

BIRMINGHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 13, 2017
Municipal Building Commission Room
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Historic District Commission (“HDC”) held Wednesday, September 13, 2017. Chairman John Henke called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

Present: Chairman John Henke; Board Members Thomas Trapnell, Michael Willoughby; Alternate Board Member Adam Charles

Absent: Board Members Keith Deyer, Shelli Weisberg, Natalia Dukas; Alternate Board Member Dulce Fuller; Student Representatives Josh Chapnick, Griffin Pfaff

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

09-43-17

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
HDC Minutes of August 16, 2017

Motion by Mr. Willoughby
Seconded by Mr. Charles to approve the HDC Minutes of August 16, 2017 as presented.

Motion carried, 4-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Willoughby, Charles, Henke, Trapnell

Nays: None

Absent: Deyer, Weisberg, Dukas

The Chairman noted that only four of seven board members were present this evening. He offered applicants the opportunity to adjourn their hearing to the next HDC meeting when a more full board might be present. All applicants wished to be heard.

09-44-17

HISTORIC DESIGN REVIEW
460 W. Maple Rd.

Chatfield-Campbell House

Mr. Charles indicated he has a conflict of interest for this review. He is an employee of Thomas Seboldt, who is the contractor. However he is not directly involved in the project.

Therefore there was not a full quorum to make a motion. However, commission members could place their comments on the record.

Zoning: R-6 Multiple-Family Residential

History: Mr. Baka noted the Chatfield-Campbell House is significant because it is one of the oldest remaining houses in Birmingham. The original house was constructed in 1865, and in 1885, part of the roof was raised to add the second story. In 1928, a brick addition designed by Wallace Frost, and constructed by Scott Hersey, was added to the rear of the house. The notoriety of Wallace Frost added to the significant history of the house. Members of the same family lived in the house from 1887 to 2007. The house was purchased by Eric Charles Designs in 2009, for use as an interior design studio. The building received historic design review approval at the October 7, 2009, the November 17, 2010, July 20, 2011, and February 6, 2013 HDC meetings. The applicant was granted a variance by the Board of Zoning Appeals ("BZA") in 2009 and renewed in 2010 to permit an office use for the structure.

Proposal: The applicant is proposing extensive landscaping and site changes around the existing historic structure. The submitted plans demonstrate a new concrete driveway, ornamental paving patios and walkways, fencing and gates, and the installation of a gas light with a sign at the entry. Additionally, the applicant is seeking approval for the installation of a ground mounted AC unit 0 ft. from the east lot line. However, the Zoning Ordinance requires a 3 ft. side setback for any structure. ***If approved in concept by the HDC, the applicant will be required to obtain a variance from the BZA to allow the installation of the AC unit within the required side open space.***

Site Changes

South (front) Yard

The applicant is proposing to make use of crushed stone mulch as the primary lawn material. The plans demonstrate an array of three diamond shaped garden beds along with a semi-circular garden bed on the right side of the front lawn facing the house. A lantern will illuminate a new sign for the building and the front entrance will be accented with planter pots on each side.

West (side) Yard

Yew plantings are proposed to extend into the west side yard running parallel along the property line. The northwest corner will feature a planter wall and a

lawn leading to an entertainment deck. Between the lawn and garage the applicant proposes a vegetable garden.

North (rear) Yard

The property owner plans to feature a new enclosed lawn, garden, and an entertainment deck. An exposed aggregate concrete apron will be installed around the garage for parking.

East (side) Yard

The interior courtyard formed by the recessed wall along the east elevation and an existing wall along the gravel driveway is proposed to be landscaped. The courtyard will be made accessible by an existing bluestone walk to the right and a new walkway on the left connecting to the front. A swinging gate will be installed to restrict public access from the front. As previously noted the applicant is proposing to install a ground mounted AC unit at the east lot line which will require a variance from the BZA.

Mr. Willoughby announced this commission's purpose is to keep the integrity of historic structures in their community intact. So, in his opinion, the further the AC unit is away from the building, the better. Given the fact it is behind a transformer it will not be seen and that seems like the smartest place to put it. Therefore, he encouraged the members of the BZA to grant the variance.

