

NORTHVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
November 19, 2014
Wednesday 7:00 P.M. – Northville City Hall – Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:

Chair Johnson called the Historic District Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Argenta, Hoffman, Johnson, Tartaglia
Absent: Field, Gudritz, Vernacchia (all excused)
Also Present: Consultant Elmiger

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: none

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION Argenta, support by Hoffman, to approve the agenda as published. **Motion carried unanimously.**

4. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES: October 13, 2014 (Sub Committee meeting)
October 15, 2014
October 22, 2014 – Public Hearing

The October 15, 2014 minutes were amended as follows:

Page 6, three instances of ~~Morina~~ changed to Marino

Page 10, 4th paragraph, 4th bullet point: ~~September 22~~ to October 22.

MOTION Hoffman, support by Argenta to approve the minutes of October 15, 2014 as amended. **Motion carried unanimously.**

MOTION Argenta, support by Tartaglia, to approve the Sub Committee minutes of October 13, 2014 as published. **Motion carried unanimously.**

MOTION Hoffman, support by Argenta, to approve the minutes of October 22, 2014 as published. **Motion carried unanimously.**

5. REPORTS:

- A. CITY ADMINISTRATION:** None
- B. CITY COUNCIL:** None
- C. PLANNING COMMISSION:** None
- D. OTHER COMMUNITY/GOVERNMENTAL LIAISONS:** None

6. PUBLIC HEARING: None

7. CASES TO BE HEARD – BY CASE:

CASE #1

**PATRICIA HEATH
125 N. ROGERS**

**PORCH, PAINT, WINDOWS &
SIDING**

Patricia Heath, owner, was present on behalf of this application, which was to renovate a 1970-built duplex at 121-125 N. Rogers Street. Currently 125 N. Rogers was unoccupied and Ms.

Heath planned to remodel it. The exterior of the entire structure would resemble a Georgian row house such as could be found in Annapolis, Maryland. Regarding 121 N. Rogers, roofing, columns and new balusters would be added to match the new Georgetown image at 125 N. Rogers.

Ms. Heath displayed color paint samples, samples of the new brick and roof shingles in proposed colors, and samples of the proposed new columns and balusters.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Hoffman, Planning Consultant Elmiger said the Applicant should address her request to do half of this structure at a time.

Ms. Heath explained that she could only afford to do one side of the duplex at a time, but that the balusters and columns would match all the way across. The siding on 125 would be white horizontal; the siding on 121 would be kept vertical but painted a little darker so that the effect would be that of two different houses.

Commissioner Argenta noted that the submitted drawings were not complete; the HDC was charged with reviewing all the drawings that would be submitted to the Building Department, but these drawings were not ready for submission to the Building Department. For example, the floor plans lacked dimensions and other notes. Patios in the rear that were being enclosed were not included. The plans seemed unfinished. Additionally, the Georgian design of the home – with its 12-inch, 16-foot high columns – needed further discussion. No other homes with such tall columns existed in the Historic District.

Discussion followed regarding the proposed design and submittal deficiencies. Chair Johnson asked the Commission to think about whether the design was enough of an improvement for this particular structure. Ms. Heath explained that due to economic circumstances she was under time pressure to begin this project.

Chair Johnson suggested that a subcommittee be given authority to meet with Ms. Heath and her architect one or more times before next month's meeting, and to be given authority to accept the application as complete and then to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness (if standards were met). This subcommittee could meet as early as 8:00 a.m. Monday, November 24.

Chair Johnson further suggested appointing Commissioners Argenta, Field, Gudritz and himself (Johnson) to serve on a subcommittee for this application. Issues that needed to be resolved included showing dimensions on the floor plan, coming up with an alternative front façade, and making sure that the elevations and floor plans matched up. The applicant's architect needed to attend this meeting.

MOTION Hoffman, support by Argenta to refer this application back to the applicant. **Motion carried unanimously.**

MOTION Hoffman, support by Argenta, that a subcommittee made up of Commissioners Argenta, Field, Gudritz and Johnson be authorized to gather all the application materials and act on the Commission's behalf regarding accepting the application as complete and then granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for this project. Further, the Subcommittee is authorized to meet one or more times, as necessary, with the first meeting scheduled for 8:00 a.m. November 24, 2014 or later. **Motion carried unanimously.**

CASE #2
VILLAGE WORKSHOP
455 E. CADY

SIGN

Village Workshop partners Dennis Engerer and Chris McDonald were present on behalf of this application. With them was Rachit Pasricha, Managing Partner of Perfect Impressions, 24580 North Industrial, Farmington Hills MI 48335.

