

**Schenectady Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes
May 25, 2023**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Yager called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Patricia Yager, Chair; Richard Unger, Zakhar Berkovich, Shaun Andriano, Dr. Dean Bennett, Austin Erickson, Christopher Marney, City Counsel, and Sylvia Jimison, Development Staff

EXCUSED: Joe Fava

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

IV. ADOPTION OF MEETING MEETINGS

IV. Adoption of Prior Meeting's Minutes

- A. January 26th motioned by Commissioner Zakhar Berkovich to approve the minutes, no corrections, and seconded by Commissioner Richard Unger.
- B. February 23rd motioned by Commissioner Richard Unger to approve the minutes, no corrections, and seconded by Commissioner Zakhar Berkovich.

V. Call for Members of Public to Speak on Agenda Items

There were 2 neighbors to premise located in the RH-2 Stockade Historic District at 6 Washington Avenue present to speak to the project. Ms. Mary D'Alessandro-Gilmore was present to speak as a neighbor to 6 Washington Avenue.

VI. Applications

- A. **Consideration for approval submitted by Tablecloths for Granted LLC to install a 92" x 40.27" aluminum sign. The premises is located in the Union Street Corridor Historic District at 510 Union St.**

Carl at AJ Signs said he would be installing a 40-inch 92-inch aluminum pan sign with PVC lettering sign that will face Clinton Street Entrance side of the building.

Commissioner Yager asked if the business was in the back of the building and the applicant replied that the business takes up the whole building but the sign will be on the back.

Attorney Marney clarified that the business has been there for quite some time.

Commissioner Andriano brought up that it is visible from a Right of Way but that it does not detract from the historical character of the building.

Commissioner Unger wanted to know if the sign would be lit, and would it show at night fall, if external lighting would be involved. **The applicant** stated the sign would not have any lighting and more intended for daytime. The **Commissioner** then asked how far down the sign would be from the top. The **applicant** stated it would 4 bricks down from the top about 12-15 inches.

Commissioner Yager wanted to know if the sign would be viewed from the right-away and how the sign would be mounted to the building. If the mounting of the sign would involve using brick. **The applicant** responded that they would mount the frame through the mortar and would not go through the brick.

RESOLUTION

Commissioner Unger made a motion to grant the application with the following conditions and seconded by **Commissioner Andriano** with the following conditions:

- To install the 92 by 40.27-inch aluminum sign
- Work will be completed by April 27, 2024.
- Sign to be located at the southeast corner of the building facing Clinton Street signs at least 12 inches below the roofline.
- The sign will be mounted through the mortar joints.
- The sign shall not be internal nor backlit.
- The application meets all the applicable Secretary of Interior standards for rehabilitation.

Motion carried unanimously.

This is in coordination with standards 9 and 10. Type II SEQR

B. Consideration for approval submitted by Tom and Mary Werner to replace an existing lantern post with the Western Red Cedar Finial Lantern Post with fluted panel base from New England Woodworks. The premises is located in the GE Realty Plot at 1155 Stratford Rd.

Tom and Mary Werner came before the commission to replace decaying lamp post. They said it was made of wood and hard to find and most lamp posts are made of plastic but can be painted. It comes in prime white, but can be painted red.

The lamp post that they will install will be the same height, fluted at the bottom, and the light will be the same dimensions. "Its pretty close to existing post," they said. The light would be

about the same dimensions. The current lamp being two feet tall and the new one would be 21.5” and the diameter would be 10”.

Commissioner Yager asked the applicant about the illumination. **The applicant** responded that there would be two bulbs and the casing is six sided. **Commissioner Yager** then asked **Commissioner Andriano** what the standard for lumens was. **Commissioner Andriano** replied that the bulbs to be installed must be under 3,000 K color temperature and the lowest they usually make is about 2,700 K color temperature.

Commissioner Yager then asked the other commissioners if they were alright with the aforementioned red paint. There was a consensus that this was acceptable.

Commissioner Andriano asked if the existing lamp was functional, to which the **applicant** responded that it was not.

