

Historic Preservation Commission Minutes

February 15, 2018

The Historic Preservation Commission met on Thursday, February 15, 2018 at the City Council Chambers, 305 Gay Street. The meeting started at 6 p.m.

Commissioners Attendance: George Vojtech, Chairman; Sharon Smith, Vice Chair; Susan Morgan; Herschel Johnson; Ron Berman and Janice Olshesky (alternate)

Liaison: Commissioner Steve Rideout

Other Representatives Attending: Herve Hamon, Planning and Zoning, Planner I and Historic Preservationist and Pat Escher, City Planner

Work Session – Historic District Design Guidelines

Mrs. Escher reviewed the revised timeline for completion of the Guidelines. Some results were received for the on-line survey. Discussion ensued regarding sharing the timeline with the public so they can get an idea of what is involved in writing the guidelines. Commissioners Smith and Vojtech will be meeting with Mrs. Escher about the survey results and to finalize the meeting schedule for the public meeting in April and other work sessions in the upcoming months.

Mr. Hamon updated the Commission on the need for ADA ramps for homes in the Historic District and around town, as well as the process that someone would have to go through to receive their permit and the length of time for emergency situations. He would like to define further the related Administrative Review and include more details in the HPC Guidelines for construction specifications.

Commissioner Berman explained that a criterion for the ramps should be a timeline that once it is not medically needed or the home is sold, the ramp must come down. The UDC gives the HPC Chairperson the authority to approve certain items on an emergency basis.

More discussion needs to take place on the subject of ramps, windows and doors. Whether of person is just doing general maintenance on their home or major repairs, if original or replace with similar or like items.

Flow Charts were discussed about the HPC process and who needs to come before this Commission to be reviewed. Staff at DPW (both Preservation, and Building Permit Dept.) must determine where to send the applicant and/or go ahead with the permits needed. More discussion is needed on this topic, and development of the Administrative Review Chart will contribute.

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A series of dates were discussed for more Work Sessions needed with the public. They will be discussed at the next meeting and Mr. Richard Wagner will be expected to attend (even if only by Skype). HPC would like to send a draft hard copy of the HPC Guidelines to Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) by June 21st (hoping to send a draft copy to the City Council in May).

Commissioner Smith recommends to add a section to the Guidelines about streetscape in public places around town, since it seems to have been a concern for the public in most of the surveys.

Chairman Vojtech closed the Work Session.

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

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

November 2017 minutes were discussed and will be reviewed and approved at the March meeting.

January 18, 2018 Minutes

After a few corrections and a motion from Commissioner Smith and seconded by Comm. Johnson the January 18 meeting minutes are carried unanimously.

January 24, 2018 Minutes (January Work Session).

After the correction of City Commissioner Hanson's name, the motion to approve the minutes was made by Comm. Olshesky, seconded by Comm. Smith and carried unanimously.

Old Business

HPC 2018-034-119 Choptank Ave – replacement of seven windows on the 3rd floor, owners are Michael & Linda Starling.

Mr. Hamon explained that this house, owned by Michael & Linda Starling, was built around 1910-1918. The applicant wants to replace all of the windows on the 3rd floor with 7 more energy efficient vinyl windows. The front two windows had already been replaced with vinyl windows and the other five on the sides and rear of the home are still wood but are in bad shape. The Starlings want to replace all seven windows to match and brought samples. They would be one over one for all the windows, as the original, and the openings would not change in size. Repairing the old windows would be costlier than replacing them, and would not achieve the energy savings sought by the applicant. In addition, the sizes of the windows are small and they would not be seen clearly from the street. Mr. Hamon recommends approving the replacements.

Mr. Starling testified to HPC that there were already 2 replacement windows on the 3rd floor in the front of the home. Window World said the wood windows could not be repaired, they would have to be remade, and that would very time consuming and costly. Mike Starling showed a sample to the HPC, matching the same glass size of the original windows.

Discussion on the size, condition and the materials for the new windows.

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

Comm. Morgan made a motion that HPC 2018-034, be approved for the replacement of the seven windows on the 3rd floor, second by Comm. Smith. Comm. Olsheky added to the motion that she recommend that the original windows be stored. All approved unanimously.

New Business

HPC 2018-033- 309 Glenburn Ave- Garden Fence & Shutters & Backyard Studio. Owners are Laura Oliphant & Dr. Karis Graham.

Mr. Hamon explained that the home itself is in good shape and the applicants want to install a new metal fence around the perimeter of the yard, re-install shutters on the home front facade and re-establish a driveway that was gravel and over the years has been overgrown with grass. The applicants also want to use the back accessory building as an artist studio, so they would need to add windows for natural light.

For the studio glass doors, the source of the products will be Second Chance in Baltimore, MD, specializing in salvation building materials for re-use. The door for the studio will be about 10' wide x 8' tall.

Some discussion took place about the studio being or not a contributing structure and what the pattern of the windows for it should be. The studio was built in the 1990's. The previous owner was Mr. Harp, who was in the assembly for another application; he responded that the studio just had general sliding doors, which he removed. Ms. Oliphant wants to have a double door and not a slider. Mr. Hamon expressed that the accessory building is non-contributing, but is quite visible from the street; as such, its architectural treatment should be in line with the requirements of the Historic District.