Mr. Engerer explained that they would like to install a new wall sign at 455 E. Cady Street. This was a continuation of the Village Workshop project to renovate and repurpose the historic industrial building at this address. Mr. Engerer further explained that the proposed sign met Zoning Ordinance standards, and they were now seeking HDC approval to construct the sign. They would be happy to answer questions from the Commission.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Argenta, Mr. Pasricha explained the construction, design and colors of the proposed sign. He confirmed that the stylized building on the sign was a cut-out, and what would actually be seen on that portion of the sign was the brick wall. Responding to a further question from Commissioner Argenta, Mr. Pasricha said that two shades of green would be used; he had only brought a sample of one of the colors this evening. Chair Johnson noted that a sample of the other green would need to be provided to the Commission.

MOTION Hoffman, support by Argenta, to accept the application as complete. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Johnson opened the meeting for public comment. Hearing none, he returned the item to the Commission.

MOTION Argenta, support by Tartaglia, to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness, referencing the Northville Historic District Design Standards 4.21 materials, 4.24 signs, and 5.18 paint and color. Motion carried unanimously.

CASE #3
PATRICK SCHADE
406 DUBUAR

WINDOWS

Patrick Schade, owner, was present on behalf of this application, which was to replace the existing windows at 406 Dubuar. Jim Bloch, Sales Representative from Hansons Windows, was also present.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hoffman, and referring to the Consultant's letter of October 30, 2014, Planning Consultant Elmiger said that the issues and questions listed in that letter had been resolved.

In response to further questions from Commissioner Hoffman, Mr. Schade said that he was not altering any of the existing openings. The new windows would be triple pane vinyl, with a white exterior with either white or dark oak wood grain interior color. Aluminum trim coil of white would trim out the exterior of the window

MOTION Hoffman, support by Tartaglia, to accept the application as complete. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Johnson opened the meeting for public comment. Hearing none, he returned the item to the Commission.

MOTION Hoffman, support by Argenta, to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness, referencing the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular standard 9, and Northville Historic District Design Standards 5.14 windows and 5.18 paint and colors as indicated on the application.
Motion carried unanimously.

CASE #4

**MARILYN JOHNSON
247 WEST**

PORCH ROOF & GARAGE DEMO

Marilyn Johnson, owner, was present on behalf of this application, which was to demolish an existing garage and porch roof on the northern side of the building at 247 West Street, in order to split the parcel into two parcels, and create a new property line just to the north of the house. Louis F. Ronayne, of Ronayne Associates, 107 N Center Street, Northville, was also present.

At Ms. Johnson’s request, Mr. Ronayne presented on behalf of this application. Mr. Ronayne explained that the Planning Commission had considered the lot split at their October 7, 2014 meeting. The Planning Commission moved to approve the lot split, but conditioned the approval upon the Historic District Commission’s approval of demolition of the existing garage and the porch roof.

Mr. Ronayne said that this property was one of the oldest homes in Northville. Ms. Johnson had lived in the home since 2002.

Ms. Johnson said that old photos showed a shed where the garage was now located. Chair Johnson said the garage had been there at least since 1982. Commissioner Hoffman said that he did not believe the garage was a contributing structure.

Commissioner Argenta noted that the Historic District Commission’s charge was different than that of the Planning Commission. Demolition guidelines for the Historic District were very severe. Normally when the HDC looked at a demolition, the purpose of the demolition was for new construction, and drawings were submitted for that new construction. Thus demolition application was based upon the resource being a deterrent to a major improvement program. Under this condition, the applicant was required to provide a list of things as outlined in the guidelines, including, among other requirements:

- a. Written description of the nature of the proposed improvement and how it will benefit the broader community.
- b. Site plan, to scale, showing the site after the proposed work, including existing and new construction.
- c. Building schematic plans and elevations sufficient to illustrate the size, mass, materials and appearance of the proposed new construction in relation to remaining historic elements on the applicant’s property and surrounding sites.

While this situation was different than most, the proposed demolition affected the historic quality of an existing building. What was going to happen on Parcel A? Removing the porch, driveway and garage significantly altered this property. The entrance to the house was going to have to be relocated. According to the Planning Commission minutes, there was no room to put a new garage on Parcel B.

Commissioner Argenta continued that if the HDC approved the demolition of the garage, they would be creating a new lot for which nothing was known. Would a home be built with an attached garage? Attached garages were discouraged in the Historic District.

