



MINUTES

**City of Ypsilanti
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting held in person at Ypsilanti Freighthouse**

**Tuesday, May 10, 2022—Approved 5/24/22
7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Meeting Called to Order 7:15 pm

Chair Alex Pettit welcomed everyone, told public when and how they would have an opportunity to address commission

Commissioners Present:

Alex Pettit – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
James Ratzlaff – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Stefan Szumko - Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
James Chesnut – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti
Jimmy Huffman – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti, sworn in 4/26/22
Delrhea Byrge—Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti, sworn in 5/10/22

Commissioners Absent: Jeff Muir – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti, ill, excused

Staff Present: Ellen Thackery, Preservation Planner

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Szumko (second: Ratzlaff) moved to approve the agenda.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS—none

PUBLIC HEARING—none

OLD BUSINESS—none

NEW BUSINESS

202 E Forest

**Removal of rear porch, building an addition, installation of ADA ramps*

Staff Report: House contributes to the National Register and local historic districts. Both front and back porches appear to be original. The proposed work is to demolish the first-floor rear porch, build an addition in its place, and build a handicapped-accessible ramp to front and back doors. Staff recommended thinking about the motions in three steps.

Applicant: Architect Ric Foley was in person to answer questions. He stated that the design team incorporated the commission's feedback into this revised proposal. He explained that the reasons they are seeking to demolish the rear porch include (1) the porch is in very bad condition, and (2) they need to build the addition so that they can achieve the necessary sight lines for a childcare facility.

Discussion: Commission discussed that it would be great if the porch columns and any removed materials could be saved in storage so that if anyone wanted to restore the rear porch, they could. Agreed that they would not include language about this idea in a motion—it is simply a recommendation for applicant to consider. Clarified that the porch would be gone for this addition and that the addition is about the size the porch was. Clarified that the roof would just be a sloped shed roof at a shallow pitch. Clarified that the new roof design for the first-floor addition encourage some returns to dump water right to a fascia—yes, that is the intention because it is not much water.

Motion: Ratzlaff (second: Szumko) made three motions regarding this application:
I move to issue a notice to proceed for the demolition of the rear porch at 202 E Forest, proposed April 21, 2022. The porch is a historic feature of the house, but it is on the rear of the house, and its demolition would allow for an addition that would make possible childcare in this location, which is of substantial benefit to the community.

In addition, I move to issue a certificate of appropriateness for the handicapped-accessible ramps as proposed April 21 for 202 E Forest because they meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standards 2, 5, 9, and 10.

Finally, I move to issue a certificate of appropriateness for the new addition proposed April 21 for 202 E Forest because it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation #9.

Relevant Secretary of the Interior's Standards:

#2, #5, #6, #9, #10

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

330 E Forest

**6' wood fence proposed to be replaced by a 6' tall wood composite fence, same locations as currently*

Staff Report: This house contributes to both the National Register and the local historic districts. In the National Register nomination, the house is described as "two-story, L-shaped, gable-roof 19th-century with raking cornices without returns." The proposed work is to replace a non-historic 6' wood fence with a 6' Trex-brand composite fence. This issue was before the commission as a study item last month.

Applicant: Homeowners Wendee Wegenik and Elizabeth Perry attended the meeting in person.

Discussion: Clarified that the existing, non-historic fence is cedar and deteriorated beyond repair. Clarified for new commissioners why the fence that had been studied at the last meeting was not successful—faux and exaggerated woodgrain on plastic. This is a smoother, sturdier product and Commission believes it meets the Standards better for its effect on the district.

Motion: Szumko (seconded by Ratzlaff) Move to issue a certificate of appropriateness for the work at 330 E Forest proposed April 22, 2022 for the removal and disposal of the existing fence and installation of 6' composite fencing around the backyard and down a portion of the driveway. The proposed work is appropriate because it meets Standards 9 and 10; the new proposed fence will not affect any historic materials and if it were to be removed, the historic building would be unaffected.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

Relevant Secretary of the Interior's Standards:
#9 and #10

202 N Washington

* Paint

Staff: 202 N Washington is not listed as a contributing building in the National Register nomination. Staff was unable to find original building permits. The building was a gas station, then an auto repair shop, and is now being rehabilitated for use as a coffee shop. The brick veneer is not historic—the building's brick veneer was removed and then replaced in October 2021.

Applicant: Property owner was not able to attend. Staff had spoken with him and staff will notify him of the meeting's outcome.