Mr. Eric Jirgens, the property owner, explained they had previously received variances for two AC units that sit on the west side of the main residence. This unit would service the barn only. Chairman Henke said he has no issues with the placement of this unit. All the HDC can do is build a record to send forward to the BZA for them to deal with.

Mr. Willoughby indicated he does a lot of work with Mr. Seboldt's company and they do not do landscaping. Therefore he does not see that Mr. Charles would have a conflict of interest with the landscape. Mr. Charles said he is comfortable with that.

Mr. Michael Dul, Landscape Architect, passed out a colored diagram to the commission members and went on to describe his extensive proposal. They are even planting on the adjacent property with their permission, and the neighbors are very happy to cooperate with the planting. They are trying to make this condensed site very elegant and fitting. The garden will be maintained in a low key manner as a showpiece for the design studio. The proposed lantern in the front yard is pretty much a duplicate of the historic fixture, as is the panel sign that will hang from the post. They hope to place the utilities all in one area. Along the right-of-way low-grow sumac will be planted which is durable and has great fall color.

Mr. Charles inquired about what will be done to keep the pleached Linden trees from infringing into the very constricted alleyway. Mr. Dul said they are a canopy street tree and will be a great ceiling for the alley. He didn't think there would be a problem.

It was noted that the fencing material color will need to be submitted for administrative approval.

**Motion by Mr. Willoughby
Seconded by Mr. Trapnell to approve the landscape plan for 460 W. Maple Rd. in its entirety as submitted.**

There were no comments from the public on the motion.

Motion carried, 4-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Willoughby, Trapnell, Charles, Henke

Nays: None

Absent: Deyer, Weisberg, Dukas

09-45-17

STUDY SESSION

927 Purdy

Historic Designation request

Mr. Baka reported that the City of Birmingham recently received a request from a home owner to consider Historic Designation of their home at 927 Purdy. Accordingly, the Birmingham Historic Designation Study Committee ("HDSC") met several times to compile and review relevant information and research. Upon review of the information, the HDSC voted to recommend approval of the request to the City Commission. In accordance with the Birmingham City Code, Chapter 127 section 127-4 (c) 5, the City is now transmitting the preliminary report that has been compiled to the HDC in a request for review and comments on the appropriateness of this designation request.

The preliminary designation report along with all available and relevant research and information on the subject property was presented. The Birmingham City Code requires that the HDC review the recommendation of the HDSC and provide comments.

The house was originally located on Pierce, basically right across from City Hall. The current property owner bought it four or five years ago and has been restoring it. Architecturally there are some question marks about what is original and what is not. What is interesting about the house is that it was once owned

by Almeron Whitehead, who was the founder of the Birmingham Eccentric along with his many other accomplishments. In about 1950 the house was purchased by Russell McBride who moved it to Purdy. Then his son and family lived in the house. The HDSC felt the ownership by Almeron Whitehead makes the house significant and therefore they were in favor of designating it.

Chairman Henke commended the owners for renovating the house. It looks like they have done a nice job of putting back as much as they could. Mr. Baka noted some of the elements have been recreated without actual verification. The details have been taken from other houses that were built at the same time rather than from photographs. Therefore from the standpoint of designation Mr. Baka thought it would be more for the historical aspect rather than an architectural one.

Mr. Willoughby liked the fact that the homeowners have stepped up to seek the designation. Certainly the home is pretty close to what it once was, so he would support designation. Chairman Henke, agreed, especially given the long history of the house and who owned it.

09-46-17

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Staff Reports

-- Administrative Approvals

- Community House - Purpose is to paint the Community House. Lift required to reach high paint areas.
- 320 Martin, 320 Investments, LLC - Roof tear off and replacement with EPDM rubber.
- 101 N. Old Woodward Ave. - Addition of umbrellas to outdoor patio space.
- 271 W. Maple Rd., Apt. 6 - Install one vinyl replacement window on the side of the building.

-- Violation Notices (none)

-- Demolition Applications

- 1544 Holland
- 832 Humphrey
- 185 Linden
- 583 Southfield

B. Communications

-- Commissioners' Comments

09-47-17

ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, the commissioners motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

Matthew Baka
Sr. Planner