

Schenectady Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes April 28, 2022

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Yager called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Patricia Yager, Chair; Shaun Andriano; Richard Unger; Joe Fava; Dr. Dean Bennett; Matt Smith, Senior Planner; Sylvia Jimison, Development Staff; Chris Marney, Assistant Corporation Counsel.

ABSENT: Frank Gilmore

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Chris Marney stated that he is the applicant for items G and H and therefore can not provide the commission any legal counsel regarding them.

IV. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Fava, seconded by Commissioner Unger, to approve the amended Minutes of the March 24, 2022.

Motion carried unanimously.

V. CALL FOR MEMBERS OF PUBLIC TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS

None.

VI. APPLICATIONS

A. Consideration for approval submitted by Lynn & Linda Seal to paint the shutters. The premises is located at 19 Front St. in the Stockade Historic District.

Jim Plowman, the contractor for the owner, appeared before the commission. He stated that the current shutters are burgundy and would like permission to paint them black. Commissioner Yager asked if any commissioners had comment and no objections were raised.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Unger, seconded by Commissioner Fava to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standards #2, #5, and #6 as the guidelines for their decision.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Consideration for approval submitted by Erika Winkler to paint the house. The premises is located at 3 Front St. in the Stockade Historic District.

Erika Winkler appeared before the commission. She explained that she intends to close on the house in the next ten days. She stated that the current paint is peeling and decided to paint the property different colors than currently exist.

Commissioner Yager asked about the window boxes that were mentioned in the application. Ms. Winkler stated that she would like to install some flower boxes below the windows. Commissioner Unger asked if the trim work would be painted blue or white. Ms. Winkler stated that she intended to paint the trim in Platinum Gray. She explained further that any features that are currently painted blue would be repainted the Hale Navy color.

Commissioner Unger asked what material the window boxes would be constructed of. Ms. Winkler stated that they would be wood, and painted the same color as the trimwork.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner Unger to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standards #2, #5, #6, as the guidelines for their decision.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Consideration for approval submitted by Mabel Leon to install a new driveway. The premises is located at 22 Front St. in the Stockade Historic District.

The applicant decided to reset the existing bricks on the driveway as opposed to replacing the driveway material and therefore does not need approval for the Historic District Commission. The applicant withdrew their application.

D. Consideration for approval submitted by Home Evolution Contractor LLC to install a new roof. The premises is located at 32 Washington Ave. in the Stockade Historic District.

Mary Zawacki, Executive Director of the Schenectady County Historical Society, appeared before the commission. She stated that the current roof is a three-tab shingle, approximately 30 years old and is looking to replace the shingles with an architectural shingle in a similar color.

Commissioner Unger stated that the commission has approved architectural shingle replacements for three-tab shingles on other applications and therefore has no objections.

Commissioner Andriano asked if any of the flashing will be replaced. The applicant stated that the flashing will remain.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Unger, seconded by Commissioner Fava to approve the application as submitted with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The shingles will be in the Castle Gray color.
3. Any flashing in need of replacement will be replaced in the same color and material as existing.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standards #2, #5, and #6 as the guideline for their decision.

Motion carried unanimously.

E. Consideration for approval submitted by Nancy Baum Delain to replace the front stairs and railing. The premises is located at 107 N. College St. in the Stockade Historic District.

Ms. Delain appeared before the commission. She stated that the steps are in disrepair and she would like permission to repair or replace them.

Commissioner Yager stated that the bottom stair looks severely deteriorated and is concerned the other steps may not be far behind. She asked what the reasoning was for just doing the repair as opposed to the replacement. Ms. Delain stated that the reasoning is financial. She explained that she believes the contractor she hired to fix the steps will ensure the other two steps are solid.

Commissioner Bennett asked whether the commission needs to approve a specific railing. Ms. Delain stated that she is proposing a cast iron railing that will be the same or substantially similar to the existing railing. Commissioner Unger stated that there are subtly different cast iron railings throughout the Stockade, so long as the new railings are similar in design.

Commissioner Yager asked if the new bottom tread will have the same lip as the other two treads. Ms. Delain stated that she did not know, but explained that the contractor will either put in a new lip on the bottom step, or cut off the lips on the top treads so they all match. Commissioner Andriano stated that code requires nosings on the treads. He stated further that it is going to be quite difficult to repair the existing step and he doesn't believe that there is enough information to render a decision. He explained that a lot of the discussion has been based off of what the applicant has said the contractor will do, but that he doesn't fully understand whether the contractor will be able to achieve what the applicant has presented. The applicant stated that she will call the contractor to explain what he intends to do to complete the project.