Commissioner Argenta said that the HDC had to decide whether the structures proposed for demolition were historical, and whether a public hearing was necessary. He felt that there was no question that the structures proposed to be demolished were historical. For instance, the porch was part of the historical portion of the house. He quoted from the Secretary of Interior Standards: *4: Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.*

Mr. Argenta said that he felt the structures proposed for demolition were of historical significance for the following reasons:

- The building and the site dated to the 1820s.
- Many of the most notable residents and contributors to the City had owned or lived in this residence.
- The resource was a significant part of the heritage of Northville.
- The resource was one of the most significant, recognizable sites in Northville.
- The resource had historical and architectural significance in its relationship to the Historic District and to the historic value of the surrounding area.
- Regarding the garage, the garage had a relationship to the house, the site, and the surrounding area and was a significant part of the overall character of the site.

Mr. Argenta further wondered how the proposed improvement would benefit the broader community. Mr. Ronayne said the benefit would be a new house on a new lot, with its attendant tax income for the City.

Discussion followed. Mr. Ronayne said that the lot split was necessary in order to give prospective purchasers options for property use. Commissioner Argenta continued to have concerns about the lack of specificity regarding this proposal. Chair Johnson was concerned about the lack of a garage on Parcel B. This request would create a situation with a historic structure that was not appropriate to that structure.

Chair Johnson said that the HDC needed a resubmittal, showing the proposed improvement. This proposed demolition would affect an historic structure, and the proposed change could leave the resulting Parcel B woefully inadequate.

Discussion followed regarding the historical significance of this property generally, and whether or not the garage had historical significance. There appeared to be consensus among the Commissioners that the porch was historically significant and needed to be retained.

Commissioner Hoffman said that conceptual plans regarding garage placement on Parcel B might be helpful.

Commissioner Argenta said the drawings showed a 9 to 10-foot wide driveway; the ordinance required a 16-foot wide driveway, though some leeway was permitted in the Historic District.

Mr. Ronayne spoke to the benefits of constructing smaller homes in Northville.

Chair Johnson did not believe this application was ready for approval. There were two significant issues:

1. Where would a driveway and/or a garage be located for the historic structure on proposed Parcel B?
2. What kind of structure was being envisioned for proposed Parcel A?

Discussion followed regarding constructing a shared, private driveway that would serve both proposed parcels.

In response to a question from the Commission, Planning Consultant Elmiger said that a variance was not likely in terms of leaving an accessory structure on a parcel without a main building. Variances could not be granted for a self-created hardship.

Commissioner Argenta said that the lot split depended upon a demolition, but there was a question of when or even if the demolition was going to happen.

In response to a question from Mr. Ronayne, Commissioner Hoffman said that he was opposed to referring this item to a subcommittee. This application for this particular site and structure needed to be heard by the entire Commission.

Chair Johnson suggested that the applicant bring conceptual plans to a study session of the Commission. The HDC's priority was saving the historic structure. This study session could be scheduled after a potential buyer was found.

After brief further discussion, Chair Johnson indicated he was ready for a motion.

MOTION Hoffman, support by Argenta to refer this application back to the applicant. **Motion carried unanimously.**

CASE #5

**MISHELLE LUSSIER
102 E. MAIN**

VENT

Mishelle Lussier, owner, was present on behalf of this application, which was to install ventilation system grates above the existing windows on the rear façade of the building at 102 E. Main Street. Ms. Lussier said that she had done her best to answer all the questions called out in the November 4, 2014 consultant's letter.

Commissioner Argenta expressed appreciation for the simple, logical solution provided by this application. He pointed out that galvanized metal could be painted to match the brick wall; stainless steel should not be used.

MOTION Argenta, support by Tartaglia, to accept the application as complete. **Motion carried unanimously.**

MOTION Argenta, support by Hoffman to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness, referencing the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular standard 9, and Northville Historic District Design Standards 4.21 materials, 5.4 preserving masonry, 5.18 paint and colors, and 6.7 mechanical and electrical systems, and that the materials be galvanized metal painted to match the brick wall.

Chair Johnson opened the meeting for public comment. Hearing none, he returned the item to the Commission and called the vote.

Motion carried unanimously.

**CASE #6
BRENDA LOTT
320 LINDEN**

FENCE

As no one was present on behalf of this application, Chair Johnson postponed action until later in the meeting.

**CASE #7
WENDY & DENNIS RICHARDVILLE
543 W. DUNLAP**

GARAGE

Wendy Richardville, owner, was present on behalf of this application. They had received approval to demolish their existing garage at the October 15, 2014 HDC meeting. They had also wanted to present the design for the new garage at that meeting, but determined that some re-design was needed, as the height of the proposed garage did not meet zoning requirements. Tonight they were submitting revised drawings for the new garage as an amendment to their previously submitted application.

Ms. Richardville explained that they were proposing to build a two-bay garage in approximately the same location as the existing garage. After approval, they would demolish the existing garage and start construction on the new garage as soon as possible.

Commissioner Hoffman confirmed with Ms. Richardville that the attic would be non-habitable.