Discussion: Commissioner clarified that this was a case where the owner had removed all brick veneer without commission's approval and then got permission for this brick facing that looked very similar to what was there. Clarifying that all brick was indeed replaced. Recalled some conversation from last year about a mural, but no mention of a mural this application. Looking at adjacent properties/environment, there is plenty of unpainted brick in the area—this brick is not historic, however. There is also a painted white house nearby, as well. Clarifying whether north and east sides are historic/existing brick—clarified that it is concrete block painted white on those sides and the remaining sides are now new, non-historic bricks.

Motion: Ratzlaff moved (seconded by Chesnut) to issue a certificate of appropriateness for the painting of existing wood trim and new brick as proposed May 2, 2022 at 202 N Washington because the work meets Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation Standard 9 and 10. The painting of the new, non-historic brick does not destroy historic materials, features, or spatial relationships and is not incompatible with the adjacent properties in the district, and the paint used must be compatible with the material being painted.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

302 S Huron

**small-scale, scattered chimney repointing*

Staff Report: This house contributes to both the National Register and the local historic districts. The house is at the corner of Catherine and Huron and is a wood-framed Italianate house with wood siding and original brackets. In the National Register nomination, the house is described as, “a two-story cubical Italianate.” The chimney is brick and only a few feet of it protrude through the roof. Some portions of the house’s foundation are field stone and others are brick. Staff mentioned that the proposed mortar mix is directly from the City’s fact sheet about historic bricks and it has a little more lime than Preservation Brief #2 specifies. Staff didn’t think that would hurt anything but flags it for the commission. Staff also notes that Preservation Brief #2 specifies that round sand might be preferable, but staff is not a mason.

Applicant: Applicant was not able to attend. Staff had spoken with him and will notify him of the meeting’s outcome.

Discussion: Commissioner states that the extra addition of lime will not damage the bricks—it just makes it easier to manage. Also, sharp sand is more commonly used because it is filtered and clean. Round sand tends not to be used in masonry because it is inconsistent. The sharper sand takes to the mix better.

Motion: Szumko moved (seconded by Byrge) to issue a certificate of appropriateness for the work at 302 S Huron as proposed May 3, 2022 for the repointing of several scattered, small areas of the brick chimney. Proposed mortar mix should be soft enough to avoid damaging historic bricks. As long as deteriorated mortar is removed carefully by hand when necessary with a hammer and chisel or carefully using a small pneumatic chisel, and without any harsh cleaning or sandblasting, the proposed work meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation #2, #5, #6 and #7.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

229 W Michigan

**replacing 4 lights on poles in the plaza, replacing in-ground uplights, and replacing two existing parking lot lights.*

Staff Report: This building contributes to the local historic district. It was built in 1915 as a Carnegie Post Office and was adapted for use as the Ypsilanti Public Library in 1963. Proposed is new lighting around the parking lot and plaza. The proposal is to add 4 new 12’ black pole-top lights, replace 2 lights in the parking lot (silver), and replace the in-ground landscape lights (black/brown). None of these proposed lights will be mounted to the historic building.

Applicant: Kyle Keaffhaber and Brendan Booms

Discussion: Commissioner wonders if the landscape uplighting is against city code. Staff's understanding is the uplights are allowed but no more than 3000 K. The city planner will need to approve this plan administratively. Commissioner clarifies that in the past, commissioners have been more prone to approve a lighting fixture that did not try to look historic so there was no question which materials are historic and which are not. That's not to say that the current commissioners would approach lighting fixtures in that same way, but that's where the commission typically went in the past. Commissioner agreed that the option 1 (Cambria) light looks like it might imitate earlier styles. Applicant mentions that the light fixtures on the sidewalk are unshielded and the design intent had been to carry that same brightness of unshielded light into the plaza--cohesion. Brendan explained that when you spread light over a surface area, that reduces glare, and clarified definitions of "fully shielded" and "full cutoff." Full cutoff means that 0 percent of your light output is above horizontal. With the globe, some light (a small amount) escapes upward. Fully shielded means that the light source is hidden above horizontal—the light source is recessed. If the light source is completely hidden in the housing, it is shielded.

Seeking to provide more security—don't want to blast the light, however, to the residents next door. Next door, the first floor is commercial but the second floor is an apartment. So the light barely reaches that second floor. That is achieved by the cutoff and shielding but also to keep the light directed more at the library.

Option 1 is a simplified traditional streetlamp—it's not so ornate that it would be likely to confuse the historic record. Two streetlight bases are shown in the materials but the simpler one (the 500 series) is the one they'd use.

