



# MINUTES

**City of Ypsilanti**  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**Meeting held in person at Ypsilanti City Hall, Council Chambers**

**Tuesday, October 25, 2022, approved 11/22/22**  
**7:00 P.M.**

## CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair called meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

## ROLL CALL

### Commissioners Present:

Alex Pettit – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti  
James Chesnut – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti  
Stefan Szumko - Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti  
James Ratzlaff – Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti

Commissioners Absent: Delrhea Byrge—Washtenaw County, City of Ypsilanti

Staff Present: Ellen Thackery, Preservation Planner

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Approval: Voice vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS**--none

## **PUBLIC HEARING**—none

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **410 N Hamilton**

*\*Porch guardrail and handrails*

Applicant: Jackson Troin, applicant, present.

Staff Report: Staff reminded that this application came before the commission previously in May and the applicant was not able to attend meetings to answer commission's questions and so the application was postponed and then procedurally denied. The application ran out of time—we

have a 60-day deadline to act on complete applications so this one was denied because of that window. Porch guardrail and handrail are back before the commission; paint and roof have been approved on behalf of the HDC administratively.

Applicant clarified that he initially left off the graspable handrail and that has since been added. Applicant also clarified that he had not intended to make this repair but the porch guardrail gave way to someone's weight and he had to make an emergency repair.

Discussion: Commissioner described that the commission first seeks to preserve historic material. If replacement is necessary, the Standards for Rehabilitation ask for a replacement that is as close to the original as possible. There may be a couple issues with this design that was selected. In the case of emergency repairs, usually a temporary repair is done and then the applicant applies to the historic district commission for the more permanent repair. Since that wasn't done in this case, the commission is now trying to figure out what the appropriate way forward is—replace with something more historically sensitive, possibly seeing if something could be done to this solution to make it more appropriate, perhaps there's another solution? Applicant understands commission's perspective and a better solution is to apply to the commission first. One thing he noted is that he spent considerable time and effort on preserving the existing porch posts. Commission discussed that there may be design tweaks that could help new guardrail better fit in; one commissioner stated that adding the new center post helps the guardrail's structural longevity because the porch is too long of a span without additional support. The question is whether these proportions are appropriate for that added post. Applicant noted that this post matches the dimensions of the original posts at the bottom of the stairs. Commissioners agreed that if the added center support post could be shortened to be just above the rail and capped there, that would help the new railing blend in.

Applicant stated that he suspects an additional handrail will be needed once the building department inspects the handrail. Commissioners agreed that staff could approve an additional handrail if that becomes required. It could be a simple pipe railing mounted inboard of the rails. Applicant stated that he also believes the building department may have an issue with the spaces under the bottom-most railing of the handrail. If corrections need to be made there, commission agreed that revised design will need to come back to this commission for final approval.

Motion: Ratzlaff (second: Chesnut) moved to approve Application PHDC 22 0095 dated October 11, 2022 and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the new guardrails and handrails at 410 N Hamilton, with the condition that the new center post be altered to be shorter and closer to the guardrail's height and capped. With this condition met, the new porch guardrails and handrails will substantially meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standard for Rehabilitation, including Standards 5 and 6.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **218 E Forest**

*\*Reroof small area and extend fascia and roof curbs for mechanicals to allow for new insulation*

Applicant: Dr. Alejandra Barraza , applicant, present.

Staff Report: This building does not contribute to the district. Roof needs to be replaced in this small area on the high roof over the front door and building code will require that additional insulation is added. As a result, the fascia will be extended and the curbing that the mechanicals sit on will be raised as well. The work will not be noticeable from the street or the parking lot, but it's work that must be done.

Discussion: Dr. Barraza Commission discussed that High Scope would like to offer the space for community engagement and for community use. Staff agreed to let City Hall staff know that this is a space that could be used for programs, etc. Commissioners did not have any questions or concerns and agreed that the proposal looked straightforward.

