

CITY OF MUSKEGON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES

October 6, 2015

Vice-Chairman S. Radtke called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. and roll was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: S. Radtke, S. Kroes, A. Riegler, L. Spataro, L. Wood, K. Panozzo

MEMBERS ABSENT: J. Hilt (Excused)

STAFF PRESENT: M. Franzak, K. Cummins, Cathy Brubaker-Clarke

OTHERS PRESENT: D. Gregersen, 241 W. Muskegon Ave; K. Johnson, 1281 Montgomery; M. McGivney, Allen Edwin Homes, 795 Clyde Court SW, Byron Center, MI

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of September 1, 2015 was made by L. Spataro, supported by S. Kroes and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Case 2015-13 – Houston/Monroe between 4th/5th. Applicant: City of Muskegon. District: Houston. Current Function: Vacant. The City of Muskegon is in the process of acquiring the former St Joseph’s Church property and plans to construct nine new market-rate homes along Monroe Avenue and Houston Avenue. M. Franzak introduced C. Brubaker-Clarke, the Director of Community and Economic Development for the City of Muskegon, and M. McGivney, Vice President of Sales and Marketing of Allen Edwin Homes.

C. Brubaker-Clarke spoke regarding the history of the project. She stated that income restrictions, declining property values, and average income levels were adversely affecting the health and diversity of neighborhoods in Muskegon which was not healthy for the fabric of the City. She stated this was not only a detriment to prospective residential, commercial and manufacturing investments, but impacted bank financing as well. C. Brubaker-Clarke stated the City decided to become proactive in their quest to support an initiative to construct nine market-rate homes in one neighborhood, built along Houston and Monroe Avenues. In that way prospective buyers were not deterred by the notion that they are the only ones moving into an area. C. Brubaker-Clarke emphasized that the project would trigger additional improvements, and would spill over into other homes in the area who would qualify for siding and other rehabilitation work. This would ultimately improve the overall housing stock.

C. Brubaker-Clarke introduced M. McGivney of Allen Edwin Homes, who stated that the builders were chosen because of their capacity to construct nine homes simultaneously, with particular attention being given towards the compatibility of the historic neighborhood. Groundbreaking is set to commence this fall with homes slated to sell in spring, 2016. M. McGivney addressed floor plans, lot positioning, curb appeal, garage placement, and pricing. He

spoke to the project's eligibility for a 12-year tax abatement through a Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ) for homebuyers. Future homebuilding opportunities for the hometown heroes project was discussed, as well as potential markets for hospital employees in conjunction with the local hospital's planned expansion. A. Riegler inquired about the facades on Fifth Street for the Kensington 2100 and 1890 plans, which appeared to be devoid of windows. She stated that would be a significant challenge to the aesthetics along the street view. M. McGivney stated that additional windows could be incorporated, with consideration being given to the functionality and furniture placement within interior rooms. K. Panozzo requested clarification of the property line separation in order to get a feel for home placement and configuration of the yards. C. Brubaker-Clarke stated that the property lines and property descriptions were currently being written, and would remain as depicted on the architectural storyboard. C. Brubaker-Clarke also informed the commission that the City would be presenting the project to a group of realtors promoting Muskegon who expressed interest in helping market the homes.

K. Johnson of 1281 Montgomery asked to view exterior color selections chosen for siding. L. Spataro asked about the homeowner's ability to make modifications to personalize the home. M. McGivney stated that any change to the footprint of a home would have to be done pre-foundation, and prior to in-house fabrication of the exterior walls. A. Riegler requested verification that the homes would be built precisely as presented in order to maintain the variety and aesthetic balance of the homes and color schemes. M. Franzak stated that any motion was to approve the homes as presented on the architectural renderings. C. Brubaker-Clarke stated that if a homebuyer expressed an interest in a home but wished to deviate in design, that they would be directed to future build sites where flexibility was still allowed. D. Gregersen of 241 W. Muskegon expressed his concern regarding the lack of windows on all four sides of the home, and asked about plans for landscaping. M. McGivney stated that consideration would be given to additional windows on each side of the home. C. Brubaker-Clarke stated that the inclusion of landscaping was a critical component when determining the price-points of the homes, but that landscaping was not under the purview of the HDC.

A motion that the HDC approve the North Nelson home in-fill concept with the models as presented, and to table action of the final facades until a Special Meeting could be held was made by L. Spataro, supported by S. Kroes, and unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.