The contractor stated that he intends to form up the sides of the remaining portion of the bottom step and fill it in with concrete to best match the existing steps. Commissioner Andriano stated that it looks like there is some slight reinforcement coming up from the bottom of the step and asked how the contractor intends to tie into that. The contractor stated that he intends to put rebar in to tie the new concrete in to the existing step. Commissioner Andriano stated that the existing step is very jagged and asked if the contractor intends to cut the concrete into a straight line before pouring the new concrete or if intends to try and form to the old concrete. The contractor stated that he intends to use a hammer drill to chip out the jagged edges of the existing step and will cover the formed step with hydraulic cement.

Commissioner Bennett stated that he doesn't believe that the applicant needs to install the heart ornamentation on the railings. The applicant stated that she would be ok with either installing the heart ornamentation or leaving them off and just installing the straight railings.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Unger, seconded by Commissioner Fava to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The bottom step will be constructed such that it matches the top two steps in form, texture, and color.

3. The railing will be black cast iron of similar design as the existing railing, with or without the heart ornamentation.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standards #2, #5, and #6 as the guideline for their decision.

Motion carried unanimously.

F. Consideration for approval submitted Paul Ambrose to replace the driveway. The premises is located at 1191 Stratford Rd. in the GE Realty Plot Historic District

Paul Ambrose appeared before the commission. He explained that he would like to narrow the existing driveway and repave it in concrete and that the driveway will be heated. The applicant's contractor stated that he intended to stamp the concrete driveway all the way down to the sidewalk, and the sidewalk would be replaced to match the neighboring sidewalk panels.

Chris Marney suggested that the commission also give approval for the sidewalk installation, as the building department may request formal approval for its replacement.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Unger, seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve the application with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The new driveway will be tinted and stamped concrete from the sidewalk to the garage as per the sample provided to the commission, and the sidewalk being replaced will be completed in a standard finish and meeting all city code requirements.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standards #2, #5 and #6 as the guideline for their decision.

Motion carried unanimously.

G. Consideration submitted by Chris Marney to request an extension of a prior approval. The premises is located at 205 Union St. in the Stockade Historic District.

Chris Marney appeared before the commission and stated that he is requesting a two-year extension on the previous approval to provide enough time to complete the project. In addition, he stated that there are some modifications to the original application that he is requesting as well. He explained that he has since discovered that the original entry door was once much larger and he is looking to restore the doorway to its original size. Additionally he stated that he was originally looking to install two gas lamps and an overhead lamp, but has decided that it would look too busy, so he would instead like to install a recessed overhead light in lieu of the lamp, while keeping the two proposed gas lamps. Lastly, Mr. Marney stated that the current windows are a two-over-two lite configuration, and would like to restore the windows to the original six-over-six lite configuration by milling and installing new muntins.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Fava, seconded by Commissioner Bennett to approve the application as submitted with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within two years.

And with the following finding of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.

Motion carried unanimously.

H. Consideration submitted by 145 Barrett Street, LLC for a recommendation to be designated as a historic structure. The premises is located at 145 Barrett St.

Chris Marney appeared before the commission. He explained that he is working with a potential tenant of the building that would like to open a music venue. He stated that he is looking to designate the property as a historic structure. He explained that the designation would create an historic overlay zoning district on his parcel and would subject the property to review by the Historic District Commission on any exterior modifications. Mr. Marney stated that the designation also makes available some local property tax exemptions.

Commissioner Bennett asked whether the commission's decision whether to make a recommendation is just one step in the process. Mr. Marney stated that it is.

Commissioner Bennett asked whether there's an exit clause if in the future, the current or future owner decided they no longer wished to have the historic designation. Mr. Marney stated that the designation is a function of the zoning code, and a request to be removed as a historic structure would require a rezoning application to the city council.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Unger, seconded by Commissioner Andriano for the commission to recommend that the structure be locally designated as a historic structure.

Motion carried unanimously.

VII. Miscellaneous

A. Review of the potential nomination of the Schenectady Police Department building to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The premises is located at 301 Clinton St.

The commissioners discussed the property, and no objections were raised regarding its nomination.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Unger, seconded by Commissioner Bennett, to support the nomination.

Motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Fava, seconded by Commissioner Andriano, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.