



City of Saginaw
Historic District Commission
City Hall Council Chamber, Room 205
1315 S Washington Avenue
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-8222
Minutes
Tuesday, May 23, 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: None

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

III. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Amo, seconded by Commissioner Hanley, to approve the April 25, 2024, meeting minutes. **6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent. Motion approved.**

IV. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Rooker, seconded by Commissioner Amo, to approve the agenda. **6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent. Motion approved.**

V. Public Comment

Russ Inman, 110 Braley Street, announced that the Old Town Association was having their annual art fair June 6 and 7, 2024. He invited all to attend.

VI. New Business

None

VII. Old Business

- a. J24-1862 HDC Application Demolition for 108 N Niagara.** The motion postponed by the Historic District Commission during the April 25, 2024, meeting regarding the Notice to Proceed for Case # J24-1862 for 108 N Niagara was brought back for discussion.

A Motion by Commissioner Rooker, supported by Commissioner Nauman, to amend the original motion on the floor of the "Motion to approve the Notice to Proceed for case #J24-1862 that the; b) resource is a deterrent to a major improvement program that will be of substantial benefit to the community and the applicant proposing the work has obtained all the necessary planning and zoning approvals, financing, and environmental clearances (if required) before demolition can proceed," by adding: "and the following condition(s) will be met:

- 1) The five (5) cast iron columns from the front of the northern most building be incorporated into the front entrance of the new structure;
- 2) The decorative lintels/window hoods on the third-floor windows will be saved and additional units replicated using (poly cast or other appropriate material) and installed on the third-floor windows of the new structure.
- 3) A historic photo or photos of the buildings be mounted on the exterior along with a short history of the original buildings."

Before demolition can proceed, the applicant will provide to the commission the approvals and clearances noted above. The proposed application will then materially correct the condition. **2 ayes, 4 nays, 0 absent. Motion denied.**

Commissioner Hanley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Rooker, to reconsider the motion to amend the original motion. **6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent. Motion approved.**

Commissioner Rooker handed out a document that included the amended motion language along with photos of the items listed. He explained that this was a way to celebrate the original building features and provide a compromise.

The motion to amend was voted on. **6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent. Motion to amend was approved.**

Commissioner Mixter inquired about the breakdown for the masonry quote. He felt that the original discussion centered around rectifying the building and now the discussion is about the building being deemed a dangerous building. Pete Shaheen, Shaheen Development, 1100 S Washington Ave, Saginaw responded that the description of the building is valid; that it is a dangerous building. He added that the Fire Marshal issued a notice that the building needs to be demolished. He explained that there is significant structural damage and requires excavation alongside the building. Foundations would need to be re-supported with pilings and other major structural repairs required. The perimeter walls would also have to be removed, foundations would need to be replaced and walls reconstructed. He said there is a significant economic hardship to support that investment.

Commissioner Amo asked if the plan is to remove the brick from the entire building or just along the southeast corner near the Court Street Bridge where there is obvious damage. Mr. Shaheen said it is not just one corner, the whole front of the building along Niagara is bowed out as well. He commented that the project to reconstruct the building is not financially practical. He said that his company has been involved in many restoration projects within the City, including the Temple Theater. This project is not feasible to restore.

Commissioner Hanley asked if there were any attempts in the past to make this building work or is this just now becoming an issue. Mr. Shaheen explained that there were attempts in the past to get end users for the building. He said that these end users are only willing to pay "ex number" of dollars for rent, but the cost to ready the space did not support those rents. Commissioner Mixter commented that it is difficult for the HDC to be continually asked to approve the demolition of structures due to the level of neglect. He was hoping to have a conversation about partnerships, utilizing grants, and developing "place making" opportunities. Mr. Shaheen stated that in reality Niagara Street will not likely become a vibrant pedestrian friendly area conducive to placemaking. He felt that the focus of the HDC should be resolute about the blocks of historic structures along Hamilton Street, Ames, Cass, etc. He said that they struggled with what to do with 108 Niagara site because its isolated due to the bridge and the other public structures that surround it.

Commissioner Rooker spoke about the Graffiti park under the Court Street Bridge. He commented that there exists good artwork that should be embraced. He requested that Mr. Shaheen show support for the park in some way as part of the project. Mr. Shaheen responded that while he agreed there is some good artwork, there is also profanity and racial slurs that he cannot condone. If there was a way in which it could be restrained and controlled, he could support it.

The following amended motion was voted on: To approve "Notice to Proceed for case #J24-1862 that the; b) resource is a deterrent to a major improvement program that will be of substantial benefit to the community and the applicant proposing the work has obtained all the necessary planning and zoning approvals, financing, and environmental clearances (if required) before demolition can proceed.

- 1) The five (5) cast iron columns from the front of the northern most building be incorporated into the front entrance of the new structure;
- 2) The decorative lintels/window hoods on the third-floor windows will be saved and additional units replicated using (poly cast or other appropriate material) and installed on the third-floor windows of the new structure.
- 3) A historic photo or photos of the buildings be mounted on the exterior along with a short history of the original buildings.”

2 ayes, 4 nays, 0 absent. Motion denied.

Reason given by the Commission for denial: Resource is not a deterrent or impediment to a major improvement program that will be of substantial benefit to the community.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Rooker, seconded by Commissioner Hanley, to adjourn the meeting at 5:24 p.m. **6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent. Motion approved.**

Respectfully submitted.
Robert Gollin, Staff