

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF June 17, 2015
Municipal Building Commission Room
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Historic District Commission (“HDC”) held Wednesday, June 17, 2015. Chairman John Henke called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Present: Chairman John Henke; Board Members Mark Coir, Keith Deyer (arrived at 7:15 p.m.), Natalia Dukas, Vice Chairperson Shelli Weisberg, Michael Willoughby; Student Representatives Zoe Bowers, Patrick Rogers

Absent: Thomas Trapnell

Administration: Matthew Baka, Sr. Planner
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

06-24-15

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
HDC Minutes of April 15, 2015

Motion by Mr. Coir

Seconded by Mr. Willoughby to approve the HDC Minutes of April 15, 2015 as presented.

Motion carried, 5-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Coir, Willoughby, Dukas, Henke, Weisberg

Nays: None

Absent: Deyer, Trapnell

Chairman Henke advised the petitioners that they are two members short of a full commission. However, in this instance there has been a directive from the city attorney that this is the last extension for the 220 Merrill appeal. He will recuse because of his relationship with the applicant, and this puts them at a huge disadvantage, with only four board members present to vote on a motion. The applicant for 243 Merrill elected to go forward with five commissioners. Ms. Weisberg added there is a quorum but the petitioner for 220 Merrill will need a positive vote from all four commission members. Therefore, she urged everyone to look at this proposal with fair and fresh eyes because a vote must be taken this evening.

Mr. John Carlin, Attorney for 220 Merrill, said they want everyone to be happy with the pergola, but they need to get it done.

At this time Mr. Deyer arrived and so there were five commission members to hear the appeal for 220 Merrill.

06-25-15

**HISTORIC DESIGN REVIEW
220 Merrill
Pergola Review
Historic Detroit Edison Company
CBD Historic District**

Zoning: B-4 Business Residential

Proposal: The applicant proposes to update the outdoor dining area of a two-story single tenant contributing historic building in the CBD Historic District. The building was originally constructed in 1931 - 32 by the Edison Electric Company at a cost of \$100,000. The building was designed in the English Revival style to compliment Birmingham's City Hall and the Baldwin Library. The building was sold in 1978 for use as a restaurant and office. It was recently purchased by a new owner, and it is undergoing an interior renovation. The applicant is proposing to increase the outdoor dining area, add a pergola, and replace a window with a door. This application was reviewed at the May 7, 2014 HDC meeting, and the changes to the building were approved. The HDC requested that the applicant return with clarification on the following items:

- **Intended plantings on the pergola;**
- **Lighting spec sheets;**
- **Tear sheet for the chair;**
- **Floor plan for winter and summer placement of the planters; and**
- **Pergola detail winter and summer.**

Ms. Weisberg took over the chair.

Mr. Carlin advised that the architect, Mr. Chris Longe, has proposed a very lovely treatment of the metal pergola and the plantings. Customers love to sit out there, and the restaurant is popular. Mr. Longe was present, along with the business partners, Ms. Denise Elitch and Mr. Zaid Elia.

Mr. Longe noted the Planning Board has approved a pergola in front of the restaurant. The present proposal is to alter the color of the pergola to a copper patina which matches the menu covers and is complimentary to the brick color on the building. Boston Ivy will be planted and trained along each of the eight (8)

columns of the pergola, and seasonal flower baskets will be placed on top of the four (4) pergola columns that face the street and two (2) in the back. Also, they propose to install frosted incandescent string lights inside the pergola.

Ms. Dukas thought the addition of the Boston Ivy enhances the whole structure but she didn't want to end up with a bunch of dead vines during the winter. Mr. Longe said the intent is to have the ivy cover the whole structure and give it an organic feel. Ivy stays green all year.

Mr. Deyer applauded what they are trying to do. He thinks they are hoping to disguise the pergola so that it blends in with the building. However, he doesn't find the pergola adds anything and he can't support it. He doesn't feel responsibility to the owners of the building but he feels responsibility to the City of Birmingham in trying to make sure the historic buildings maintain the integrity of the original design.

