

Historic Preservation Commission
Minutes of April 15, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michael Erquiaga
Shanda K. Horner
Emmett Lifsey
Mark Little, Vice-Chair
Christopher McSwain, Chair
Richard Morris
Shaun Spencer-Hester

OTHERS PRESENT:

Ms. Anne Nygaard, Secretary to the Historic Preservation Commission; Ms. Robin Craig, Planning Technician, and the public.

ROLL CALL:

After a quorum was established, Chair McSwain called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

1. CONSENT AGENDA:

Commissioner Lifsey made a motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Little, to accept the consent agenda, which passed by a unanimous vote.

2. NEW BUSINESS:

Only one applicant was in attendance, so the HPC began with them first.

- a) ACTION (Advocate-Commissioner Horner):** Request of Victoria's Inventory LLC to 1) remove the fire escape, 2) add new metal staircase to meet egress requirements, and 3) modify the front entrance to make it accessible at 301 Rivermont Avenue. There may be an option to modify the existing fire escape, though it is more involved and not cost effective. The adjacent parking lot is under stop work order until an application for changes to the parking lot can be made to HPC and a site plan submitted to the City's Technical Review Committee (TRC). (HPC1903-0010):

Ms. Nygaard informed the commission that the property is under a Stop Work Order (SWO) for the grading of the parking lot and the demolition of an outbuilding. Work is being allowed to continue on the building at this time. The applicant is before the commission today because they're applying for a separate COA to remove a fire escape, add a new stair, and modify the front entrance to the building. Ms. Nygaard asked for feedback on two options: 1) expand the SWO and have it apply to the building as well, or 2) keep the SWO separate from the building and allow applicant to keep working on the building renovation, with the understanding that he is going to get the site work in compliance and will come back next month with a COA application for the demolition and the parking lot. If the HPC went with

option 2 and the applicant never came in with the appropriate COA applications, the staff would have the option to extend the SWO at a later date.

Commissioner Morris opted for option 2. Commissioner Lifsey asked for clarification on whether the SWO came from HPC: Ms. Nygaard explained that it's put in place by staff. In this case, both Erosion & Sediment Control Staff and the Secretary to the HPC issued the SWO because of multiple code violations.

Mr. West explained that he wasn't thinking when he did the work as he was mainly focused on parking and apologized for it.

Commissioner Lifsey asked Ms. Nygaard to explain the options again. Mr. West assured the commissioners that he would be back May 21 with the appropriate COA application.

Commissioner Lifsey asked what the E&S Control Staff was doing regarding the property. Mr. West said that he has mitigated erosion, stabilized the site, and planned to get it all done by Thursday.

Ms. Nygaard added that once the site is stabilized, it will technically be in compliance with E&S, but Mr. West will still need to get a site plan approved before grading would be permitted. Because the work is within the historic district (parking, grading, demolition), Planning won't approve the site plan unless HPC first approves the changes.

Commissioner Morris suggested that we keep the SWO separate from the building and allow Mr. West to continue working on the building. Ms. Nygaard reiterated that if Mr. West does not end up submitting an application, the SWO will be extended. Mr. West assured the commission that the application won't take more than a couple of weeks.

Commissioner Morris asked if we had to make a motion. Commissioner McSwain affirmed, because the COA covers work on the building. Ms. Nygaard said she wanted to know if HPC is comfortable allowing Mr. West to continue moving forward on the building, despite the code violations.

Commissioner Erquiaga asked if staff had concerns that this won't reach a resolution. Ms. Nygaard said no. Mr. West assured that he always finishes. Ms. Nygaard said that staff generally does not want to continue approving new work while there are unresolved code violations.

Commissioner Spencer-Hester asked if this was Mr. West's first violation: Ms. Nygaard said yes, that she knows of. Mr. West explained that this was a learning process for him, being his first time working in a Historic District.

Commissioner Morris said that since the violations are not affecting the building itself we could separate them. Commissioner Spencer-Hester asked about the outbuilding. Commissioner Lifsey asked if the building was gone; Ms. Nygaard confirmed. Commissioner McSwain asked what records staff had of it. Ms. Nygaard said staff has photos that would be coming to HPC for the May meeting for a determination.

The Commission asked if staff had pictures now, at the meeting. Ms. Nygaard brought up an image. Commissioner Spencer-Hester asked what the building was originally used for and Mr. West commented it was an old wooden garage. Mr. West explained that it was rotting and the roof had blown off. Ms. Nygaard added that the National Register did not list it as either contributing or non-contributing to the site and that it was just listed as “outbuilding” built in 1916. (**Further research indicates it is from the 1950s or later and is not contributing. National Register information was not clear.)

Ms. Nygaard said she will provide the National Register listing next month. Commissioner Lifsey asked if a different decision could be made next month, and if the fire escape would be a non-issue with what happens with the shed and grading. Upon confirmation, he agreed with splitting the issues.