Motion: Szumko moved (Chesnut seconded) to issue a certificate of appropriateness for the new lighting proposed May 3, 2022 for 229 West Michigan Avenue to include the installation of: four new lights on poles in black, either Option 1 or Option 2; bases in the 500 series; two new parking lights as proposed in silver; and the replacement of existing in-ground landscape lights with new black and brass ones, with the conditions that all light must be fully shielded and will use maximum 3,000 K LED bulbs and that the lighting plan will be reviewed and approved by the City Planner. The proposed work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation 9 and 10.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

109 Maple

**replacing windows*

Staff Report: 109 Maple is a two-story, hipped roof house. The 1988 National Register district nomination for this area describes the house as "early 20th-century" and contributing to the National Register district. The house now has aluminum siding on it and in May 2020, the homeowner received approval to remove this siding to reveal the wood underneath. No historic photos have been located to date, but staff will try to find some.

Homeowner would also like to discuss a porch as a study item; it is possible that the wood siding under the current siding will have evidence of a past porch and its location and outline.

Applicant seeks to remove all aluminum storm windows, remove 11 windows, and install 11 new Pella Lifestyle series double-hung aluminum-clad wood windows. Applicant also plans to inspect aluminum siding and replace any that is damaged and repair or replace in kind. After this work is complete, homeowner would like to paint.

Applicant: Unable to attend. Staff can give feedback to applicant as needed.

Discussion: Commissioners state that they're not seeing the level of detail they'd need to see to approve replacements. More detailed photos are necessary—photos showing the issues/conditions in detail, and also some accompanying text that describes the conditions. The documentation now shows an orientation to the windows and shots of whole windows for the most part, but the commissioners need detailed, zoomed-in shots of rot, issues, for every window, etc. Might make sense to have the vinyl windows on one application and the wood windows on another, if that works for their construction process.

Motion: Chesnut moved (Byrge seconded) to postpone the May 4, 2022 application for 109 Maple until additional information can be provided that clarifies the questions posed at the 5/10/22 historic district commission meeting.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous. Motion carried.

STUDY ITEMS

305 E Forest

**Would like to cover peeling cedar siding on house with siding, replace two separate garage doors with one overhead door, and re-side garage as well.*

Commission discussed that the wood siding on the house was restored and the fact that it's peeling within about 5 years or so indicates to them perhaps a problem with the way the wood was prepped for painting. Much of a paint job is prep, and then some is about the quality of the paint used. A good paint job should last 8 years or more, and then, it can be touched up as needed and it's not a major paint job down to the bare wood every time. Covering up the wood siding with more siding can seal moisture in, which isn't good for a house, and the ways that the windows and doors and rooflines will be handled with applied siding can have a negative impact on the house too. Commission would want to see in more detail that the siding can not be repaired and then siding options can be considered. Homeowners shared photos of neighboring houses and streetscape to show that other neighbors have siding of alternative materials such as aluminum and vinyl. Commission and homeowners discussed.

Regarding the garage, the commission wanted to better understand the deterioration issues and what is causing them and whether the original material is no longer repairable. Applicant provided photos of the garage doors and commission understood that they likely need to be replaced. Commission encouraged homeowners to consider applying for the garage work now and the house siding can be a separate future application.

Homeowners stated that they don't really want to have two different sidings—the cedar on the house and then a new siding on the garage. They are likely not going to apply soon.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

- 1. 111 Maple—asphalt roof to asphalt roof**
- 2. 530 N Huron—asphalt roof to asphalt roof**

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Property Monitoring

- a. Commissioners/Staff discussed property concerns and property issues under review.

2. Updates from Staff

- b. Welcome, new commissioners Jimmy Huffman and Delrhea Byrge! Staff met with the two new commissioners to help them get oriented just prior to the meeting.
- c. State historic Tax Credit Infoshop, Wednesday June 15, at the Freighthouse. Registration is open at <https://cityofypsilanti.com/263/Historic-District> .
- d. Staff working on lining up a training for commissioners about new infill, elements of design, and how to review.

3. Commissioner Comments

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS—none

HOUSEKEEPING BUSINESS

Approval of the Minutes of April 26, 2022

Motion: Szumko (second: Ratzlaff) moved to approve the minutes of April 26, 2022, as submitted.

Approval: Roll call. Unanimous
Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair adjourned the meeting, citing the end of the agenda with no further items to discuss.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 10:45 p.m.