



City of Saginaw
Historic District Commission
City Hall Council Chamber, Room 205
1315 S Washington Avenue
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-8222
Minutes
Tuesday April 25, 2024

I. Call to Order - Commissioner Mixter called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

II. Roll Call – Staff took roll.

Members Present: Lee Amo, Nathan Hanley, Kevin Jones, Alex Mixter, Andrew Naumann and Kevin Mark Rooker

Members Absent: Steven Meyers

Staff Present: Cassi Zimmerman, Robert Gollin, Attorney Amy Lusk

III. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Naumann, seconded by Commissioner Rooker, to approve the March 28, 2024, meeting minutes. **6 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent. Motion approved.**

IV. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Amo requested an addition to the new business section of the agenda to review drafts of application documents she had put together. Motion was made by Commissioner Rooker, seconded by Commissioner Hanley, to approve the amended agenda. **6 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent. Motion approved.**

V. Public Comment

None

VI. New Business

a. J24-1862 HDC Application Demolition for 108 N Niagara

Nicholas Seehafer, Shaheen Development, 1100 S Washington Ave, Saginaw, proposed the demolition of the building at 108 N Niagara St. He stated that based upon an inspection and subsequent letter from the City Fire Marshal and City Engineer that the building has the potential of endangering the integrity of the Court Street Bridge, which is deemed critical infrastructure for the City and should be demolished. It represents the only bridge in the City unencumbered by the railroad lines for emergency vehicles. He added that the Fire Marshal felt that they would not be able to send fire personnel into the building if it were to catch fire. Mr. Seehafer proposed that a new 3-story building be constructed at that site. The style is reminiscent of the existing building.

Commissioner Amo inquired about how long Shaheen Development owned the building. Mr. Seehafer explained that it was purchased in 2005. It was part of a sale that resulted in the property being abandoned and the City subsequently requested that Shaheen Development purchase the building. He added that the windows were boarded up and the interior cleaned. Commissioner Amo asked if there has been any stabilization of the building and referred to the Dangerous building letter from the City in which either stabilization or demolition should occur. Mr. Seehafer stated that they have no interest in the building as it sits and are opting to demolish it. He stated that their interest is to construct the proposed residential building that will

enhance the other developments occurring on Niagara.

Commissioner Rooker asked why it isn't feasible to save the facades and construct within the interior the proposed residential units. Mr. Seehafer responded that it is not economically feasible to accomplish that.

Motion made by Commissioner Amo, seconded by Commissioner Hanley, to approve a Notice to Proceed for Case # J24-1862 for 108 N Niagara under condition #2 that the work is not appropriate however the following conditions prevail that the resource is a deterrent to a major improvement program that will be a large benefit to the community.

Commissioner Naumann stated that the HDC pursued actions on this property because it felt it was unsafe. The proposed demolition is what is being proposed to deal with that concern. Commissioner Mixter stated that the HDC has never received an engineering report. He felt that the Commission should be evaluating these proposals based upon a review of the options for the building and costs involved. Commissioner Naumann acknowledged that Shaheen's architect provided a letter stating that the building was stable, and they met the requirements. Staff Gollin added that, following the response letter from Shaheen Development, an inspection was done by the Chief Building Inspector and the Fire Marshal.

Commissioner Amo asked if the entities such as the Railroad Company had been notified that the building may be demolished, and precautions taken to ensure the safety of the bridge. Staff Gollin confirmed that the City is aware of it as is the Railroad Company. Staff Zimmerman added that the demolition contractor would be responsible for ensuring that the building is razed safely.

Commissioner Mixter stated that no effort has been made to secure the building. The building has been exposed to the elements for the past 20 years and is by definition "Demolition by Neglect." Commissioner Hanley added that this would be setting precedence by allowing this without a report evaluating the structural issues and costs. Staff Gollin responded that it is not within the Commission's responsibility to analyze a project's economic feasibility from that of the developer. Commissioner Mixter asked if the cost of demolition has been established. Mr. Seehafer responded that this has not been estimated, but they do have the cost of repairing the brick walls. He added that the cost of repairing the brick is more than the new building. Josh Duby, from Shaheen Development confirmed that he met with renovation contractors, masonry contractors and engineers. He stated that the walls are constructed with 3 layers of brick. Where the presence of cracks in the wall indicate movement, it's necessary to take it all down and then inspect the foundation. He said the estimated cost 6 years ago was about \$1.5 Million. He said that the cost to build the proposed new building is comparable. Commissioner Hanley commented that the HDC does not have sufficient evidence to justify a decision on this matter. Attorney Lusk stated that the motion is not under the criteria of "financial hardship."