Discussion about the fence, its materials, design and the area around the property. Mr. Berman asked if they were going to fence in the entire property. Ms. Oliphant responded affirmatively, and that there are other similar metal fences around the West End area, emulating a stylized version of an older profile of pickets.

Discussion on the shutter to go on the front facade, which are non-existent at this time. Ms. Oliphant explained that the shutters would be vinyl for now and would be replaced with wooden ones in the future.

Chairman Vojtech asked for public comment. Mr. Gordon Hill, from 5 Choptank: “are the shutters going to be panel or other?”. Ms. Oliphant responded that they will be have panels. She continued they are for appearance and not for protection from the elements. Mr. Harp never had shutters on the home and he has not seen any pictures of the home with any. HPC Guidelines says that the shutters must match the period.

D-11. Shutters and blinds

a. Historic shutters and blinds- if historic shutters and blinds survive, they should be carefully preserved and repaired. In any proposed rehabilitation project, if there is evidence that’s blinds and shutters once existed they should be replaced as part of the project. Replacement shutters and blinds should be customized- sized to each opening and mounted on hardware and not to the building or casing of the window frame. **Shutters may be of wood, vinyl, and composition but must meet the style of the period of the building.**

b. Shutters and blinds on additions and new buildings- in the district shutters and blinds were a dominant feature of the buildings. Their use on additions and new buildings would be appropriate if they meet the criteria in 11a.

In response to Commissioner Olshesky comment that the windows/doors should match the patterns of the windows on the main house, Mr. Hamon continued the discussion about the studio, reinforced that it is a non-contributing accessory building and does not currently match the style of the home. So, to restrict the window patterns for the studio to match the home, may not be relevant nor appropriate. Mr. Hamon expressed that he likes the image on the pictures provided by Ms. Oliphant and does not necessarily recommend one big pane of glass per door.

Mr. Hill also asked about the height of the fence. Ms. Oliphant said that it was going to be four feet in height.

Chairman Vojtech closed for public comments. All approved.

Comm. Smith made a motion HPC 2018-033, to approve the application as submitted, meaning that metal fence as in the picture, that the shutters in the hopes that they are temporary and the backyard studio door with the applicant working directly with HPC staff and to provide pictures of the door for approval prior to installation. Motion was seconded by Comm. Morgan. All approved unanimously.

HPC 2018-035 – 308 Glenburn Ave – 2nd floor window replacement – Owner Mr. David Harp.

Mr. Hamon explained that at 308 Glenburn Avenue the applicant wants to upgrade the windows throughout the entire 2nd floor. Mr. Harp wants to install the energy efficient double pane windows. The home was built around 1924-1935 and it is a contributing home. They want to replace all current 14 windows of the 2nd floor since they have a lot of rotten wood.

Mr. Harp spoke: the windows have storm windows and they are also falling apart. The profile of the window will be matched. The home has not been maintained for over 15 years.

Discussion on the materials and the condition of the windows. Deteriorated storm windows will be removed, making the replacement windows more visible. The vinyl replacement windows will feature a sculptured muntin grid pattern, with an appearance very closely matching the original wood windows.

Chairman Vojtech closed the public comment. All approved.

Motion was made by Comm. Berman for HPC 2018-035, to approve the replacement all of the 2nd floor windows as submitted, seconded by Comm. Hershel. All approved unanimously.

HPC 2018-036 – 429 Race Street – fence enclosure / back parking side of building.

Mr. Hamon presented the application from NOVO Properties / Blackwater Baker. The applicant wants to put a six -foot fence in the back corner of the building as shown in the pictures.

Ms. Cathy Bambrick who works for Mr. Brett Summers, is the property manager for the Novo Properties in Cambridge, testified that the fence would be in the back of the bakery, where there is an apartment in the back on the first floor. She stated that this would be just like their property behind the High Spot on Hight Street with a fence identical to that one. The purpose is to enclose the grass area for the downstairs apartment and the tenant would have the key to the gate. Chairman Vojtech asked that the fence would be aligned with the face of the side wall of the building. Ms. Bambrick explained that the gas meter to the building was in the way of the fence, but that it will be moved prior to installation, and alignment is possible.

Chairman Vojtech closed the public comment. All approved.

Motion made by Comm. Johnson to HPC 2018-036, recommend approving fence enclosure for the rear of the building, second by Comm. Berman. All approved unanimously.

HPC 2018-037 – 606 William Street – Garden Shed, owner is Ms. Ann Damianos

Mr. Hamon explained that the main home was built around 1900-1915, and that the applicant started to construct a shed before obtaining a permit. Construction was stopped by the City. The materials being used are salvaged and from other construction sites and Ms. Damianos was reusing materials to make the garden shed.

Mr. Hamon explained how he worked with the applicant in a series of meetings to be able to generate a sketch spelling out the intent and aesthetics of the garden shed. Most of the shed features are inspired by the main house: gable shape, slope of roof, trim details and façade finish materials and colors.