RESOLUTION

Commissioner Berkovich made a motion to grant the application with the following conditions and seconded by **Commissioner Unger** with the following conditions:

- Application granted as submitted to commission.
- Will paint lamp post as close as possible to original color-red.
- Bulbs installed will be under 3,000 K color temperature.
- Will have one-year from today’s date to complete work.

Motion carried unanimously.

This is in coordination with standards 2,6, and 9. Type II SEQR

- C. Consideration for approval submitted by Jesse Burns to replace the front porch railing and supports using pressure treated lumber and white paint and to paint the house smoky blue with white trim, and the replacement of shingles with three-tab asphalt shingles. The premises is located in the Union Street Corridor Historic District at 1307 Union St.**

Mr. Burns stated he purchased the home in 2018 and painted the house smokey blue, Sherwin-Williams brand paint. He said it’s now a little darker blue. The shingles had rotted and weren’t safe.

“One of the stipulations was to paint the house. I bought the house and I was not informed that I had to speak to you guys, which was probably partially my fault. I should have done a little more research. I painted the house smoky blue. I painted the trim around the house white.

And it was super white around the trim. House was blue before, but it was now currently a little bit darker blue. The shingles were causing the roof of the porch to rock, and it rotted the iron posts. So, the roof for the house was leaning. It was not safe. It wasn’t it wasn’t okay for people to walk through. So, I

took down the steel rods I put up to pressure treated pieces of lumber. I was going to finish the porch when I went to finish the porch. The code guy came in and said “hey, for you going farther, you have to deal with the historic commission. So don't do anything else to the front porch.” And I stopped but I had already changed the shingles on the roof. I had restarted the structure and had already painted the house so before I had known that I was supposed to be here to do this I had already done all that work.

Commissioner Yager, asked about the brand of shingles used for the project and **Mr. Burns** responded, “the manufacturer of the shingles I bought them at Home Depot on their regular three tab asphalt shingles I can go to Home Depot and look for them again if you would like give you the manufacturer but they were asphalt shingles that were on the front porch roof prior.”

Mr. Burns went on to say, he had to study the roof and put two pieces of wood on the bottom so that it could connect the posts to hold the roof up, but he didn't change the appearance of the roof at all and just started a backup so that it was safe for people to go through.

Commissioner Yager said she did research and it appeared that the house was built in 1930. She asked Mr. Burns if he had any photos of the house and that he could find them online. The **applicant** did not. **Commissioner Yager** went on to say that the photos she had seen of the house, it had metal columns holding up the porch in the past and that would be the appropriate replacement. After some further discussion, the commissioner provided the applicant with an example of what might be appropriate. She then opened the floor to other questions.

Commissioner Unger asked if the shingles for the property would end up matching. I don't I can't remember I think the shingles on the roof were. And also asked what the hole on the side of the building was.

Mr. Burns responded, the back porch and was going to put a new window in there.

There was some discussion between the commissioners and the applicant clarifying that any work done visible from the Right of Way needs to come to the Commission for approval.

Mr. Burns said there were several windows there before. The whole back porch had windows wrapping, there were there were large windows. The problem with the back porch was it literally caved in on itself. The whole back porch, when I bought the house, again, was part of the stipulation was it had to be rebuilt, it had to be redone.

Commissioner Unger responded that he would like to see a before and after.

Commissioner Berkovich conveyed that the board appreciated that the applicant fixing up the building and reminded him the mission of the Historic Commission is to keep the historical integrity of the building.

Commissioner Andriano reminded Mr. Burns when he resubmits his application it will need the following items:

- With the information that you're going to use for the windows
- The exact specifications on the railings,
- What size, what height, what color?

- What do they look like we typically have applicants provide elevations to show us so we can tie it to an application so that way in the future when someone comes in, we can relate back to what you had done to the building, but that's typically where elevation is, of course.

Commissioner Dr. Bennett inquired about the asphalt shingles and the paint. This set off a discussion about what would be needed for a complete application, and this was relayed to the applicant.