In response to a question from Commissioner Argenta, Planning Consultant Elmiger said that the Building Official would inspect the plans and drawings for conformance to Code.

MOTION Hoffman, support by Argenta, to accept the application as complete. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Johnson opened the meeting for public comment. Hearing none, he returned the item to the Commission.

MOTION Argenta, support by Hoffman to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness, referencing the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular standard 10, and Northville Historic District Design Standards 3.17 height, 3.21 materials, 3.22 details, 3.23 dormers, 3.24 garages, 5.9 asphalt shingles, 5.18 paint and color, and 5.14 windows. Motion carried unanimously.

**CASE #6
BRENDA LOTT
320 LINDEN**

FENCE

As noted above, discussion on this item was moved to the end of the meeting as no one was present to represent the application, which was to remove an existing fence and install a six-foot tall privacy fence along the east and south property lines in the rear yard.

Planning Consultant Elmiger described in detail the location of the proposed fence, which was along the rear of the property, and along the southern property line up to the existing garage, with a jog over to the garage, and with a gate between the garage and the house.

At this time Tony Boss spoke from the audience regarding his displeasure with how Case #1 was handled. Commission members explained that the drawings for that application were not complete and the application had been referred to a subcommittee. After brief further comments, the discussion returned to Case #6.

Planning Consultant Elmiger said that the applicant did not have to be present in order for a case to be heard.

MOTION Argenta, support by Hoffman, to accept the application as complete. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Johnson opened the meeting for public comment. Hearing none, he returned the item to the Commission.

MOTION Argenta, support by Tartaglia to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness, referencing the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular standards 9 and 10, and Northville Historic District Design Standards 3.4 fences, 3.21 materials, and 5.18 colors, for a new 40.08-foot fence on the westerly property line, and the southerly property line from the rear property line to the back of the garage with a jog to the garage and a new gate installed between the garage and the house as shown on the drawings submitted this evening. **Motion carried unanimously.**

8. DISCUSSION

Demolition Application

Referring to proposed revisions to the demolition application, Planning Consultant Elmiger reviewed the background for this discussion item. The HDC had desired to have structural engineers on call to assist applicants who wanted to base their demolition on a safety issue. If it wasn't obvious to the HDC what the safety issue was, the HDC could request the applicant to have a structural engineer evaluate the structure as to its integrity.

Three structural engineers had agreed to serve in this capacity. One structural engineer's specialty was commercial buildings; the other two specialized in wood frame buildings.

Ms. Elmiger said that the Application for *Historic District Commission Demolition or Moving of a Historic Building* needed to be changed to conform to this new reality, and the proposed change was on page 4, under *Applications based upon safety hazard*.

After review of the new language, the consensus of the Commission was to accept the proposed change, and the Chair said he was ready to accept a motion.

MOTION Hoffman, support by Argenta, to forward the proposed language change in the *Application for Historic District Commission Demolition or Moving of a Historic Building* to City Council. Motion carried unanimously.

HDC Guidelines for Mechanical Equipment

Planning Consultant Elmiger gave the background for this discussion item, explaining that a new page was added to both the residential and commercial standards regarding *Mechanical and Communication Equipment*. While the language in both residential and commercial standards were similar, the proposed page in Residential Standards (3-27) had language specific to residential use, including placement, screening, and other elements that might apply to a residential property. Proposed language in Commercial Standards (4-29) had language specific to commercial use, including screening rooftop equipment. Modified and additional language had also been added to *Building Systems* (6-7), including adding a cross reference to the proposed new pages.

It was the consensus of the Commission to schedule discussion of these proposed changes for a future meeting.

Commissioner Argenta referred to the work being done by the Planning Commission on new Zoning Ordinance requirements for air conditioner condenser units and permanent generators. He thought the title of the proposed pages in the Design Standards might be changed to Mechanical, *Electrical and Communication Equipment*.

Chair Johnson was reluctant to regulate communication equipment via the Design Standards. Also, it might be better to allow for administrative approval of this type of equipment via the Zoning Ordinance, rather than to have homeowners come before the HDC for placement permission.

Planning Consultant Elmiger recommended including some standards regarding communication and other mechanical equipment within the Design Standards. This might be especially important for large projects.

General Discussion

Chair Johnson asked if staff could prioritize future agendas, so that cases that would require longer discussion be placed at the end of the agenda. Planning Consultant Elmiger said she would check with City staff to see if this was possible. Changes to the agenda could also be made the night of the meeting.

Planning Consultant Elmiger referred the Commissioners to her memo of November 18, 2014 regarding *Sate Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Grant Information*. This memo would be discussed at a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Seeing that there was no further discussion, Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl McGuire
Recording Secretary

Approved as published 12-17-2014