Commissioner Naumann commented that the multiple requests for information prior should have been responded to by sharing some of the evidence of the cost. The HDC needs additional information to make these decisions. Attorney Lusk suggested that if there is more information needed, the HDC could postpone the

decision with the motion and make that request.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rooker, supported by Commissioner Hanley, to postpone the motion to approve a Notice to Proceed until the next meeting.

6 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent. Motion approved.

Commissioner Rooking requested that a report be provided that indicates the cost of stabilizing the building and bringing the building up to code. Mr. Seehafer asked if the Commission would want a tour of the building as well. Commissioner Amo requested that the set of plans be sent to the Commission. Staff Gollin said that the original pdf file of the plans will be sent.

b. J24-1902 HDC Application Window Restoration 122 S Hamilton

Mr. Seehafer, Shaheen Development, stated that as they began renovation of the interior of the building, they uncovered windows that were not on the original plan. He said that they will improve the space by allowing more light into the building. He is requesting that the HDC approve the addition of the windows to the original plan. He added that the upper two windows will enhance the office space proposed for the upper story. Mr. Dubay, Shaheen Development, stated that the new windows will match the existing windows in terms of the exterior trim work.

Motion by Commissioner Rooker, supported by Commissioner Hanley, to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for case J24-1902 for the addition of new windows to the originally approved plan. The work as proposed meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular: #10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

6 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent. Motion approved.

c. 1019 N Michigan Ave Roof Replacement Stop Work Order

Paul Brun, the project manager, requested consideration be given to the work that has been done on the roof thus far. He stated that he was unaware that this property was located within the historic district, and they currently have about \$17,000 invested in labor and materials.

Commissioner Mixer asked if there was a case number. Staff Gollin stated that we are working off the original case number issued in 2023 for metal shingles. The property was sold, and a building permit issued. The request is for a color change and to replace the asphalt shingles with asphalt shingles, rather than the metal shingles originally approved.

Motion by Commissioner Rooker, supported by Commissioner Hanley, to amend the original Certificate of Appropriateness for case #J23-0202 to permit the brown asphalt colored shingles. The work as proposed meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular: *Standard #6: Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of distinctive features, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical or pictorial evidence.*

6 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent. Motion approved.

d. Proposed changes for Historic District Applications.

Commissioner Amo presented three proposed Historic District Applications dealing with

existing, new and demolition of structures. These provide a list of items necessary for an applicant to provide the HDC to make an informed decision. Attorney Lusk stated that the information provided to staff in a prior meeting was incorporated in the documents that are handed out as part of the application process. Staff Zimmerman said that the information provided can be incorporated with documents and the step-by-step illustrations will help make it user friendly.

VII. Old Business

a. 2024 Goals

Commissioner Mixter asked the commissioners for suggestions for the next quarter goals. Commissioner Amo suggested that a homeowners guide educating those whose properties are in a historic district what is permitted and those that are not. There was discussion about how best to present the information and disseminate it on the City's website.

Commissioner Jones suggested having a Historic District Day celebrating the historic districts. Attorney Lusk suggested piggybacking off a national historic day celebration. An application could be made to the The City Manager's office by the HDC requesting a proclamation.

Commissioner Mixter summarized the goals:

1. Streamline the application process.
2. Put together a homeowner guide.
3. Establishing some form of community outreach.
4. Re-evaluating the historic district map.

Attorney Lusk pointed out that the City Council approved the establishment of the East Saginaw Historic District study committee. Interested individuals should apply for appointment with the City Clerk.

Staff Gollin provided the members of the Commission with a thank you letter from the Planning Commission for the report on the Roethke Houses study report.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Rooker, seconded by Commissioner Hanley, to adjourn the meeting at 6:01 p.m. **6 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent. Motion approved.**

Respectfully submitted.
Robert Gollin, Staff