RESOLUTION

Commissioner Unger made a *motion to table application* until next meeting giving applicant more time to submit a complete application with the following conditions and seconded by **Commissioner Berkovich** with the following conditions:

- Drawings
- Porch size
- Color
- Elevation of windows and specifications (height and color)
- Photos of exterior sides
- Before and after pictures
- Specifications of railings
- 3-tab Asphalt information (brand)

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Consideration for approval submitted by Nicholas Plowman to install new windows on the house and the construction of bay windows. The premises is located in the RH-2 Stockade Historic District at 6 Washington Ave.

Mr. Plowman said “Hi, I’m Nick Plowman I live at 6 Washington, so basically I’m looking to put in windows, solid wood windows. And I constructed a bay window on the side of the house that was in the drawing that Matt Smith had approved, so I guess there was a little miscommunication about that. Because it got stamped and everything, the whole building department had to go through him. He said he signed off on it, he said that’s fine. So, I was a little, I guess it was just a miscommunication about that, but as far as the new windows go, just need them approved.”

Commissioner Yager went on to say that there were two windows there besides the bay and the applicant confirmed.

Mr. Plowman then went on to describe how his neighbors house used to be right up against the side of the house, and a bay window would not have been possible. The windows that had been on that wall were small and just for light. So, the bay window was an attempt to be more decorative and historically authentic.

Commissioner Yager “In the past, what we’ve done is we’ve desired the rhythm of the windows, like the second floor, even though one was shorter, it was in the same rhythm.”

Mr. Plowman said he tried to keep the bay window he constructed in line with the windows up above and also there would be windows on the side that line up with the ones above. The windows would all be the same size, so they would match and have a nice flow.

There was a conversation about how the issue, is that the bay window was not there before, but it does make sense to make the change due to the house next door being moved.

Commissioner Yager asked how far the bay window was going to stick out and whether it was vulnerable.

Mr. Plowman said when his house is elevated 24 inches does not extend beyond the property and the windows that were previously there were terrible. His neighbor spoke publicly at the meeting to confirm this.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Ms. Mary D’Alessandro-Gilmore, a neighbor to the property, said Mr. Plowman bought the house back to its original façade. He has made the house so beautiful. He put a lot of effort into the house. Also, another neighbor to the property said how much she loves the work that Mr. Plowman had done to the property and its such an improvement to how the property previously had looked.

Commissioner Unger asked about the set back. The applicant said the set back is 5 feet from the property line and Commissioner Unger said would need a variance to extend 5 feet. The set back is 3 feet. The block ribbon around the drive is on the adjacent property?

Mary Anker also voiced support for the project.

Commissioner Unger, the bay window is non-conforming and will need a variance and **Commissioner Andriano** said a survey would be needed. The applicant will need to go to BZA for approval.

Commissioner Andriano also asked the applicant if he has an elevation of what it will look like when completed. Want to make sure it’s accurate. The next meeting is 2 weeks away and will need to provide a drawing.

In the meantime, the applicant said he had no idea of what type of roof he will put onto the property. The commissioners reminded the applicant that he will need to put it all together in the application when resubmitted.

Commissioner Yager asked the commissioners if they were alright with changing the two previous windows to a bay from the previous two. **Commissioner Bennett** brought up that the context has changed due to the other house being moved, and that the owner might as well do what is most aesthetically pleasing.

There was a further conversation between the commissioners and the applicant regarding the amount of detail they were hoping to see from the application and this was reflected in the resolution.

RESOLUTION

Commissioner Berkovich made a *motion to table application because it was incomplete*, and applicant will need to submit a completed application with the following conditions and seconded by **Commissioner Andriano** with the following conditions:

- Staff will send an email to applicant to what is needed
- Will need a site plan
- List out asphalt shingles
- Will need a variance
- Will need a survey
- Will need to provide type of windowpanes

Motion carried unanimously.

VII. Miscellaneous – Commissioner Fava is in ICU, and will there be a temporary chair?

Commissioner Andriano will not be present for next month's meeting and Commissioner Dr. Bennett will be away for the months of June and July.

VIII. Adjourn 8:06 p.m.