

CITY OF MUSKEGON  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
MINUTES

**May 2, 2017**

Chairperson J. Hilt called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and roll was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Hilt, S. Kroes, S. Radtke, A. Riegler

MEMBERS ABSENT: D. Warren, excused; L. Wood, K. Panozzo

STAFF PRESENT: M. Franzak, D. Renkenberger

OTHERS PRESENT: H. Sherman, 1347 Peck St; D. Gregersen, 241 W Muskegon Ave.; J. Paulson, SafeBuilt Building Inspection Dept; A. Soler, Lakeshore Museum Center; T. Kling & T. Sanocki, Muskegon Polish Festival

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of April 4, 2017 was made by J. Hilt, supported by S. Kroes and unanimously approved.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Case 2017-06 – 1347 Peck Street.** Applicant: Helen Sherman. District: McLaughlin. Current Function: Residential. M. Franzak presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking approval to replace the current wood siding with vinyl siding. They are proposing to remove the old wood siding, wrap the house for insulation and protection against moisture, put up trim and wrap in aluminum and then reside with vinyl. The applicant was asked to get a quote for repainting versus residing.

H. Sherman stated that there were a number of improvements to the property that were needed in order to make it marketable, including repairing some areas of dry rot. A. Riegler asked if the porch was original to the home. H. Sherman stated that it was not; it was a later addition that was approved by the HDC. A. Riegler stated that the house was architecturally significant, as it was a classic of its time period. S. Radtke concurred. S. Kroes stated that the architectural features would be retained, just wrapped in aluminum. H. Sherman stated that she wanted to protect the house from further deterioration. A. Riegler stated that the addition of vinyl siding could cause more problems, as it would trap moisture. H. Sherman stated that she planned to remove the problem siding and correct any problems before wrapping and adding vinyl siding. A. Riegler asked if she had obtained a quote for the work. H. Sherman stated that she had a quote of \$5,000 to \$7,000 for the siding only, with no labor, as she would handle the labor herself. A. Riegler stated that she had a couple of issues with the request: 1) the house was definitely architecturally significant, and 2) the addition of vinyl siding and aluminum trim would drastically change the look of the house. She stated that she would like to see pictures of the areas of deterioration. H. Sherman stated that one board had fallen off on the back and others were dry-rotted. S. Radtke stated that houses of this era were not meant to be wrapped, and the vinyl siding would trap moisture. J. Hilt asked H. Sherman if she had gotten a quote for restoring the wood. H. Sherman stated that she had not; she planned to do that work herself. She stated that the house was last painted in 2003 and it was not done well.

She was also concerned with possible lead paint contamination. A. Riegler stated that she would like more information before voting on the request. The wood siding was part of the structural integrity of the house and there was no telling what damage could be caused by removing it. S. Radtke and J. Hilt concurred. J. Hilt asked if H. Sherman could obtain estimates for stripping and repainting the wood siding. H. Sherman stated that it would be difficult, since they would be doing that work themselves. S. Radtke reviewed the HDC standards for vinyl siding and stated that the board had to abide by the standards. H. Sherman stated that the board had been generous in the past in allowing work to be done. A. Riegler stated that board members had changed over the years. H. Sherman stated that she was aware of the home's history but improvements to the house were much needed and the cost of wood repair and painting would make that impossible. She asked staff about lead paint concerns. M. Franzak stated that it was possible the house contained lead paint, and she would need to take that into consideration. H. Sherman confirmed that the board was asking for quotes on painting and vinyl siding. S. Radtke stated that the first preference was to repair the wood siding, but the board would like to compare the estimates. H. Sherman asked if the HDC or the City provided any incentives for financial assistance to help meet the HDC standards. M. Franzak stated that there was nothing in place at this time, but the City and the HDC had been looking at possibilities to provide some kind of assistance to homeowners.

A motion that the HDC table the request to replace with wood siding with vinyl siding was made by S. Radtke, supported by J. Hilt and unanimously approved, with J. Hilt, S. Kroes, S. Radtke, and A. Riegler voting aye.

**Case 2017-07 – 240 Monroe Avenue.** Applicant: City of Muskegon. District: Houston. Current Function: Residential. M. Franzak stated that SafeBuilt building inspection department was the applicant for this case on behalf of the City. They are seeking approval to demolish the house due to fire damage from a fire on November 9, 2016. The State Historic Preservation Office of Michigan (SHPO) has determined that the home is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Fire Inspection Report and pictures were provided to board members.