Mr. Willoughby did not object to the pergola being there. He reminded the board that when you add on to a historic building it is very important not to mimic the historic character, so that it is very clear what is historic and what is not. Therefore he thinks the pergola is very compatible with the building. From that perspective the applicant has met the Dept. of Interior's Standards and it is done quite well. What keeps historic buildings going in communities all over the world is that they react to changes in people's lifestyle. People love to dine outside, so he thinks the pergola is really responding to the needs of the citizens of Birmingham.

Chairperson Weisberg called for discussion from the audience at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Gary Wachler, whose business in Birmingham is Wachler Estate Collections, thought the pergola looked beautiful just the way it was. He appreciates Mr. Willoughby's comments and thinks the same way.

Ms. Lauri Carbel whose business is in Birmingham reiterated what Mr. Willoughby said. Customers that come into her store say they love the restaurant and love the pergola. It adds to Birmingham and makes it look beautiful. People want to see things like this. New things are needed to keep people coming. If you keep doing the same thing, you keep everything the same, nothing is ever different, you complain about everything, it doesn't help Birmingham at all. People like to sit outside under something with flowers and vines. It creates a better atmosphere and it would be a huge mistake to take it away. She listens to the board and can't even believe that is what they are saying. She doesn't understand why the commission seems to try to do everything to keep businesses from coming to Birmingham. The City of Birmingham is a very sophisticated area and you have to keep things interesting for people to want to come to these different places. She hears complaints all the time in her store that the board makes it very difficult for everything anybody

wants to do to make things better for the City of Birmingham. It's like some members are really with us in this century and some are just really lagging behind. She thinks they should start looking at books to see what is going on in the world. What makes the members expert on knowing what is great for architecture for the City or knowing what businesses should do. She doesn't understand why she should say how great it is and the board doesn't know it. So, please keep the pergola.

Mr. Deyer said he doesn't think the comment was true that the board is an impediment to business. Everything on the building was approved and the only issue was the pergola.

Mr. Andrew Wachler suggested looking at the big picture rather than trying to micro manage. He feels the historic building has been enhanced and it will continue to be a catalyst for the City. The idea of ivy growing along a historic building certainly seems consistent with historic context. With that, he urged the commission members to approve the proposal.

Chairperson Weisberg clarified this commission is allowed to be subjective and each member is allowed to assert his/her individual opinion on projects. However as Mr. Willoughby pointed out, they do have standards particularly when it comes to historic buildings,

Mr. Dustin Wachler thought he would add a youth perspective. A lot of people his age are going to more and more restaurants Downtown. He thinks the building is beautiful and the pergola is classic and it doesn't obstruct anything. It adds to the City and hopes the commission will approve it.

Ms. Isabella Tobias remembered that the old 220 Merrill seemed rather outdated and kind of sterile. She urged the commissioners to think about the aesthetic nature of what is proposed. It would be lovely to walk down the street and see ivy and flowers. They would really add to the beauty, atmosphere and architecture of the building. She urged the commission to think about that.

Mr. Carlin indicated his clients are anxious to go forward and bring this to a conclusion.

Ms. Dukas affirmed that the petitioner has tried to address the concerns she had about the pergola. Ms. Weisberg said she has always been comfortable with the pergola.

Mr. Willoughby added to his earlier comments. He feels the petitioner has gone to great lengths to respond positively and effectively to the commission's suggestions. He thinks the pergola works extremely well with the windows behind it and he doesn't think it diminishes the structure. The applicants followed

the rules on how to add on to historic buildings and they did it right. Therefore he is in favor of it.

Mr. Coir said he had been opposed to this particular design. This is a French looking pergola and it is inappropriate for an English looking building. He feels if they are trying now to hide the pergola by putting ivy and plants on it he is comfortable with that rather than looking at something that in his opinion is totally the wrong style. A pergola per se is highly appropriate and adds luster to this property.