Ms. Damianos, the applicant, spoke in more details about the materials she is using for the shed, and expressed her satisfaction about the collaboration process with Staff.

Chairman Vojtech closed the public comment. All approved.

Motion made by Comm. Morgan to approve the application as submitted for HPC 2018-037 for the building of the garden shed. Second by Comm. Smith. All approved unanimously.

HPC 2018-038 – 437 Race Street – Storefront Sign

Mr. Hamon spoke about the property where Cambridge Main Street office is located. The building itself was built around the 1890's. This is an "After the Fact" application for a sign on the front of the building. Mr. Hamon was concerned about the choice of color of the sign compared to the others on the rest of the building.

Ms. Katie Clendaniel, the director for Cambridge Main Street, presents: "the building is owned by the Cambridge Masonic Lodge; we put our logo over the existing sign, to let the citizen of Cambridge know that we are there. We did not change any materials and it was an improvement to the business" Ms. Clendaniel also looked up all the UDC guidelines on the issue of storefront signage, and attest that the window signs are within the maximum allowed square footage of signage.

Mr. Hamon told her that she is at this meeting because she changed the sign and put it up without a permit. Any sign in the Historic District must be reviewed, by HPC. The UDC guidelines is not the only regulation Ms. Clendaniel looked at, but the discussion did not carry any further.

Chairman Vojtech explained that the Historic Preservation Commission overrides the UDC guidelines as far as signage style is concerned.

Comm. Olschesky stated that the HPC guideline says

F. Design guidelines for specific commercial applications

5. Signage- Signage can enhance the historic significance of the commercial area. Sign designs should be compatible with the architectural detailing of the building on which they are to be attached or the site where they are placed.

Chairman Vojtech closed the public comment. All approved.

Comm. Smith made a motion for the approval of HPC 2018-038, for the storefront sign. Application was accepted as presented. Second by Comm. Morgan. All approved unanimously.

HPC 2018-039 – 4 West End Ave – Handicap access ramp to residence, owner Ms. Betsy Davis.

Mr. Hamon stated that this issue was addressed during the earlier work session about ramps and their need. The contractor/applicant came to DPW and met with Staff; he was brought in to the discussion to determine the best possible location for the access ramp. The home is in the flood zone close to the water and is elevated significantly (about 38” above grade). It was agreed that the side door, which is currently a slider, (and not the front door) would be the better location. The distance from the sidewalk to the side door is about 28 feet and so the achievable slope would be 1 and 8, which is compliance with MDIA, Building Inspectors. The ramp would start at least three feet from the sidewalk. The posts would be in block foundations and there would be a ledger board attached to the bricks to secure the ramp to the home. All would be MDIA inspected and HPC approved materials and painted white to match the home.

Mr. Greg Price, Contractor for the homeowner, spoke: “he has constructed a lot of ramps for the VFW and they are all built from donations of time and monies, so this is, why we try to keep the cost as low as we can. By adding the lattice, permits, flipping the handrails on the project, it is adding up to the cost of the project. He understands that HPC has requirements, does the project need to be painted right away, the wood is salt treated and the weather will not cooperate with paint. The landing will be 5’x5’, runway will be 4’ wide and 28’ long. All the materials will be salt treated and will be considered temporary. The ramp will follow the side of the house to the edge then the handrailing will start”. Commissioners Vojtech and Smith asked for a profile on the handrail. More discussion continued on the rail design, spindles and ramp slope.

Ms. Jane Thomas, caregiver for the homeowner, testified that this ramp was needed for health reasons. Th homeowner can use a walker or use the wheelchair. She is in the nursing home right now until the ramp is ready. More discussion ensued on her health and age, and getting her out of the nursing home, and back to her house. Money is an issue for the ramp construction, and getting it built as soon as possible will depend on sources of financing. The front steps and railing also needs to have repairs, which they are trying to complete at the same time.

Mr. Price explained that the homeowner was not a veteran, but her husband was, so the funding from the VFW will not be available. Habitat for Humanity and other organizations would need to provide the necessary funds (Commissioner Vojtech gave the Applicant possible links with Eldercare and other charitable associations)

Chairman Vojtech closed the public comment. All approved.

Motion to approve the HPC 2018-039, by Chairman Vojtech, with the change of railing against the home, where pickets are not required, but a handrail is (profile on the top handrail with all sharp edges removed); and HPC to allow the delay of paint for six months for the wood to season. This is to be considered a temporary fixture, so that when it is no longer medically needed, it shall be removed. Second by Comm. Morgan. All approved unanimously.

Administratively Approved/Routine Maintenance

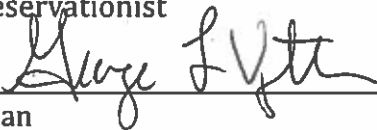
AA 2018-020 – 221 West End Avenue-replacement of a door-in-kind

Adjournment

Chairman Vojtech asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion by Com. Berman to adjourn the meeting was seconded and by Comm. Olshesky carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Herve Hamon
Planning & Zoning Planner I
Historic Preservationist

Signature:  Date: April 26 2018
HPC Chairman