Motion: Szumko (second: Chesnut) moved to approve Application PHDC 22-0093 dated October 11, 2022 and issue a certificate of appropriateness for installing new insulation, a new EPDM roof membrane, new sheet metal coping, a new thru-wall sleeve at the conductor box drain, and properly flashing rooftop units and penetrations and conduit and pipe penetrations on the high roof over the front, main entrance at 218 E Forest Ave. Also included in this certificate of appropriateness is additional work required if the 3.5" insulation is selected, including 3.5" wood blocking at the roof's edge, extending the fascia, altering the conductor box and drain as necessary, and raising the curbs under all the mechanical units. All of this work is compatible with the district and will not impact any historic materials or features, meeting Secretary of the Interior's Standard #9.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

### **111 N Huron**

*\* Refacing existing sign*

Applicant: Applicant not present.

Staff Report: This application is for refacing a sign that is already installed. It is a lit wall sign and the left part of the sign that appears white during the day is not actually all a lighted white wash of light at night. Instead, the white is aluminum masking so it appears dark and only the letters appear in that part of the sign at night. Because it's close to the sign face that already exists, and the light part of the sign is masked with only lighted letters, staff did not have concerns.

Discussion: Commissioners discussed that this proposal is very similar to the recent sign proposal at the same address, so commissioners are comfortable with the signage, lighting, and design.

Motion: Chesnut (second: Szumko) moved to issue a certificate of appropriateness for Application PHDC 22-0092 dated October 11, 2022 for refacing an existing wall sign measuring 22 feet long x 27" high at 111 N Huron because the sign:

- is similar to the existing,
- does not destroy historic materials or spatial relationships,
- has a masked background so that only the words (not the background) light at night,
- is compatible in scale and proportion to the nearby historic resources,
- and is removable without impact to historic resources, meeting Standards 9 and 10.

This sign will still need to be reviewed by the Planning and Building Departments, and will need to meet their requirements. Any amendments to the sign's design will need to be reviewed by the historic district commission.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

## **5 S Washington**

*\*New internally lit sign mounted to building*

Applicant: Michael H. Patino, applicant, present.

Staff Report: This application is for an internally lit, round 4' in diameter sign to be mounted on the brick building. Dark background with white letters. This application was late for inclusion on this agenda but applicant has an end-of-the-year deadline and so staff included it here.

Discussion: Applicant clarified that letters will indeed glow white, and there will likely be a band of pink illuminated around the edge of the sign.

Commissioners stated that because the sign does not give that much light, a thin band of color around the edge should not create a wash of color. Applicant stated that the sign will be about 1400 lumens, whereas a spotlight is around 4000 or so, so this light will not be very bright.

Motion: Szumko (second: Ratzlaff) moved to approve Application PHDC 22-0097 dated October 20, 2022 and issue a certificate of appropriateness for the new internally lit sign proposed at 5 S Washington, with the conditions that the sign is mounted in the mortar joints wherever possible, that the hardware used to mount the sign will be corrosion-resistant, that any holes created by the sign installation will be sealed with a high-performance exterior caulk, that the sign will have a dark background that allows for the light letters and possibly a thin ribbon of pink around the perimeter to be illuminated, and that all necessary zoning and building approvals will be obtained. If these conditions are met, the proposed work meets Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation #9 and 10.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous. Motion carried.

**STUDY ITEMS**—none

**ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS**

329 E Cross—repainting porch trim and decks

114 N River—repainting siding

402 E Cross—reroof asphalt to asphalt

410 N Hamilton—roof asphalt to asphalt and paint

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**1. Property Monitoring**

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

**2. Updates from Staff**—seeking new commissioners to fill commission vacancies; new city planner starts Monday

**3. Commissioner Comments—**

a. Clarifying next meetings: Nov 22 and Dec 13

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**-none

**HOUSEKEEPING BUSINESS**

**Approval of the Minutes of October 11, 2022**

Motion: Chesnut (second: Szumko) moved to approve the minutes of October 11, 2022, as submitted.

Approval: Roll call vote. Unanimous.  
Motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

**MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:00 p.m.**