Mr. Longe explained the metal is meant to blend in with the building and in time the ivy will hide the pergola.

Motion by Mr. Willoughby

Seconded by Ms. Weisberg to approve the design as submitted today for 220 Merrill, pergola review with the understanding that the ivy will cover the metal pergola in time and that Boston ivy lasts all year. Also with the understanding the lighting they have proposed will supplement what is already there.

Mr. Carlin assured everyone they will make sure the ivy continues to be there. The chairperson added that property owners who have a huge investment in the property and the business can be presumed to have a great interest in making sure that their business attracts people.

Motion carried, 4-1.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Coir, Willoughby, Dukas, Weisberg

Nays: Deyer

Abstain: Henke

Absent: Trapnell

06-26-15

Mr. Henke took over the chair for the next hearing.

HISTORIC DESIGN REVIEW

243 Merrill

La Strada Caffè

CBD Historic District

Zoning: B-4 Business Residential

Proposal: The applicant is seeking approval to install one new window in a previously existing opening, a new set of out-swing French doors and the establishment of an

outdoor dining area in a non-contributing historic building in the CBD Historic District. The applicant was recently granted administrative approval to reinstall four (4) of the original copper awnings that had been removed and put in storage at some time in the past.

The proposed window will be constructed of lightly tinted 1 in. insulated glass with a bronze anodized aluminum frame to match the rest of the building. The two sidelight windows are proposed to be operable. The French doors are proposed to replace an existing window to allow an open air atmosphere between the sidewalk and the inside of the cafe. The doors are proposed to be French style glass doors without muntins or mullions. The color and finish of the doors will be anodized aluminum to match the rest of the building.

Outdoor dining area

The applicant is proposing to create an outdoor dining area with ten (10) seats located directly on the sidewalk in front of the cafe's proposed French doors and new window. The proposal includes three (3) two-top tables and one four (4) top table. The tables and chairs are proposed to be the Innova hearth and home bistro set with an antique black bamboo powder coat finish. The chairs are constructed with a cast iron frame and aluminum seats and backs. The tables are constructed with an aluminum frame and metal top. The total outdoor dining area proposed is 150 sq. ft. **The applicant must provide a trash receptacle within the outdoor dining area as required by the Zoning Ordinance.**

Mr. Zharko Palushaj, the restaurant owner, said he will share the space with his wife who has a nail salon. Inside at the front of the restaurant will be a bistro bar with no chairs for the service of specialty coffee and teas. In the rear there will be seating for people who want to sit quietly and discuss business. The signs can be administratively approved after the SLUP is approved at the City Commission.

Motion by Mr. Deyer

Seconded by Mr. Willoughby to approve the Historic Design Review for 243 Merrill, La Strada Cafe, as submitted.

There were no comments from the audience on the motion at 8:13 p.m.

Motion carried, 5-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Coir, Willoughby, Dukas, Henke, Weisberg

Nays: None

Absent: Deyer, Trapnell

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Staff Reports

-- Administrative Approvals

- 180 Pierce - Remove existing 2 in. louver on underside of entry canopy. Widen existing opening to install new TrueAire Model 173.4 in. surface mounted louvers to allow for increased Outside Air to restaurant MAU. Repaint bottom of canopy color Sherwin Williams Sandbar SW7547.
- Merrillwood Bldg.
- 222 Maple Rd., Dessis - Front facade of building.

-- Violation Notices (none)

-- Demolition Applications

- 748 Davis
- 1007 Emmons
- 1186 Stanley
- 468 Park
- 370 Pleasant
- 492 Larchlea
- 1044 Lakeside
- 1655 Dorchester
- 1863 Hazel
- 1348 Yosemite
- 1188 Bird
- 2624 Buckingham
- 1929 Hazel
- 2291 Dorchester
- 482 Park
- 1951 Holland

B. Communications

-- Commissioners' Comments

06-27-15

ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, the board motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Matthew Baka
Sr. Planner