _____
HPC Chairman