



Schenectady Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes

July 22, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Yager called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Patricia Yager, Chair; Shaun Andriano; Dr. Dean Bennett (appeared virtually through WebEx); Frank Gilmore; Christopher Marney; Richard Unger; Matt Smith, Senior Planner; Jennifer Mills, Secretary

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Commissioner Marney recused himself from the consideration of Application C, the proposal by Senga World LLC for 2 North Ferry Street, and Application E, the proposal by Christopher Marney for 205 Union Street. Commissioner Unger recused himself from consideration of Application D, the proposal by St. George's Episcopal Church for 30 North Ferry Street.

IV. ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Gilmore, to approve the June 24, 2021 Meeting Minutes as submitted.

Motion carried unanimously.

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

Commissioner Yager stated that there was a letter submitted by Gloria Kishton regarding the application for 2 North Ferry St., which was later read into the record during the hearing of that application.

VI. APPLICATIONS

A. Consideration submitted by Thomas Vassi and Karen Marshall to pave the driveway. The premises is located at 1049 Avon Rd. in the GE Realty Plot Historic District.

Thomas Vassi and Karen Marshall presented the application.

They explained that they would like to replace their current driveway which is comprised of crusher run, with asphalt. Ms. Marshall stated that the driveway is

difficult to clear of snow, and that the stones get strewn all throughout the sidewalk and roadway, making it hazardous for bikers.

Commissioner Gilmore stated that the asphalt replacement would be appropriate, but suggested another option that the applicants could consider. He explained a process in which pea gravel is placed over the asphalt during installation and is rolled into the blacktop, which would result in a driveway with the look of gravel, but the benefits of asphalt. The applicant stated that they would look into it and consider that option.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Gilmore, to approve as submitted the application to replace the driveway, with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The applicant has the option of installing pea gravel over the asphalt driveway.

And with the following findings of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standards #9 and #10 as the guidelines for their decision.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Consideration submitted by Bob Stern to replace the front exterior door. The premises is located at 5 North St. in the Stockade Historic District.

Bob Stern presented the application.

Mr. Stern explained that he would like to replace the current door, which is metal, with a similar style door comprised of wood. He stated that he would stain it a clear stain or something slightly darker. Commissioner Gilmore asked what the hardware would look like and Mr. Stern replied that it would be historically appropriate but hadn't made a final decision. Commissioner Gilmore suggested Eastlake hardware and also using a marine varnish for the door to stand up better to the weather.

Commissioner Yager asked if the applicant would consider a single pane of glass with no muntins. Commissioner Unger stated he would be fine with either a single pane or the proposed six-lite window. Commissioner Unger asked if the storm door was going to remain and the applicant stated it would.

Commissioner Marney explained that since there was no specific hardware or stain proposal submitted, the commission could either vote on the approval of the door and the applicant would have to return to the commission with those items, or the commission could table the application.

MOTION TO TABLE

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Unger, to table the application as incomplete pending the submittal of further information regarding the specific hardware and stain selections.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Consideration submitted by Senga World LLC to install a fence, new windows and gutters. The premises is located at 2 North Ferry St. in the Stockade Historic District.

Agnes Davis and Steven Cotch presented the application.

Commissioner Yager read aloud the public comments submitted by the applicant's neighbor, Gloria Kishton.

The applicants explained they would like to install a fence along the rear of the property so they can pile the snow against it in the winter without disturbing the neighbor's fence. They would also like to extend the fence down along the south property line. The applicant proposed that the fence along the rear be constructed of 6" vertical posts and 5/4" boards, with 4" posts along the side yard.

Commissioner Unger asked what the applicant plans to do about maintaining the area in between the neighbor's fence, since the plan calls for the new fence to be set 19 inches from the existing fence. The applicant stated that they would have access to that area to handle any brush that grows in between. Several commissioners stated they were in favor of setting the fence back along the property line to eliminate the gap and the need to weed between the fences. Mr. Smith stated that he does not believe it is within the purview of the commission to dictate where the property line is and to require the fence be set back.

Commissioner Gilmore suggested putting vertical slats on the fence to provide some more visual interest and appeal. Commissioner Yager had printed up an example of what Commissioner Gilmore was referring to, which has been entered into the record, and the applicants agreed to comply.

The applicants proposed to install white aluminum gutters to divert water away from their basement. Commissioner Bennett stated that the gutters will help protect the building and is in favor of them.

The applicants proposed to install the same aluminum-clad windows that were approved for the first floor on a previous application, to replace wood windows on the second floor. Commissioner Gilmore stated that the new windows should be set in and not flush with the exterior wall.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Andriano, seconded by Commissioner Gilmore, to approve as submitted the application to install a fence, gutters, and windows, with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The fence near the rear property line will be constructed of 6x6 posts with 5/4ö boards stacked horizontally and a cap across the top, as well as vertical boards placed at the post joints to create a rhythm typical of a stockade fence.
3. Gutter downspouts will not be placed on the front façade and shall be set back from the front façade.
4. The windows will match the windows approved on the first floor and will be recessed in the opening to maintain the historic look of the original windows.

And with the following findings of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The windows showed evidence of deterioration and disrepair.
3. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standards #2, #5, #6, and #9 as the guidelines for their decision.

Motion carried 5-0, with Commissioner Marney abstaining.

D. Consideration submitted by St. George’s Episcopal Church to paint a shed. The premises is located at 30 North Ferry St. in the Stockade Historic District.

Richard Unger presented the application.

Commissioner Unger stated that it was a good idea to match the paint with the brick on the main structure. Commissioner Andriano stated that he had no issues with the application since it is a non-contributing structure.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Bennett, to approve as submitted the application to paint the shed as submitted.

And with the following findings 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 5-0, with Commissioner Unger abstaining.

E. Consideration submitted by Christopher Marney to paint the property. The premises is located at 205 Union St. in the Stockade Historic District.

Christopher Marney presented the application. He explained that as he removed the pediments on the front façade to expose the rusticated siding, he discovered faux lintels behind them and was seeking permission to remove all the pediments and restore the lintels.

Commissioner Gilmore stated that this posed an interesting philosophical question, as many historic homes were modified over time and reflect different architectural styles and periods. However, he stated because the applicant was taking such care in restoring the home, he would be ok with the façade being reverted to the more Georgian style with the lintels, as opposed to the Second Empire style represented by the pediments.

Christopher Marney stated that he would like to modify his proposal and approval from a prior meeting to move the mail slot that was originally proposed for the door, to the side entry wall, and to change the previously approved lighting scheme. No commissioners raised any objections to these proposals.

Commissioner Gilmore stated that he would be careful about painting the shutters red, as that would be a more Victorian paint scheme, and the removal of the pediments to express a more colonial style, would typically have black shutters. Mr. Marney stated that he isn't opposed to coming back with a modified paint scheme given the new information and guidance.

Mr. Marney stated that he would also like to replace the storm windows with two-over-two windows as opposed to one-over-one that were previously proposed.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Commissioner Unger, seconded by Commissioner Andriano, to approve as submitted the application to make modifications to the front of the building with the following conditions:

1. The project will be completed within one year.
2. The painting plan is not part of this approval.

And with the following findings of fact:

1. This is a Type II SEQRA.
2. The Commissioners cited Preservation Standards #1, #2, #4, #5 and #7 as the guidelines for their decision.

Motion carried 5-0, with Commissioner Marney abstaining.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Review of the potential nomination of the Schenectady Weigh House to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The premises is located at Clinton Street and Van Guysling Avenue.

The commissioners discussed the property and were supportive of its nomination with no objections.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Marney, seconded by Commissioner Unger, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.