A. Riegler stated that at the previous meeting the applicant had indicated that he was interested in saving the structure. J. Paulson replied that, at the subsequent Housing Board of Appeals (HBA) meeting the homeowner informed that board that he had not been aware of the full extent of the damage and the costs involved in repairs. J. Paulson described the structural problems with the house, and estimated that repairs would cost over \$20,000. The City had escrowed funds to cover demolition or rehabilitation costs, and Mr. Clark (homeowner) had been under the impression that he would lose those funds if the house was demolished. A. Riegler stated that, given the choice of the house remaining as it was or being demolished, demolition was preferable. Given the new information regarding the extent of damage and estimate of repair costs, she was more comfortable approving the demolition request.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to demolish the structure as proposed as long as all zoning requirements are met and the necessary permits are obtained, was made by A. Riegler, supported by S. Kroes and unanimously approved, with J. Hilt, S. Kroes, S. Radtke, and A. Riegler voting aye.

Cases were heard out of order at this point, with the ones having applicants present being heard first.

**Case 2017-11 – 444 & 448 West Clay Avenue.** Applicant: Lakeshore Museum Center. District: Clay – Western. Current Function: Institutional. M. Franzak presented the staff report. The applicant is seeking to erect a wooden split-rail fence around the two vacant properties where homes

were recently razed. The fence will keep cars from parking in these areas so they can be seeded. The rear of the lots near the alley will remain a parking area.

A. Soler stated that the fence may not be permanent; they just needed something to keep people and vehicles off the grass seed. She was willing to erect whatever type of fence the HDC deemed appropriate. The HDC standards did not clearly address fences on vacant lots. S. Radtke stated that the fence matched that around the adjoining museum property. The board suggested that shrub plantings could be used to screen the fence and vacant lots.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to erect a wooden split rail fence as proposed as long as it meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained, was made by S. Kroes, supported by S. Radtke and unanimously approved, with J. Hilt, S. Kroes, S. Radtke, and A. Riegler voting aye.

**Case 2017-10 – 345 Houston Avenue.** Applicant: Andre Coffee. District: Current Function: Residential. This is one of the new Midtown Square homes. The applicant is seeking approval to install a 6-foot white vinyl privacy fence with gate around his back yard. They will also be installing a ground-level wooden deck in the back yard and a paver patio with a fire pit. A sketch of the project was provided.

A. Riegler asked if the improvements met HDC standards. M. Franzak stated that this type of fence was very popular in historic districts and fit the character of the homes. J. Hilt pointed out that the houses in this development were new, not historic. Board members concurred that the proposed fire pit did not require HDC approval.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to erect a 6-foot white vinyl privacy fence and a wooden platform deck as proposed, as long all zoning requirements are met and the necessary permits are obtained, was made by S. Kroes, supported by J. Hilt and unanimously approved, with J. Hilt, S. Kroes, S. Radtke, and A. Riegler voting aye.

**Case 2017-09 – 25 Merrill Avenue.** Applicant: Holly Alway. District: McLaughlin. Current Function: Residential. The applicant is seeking approval to replace the current chain link fence with a 5-foot wood privacy fence. Her back yard borders a parking lot and she would like the fence to screen her yard. The fence will be located along the rear property line and the side of the back yard facing Peck St. An aerial photo of the property was provided showing the proposed fence location.

A motion that the HDC approve the request to erect a 5-foot wood panel fence as proposed as long as it meets all zoning requirements and the necessary permits are obtained, was made by S. Kroes, supported by J. Hilt and unanimously approved, with J. Hilt, S. Kroes, S. Radtke, and A. Riegler voting aye.

**Case 2017-08 – Hackley Park.** Applicant: Muskegon Polish Festival. District: National Register. Current Function: Park. M. Franzak stated that, although this request was not supported by staff, the applicant wished to present their case for installing a concrete dance floor in Hackley Park and have the HDC vote on it. M. Franzak and the City's Parks Supervisor, B. Young met with the applicant, Mr. Kling, at Hackley Park to discuss the proposal. Staff was not in favor of installing any permanent structure or grinding down any paved areas. There was discussion about leveling off the dirt then reseeding it after the festival. Mr. Kling stated that the temporary dance floor they rented last year did not work well, as it shifted position and was uneven. Staff and board members pointed out that the intended use of the park, per its master plan, was a Civil War monument, and a dance floor did not fit that purpose. T. Sanocki stated that they needed a dance floor for their festival and asked what their next step was. M. Franzak stated that he would discuss it with the

Parks Supervisor. No vote was able to be taken, as J. Hilt was on the board of the Muskegon Polish Festival and the remaining three HDC members present did not constitute a quorum.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.