Commissioner Morris asked for an explanation regarding the fire escape. Mr. West explained that it’s too narrow for fire code and not in good condition. There are no tax credits associated with replacing it.

Ms. Nygaard said that they could 1) rebuild the current fire escape, which would be more complicated and costly, or 2) could go with the proposed metal staircase. Ms. Nygaard talked about the staircase’s dimensions. Commissioner Lifsey asked if the building inspectors have been looking at this. Ms. Nygaard confirmed. Mr. West mentioned that even rebuilding the staircase meant that it may not look the same anyway.

Everyone looked at the profile views, then asked about logistics of egress and technical drawings.

Ms. Nygaard brought up that the other request had to deal with modifications to the entrance and the railing. Commissioner Erquiaga asked about the sidewalk and safety rails; West explained. Commissioner Spencer-Hester clarified that the railing would be on the added handicap ramp. Commissioner Erquiaga asked if anyone with code knowledge looked over the design; yes, they had. Commissioner Lifsey, Commissioner Morris, and Mr. West talked about different design alternatives and clarifications. Mr. West acknowledged that there will likely be more railings than what was shown on the provided rendering. Commissioner Spencer-Hester, Commissioner Little, and Commissioner Morris asked about the style of the balcony railing, and talked about balancing safety with historical elements. There was discussion on adding higher horizontal rails to encourage safety while keeping the original railings. It was determined that the balcony railings were approved under a previous COA.

Commissioner Morris moved that the HPC table the front-ramp for the next meeting and approve the fire escape in the rear of the building as proposed. Commissioner Erquiaga seconded. Commissioner Lifsey clarified that the motion was to approve the new staircase, as opposed to rebuild the old. It was. Commissioner Erquiaga asked for clarification that they were tabling the work on the front of the building to get more clarification on where the railings will actually be. Ms. Nygaard reminded the commission that code requires them to act within 60 days of first hearing an application.

AYES: Erquiaga, Horner, Lifsey, Little, Morris, McSwain and Spencer-Hester	7
NOES:	0
ABSTENTIONS:	0
ABSENT:	0

All other applicants for the HPC agenda items were not present, so Ms. Nygaard asked if HPC wanted to act without their attendance. The Commissioners elected to table some items and discuss others depending on the need to discuss with the applicant.

(b) ACTION (Advocate-Commissioner Morris): Request of Evelyn Dickey-White for an after-the-fact COA to replace a standing-seam metal roof and change the color from red to gray at 712 Hancock Street. (HPC1903-0002):

Commissioner Little pointed out that the roof now has a cap and eave-caps, which normally would not be approved. Ms. Nygaard/Ms. Craig said that the applicant could make the meeting next month. Commissioner McSwain made a motion to TABLE the item. Commissioner Horner seconded.

AYES: Erquiaga, Horner, Lifsey, Little, Morris, McSwain and Spencer-Hester	7
NOES:	0
ABSTENTIONS:	0
ABSENT:	0

(c) ACTION (Advocate-Commissioner Little): Request of Ashley Kubik to add skylights at 605 Pearl Street. Skylights not visible from the street are typically approved administratively; however, these would be visible from Madison Street. Additional work listed on the application has been approved administratively. (HPC1903-0005):

A Commissioner proposed tabling the COA and Commissioner Morris asked why we would approve it. He elaborated that she could have them in the back or the other side. Staff brought up pictures and Commissioner Little mentioned that skylights may be visible even from the back. Commissioner Morris wondered if it would be best to not approve the COA and motioned to DENY based on the fact that it would be visible from Madison and it was seconded by Commissioner Spencer-Hester. Commissioner Erquiaga asked to see the area around the property via Google Streetview and determined that skylights on the side of the house would be visible. Commissioner McSwain called for a vote for the DENIAL of skylights on the side of the house.

AYES: Erquiaga, Horner, Lifsey, Little, Morris, McSwain and Spencer-Hester	7
NOES:	0
ABSTENTIONS:	0
ABSENT:	0

(d) ACTION (Advocate-Commissioner Spencer-Hester): Request of Margaret Whitaker to replace an asphalt shingle roof with standing seam, to match adjacent roof, at 2703 Rivermont Avenue. (HPC1903-0006):

Staff clarified that the COA is for matching the roof on the adjacent additions at the same address, not the adjacent house's roof. The Commission discussed the different types of seamed roofs and how it emulated hand-crimp. Commissioner Little mentioned that the proposed roof would match the color of

the existing standing-seam roof. Commissioner Little moved to APPROVE the application as submitted and Commissioner Lifsey seconded.

AYES: Erquiaga, Horner, Lifsey, Little, Morris, McSwain and Spencer-Hester	7
NOES:	0
ABSTENTIONS:	0
ABSENT:	0

3. OLD BUSINESS:

Training:

Commissioner McSwain wanted everyone to look at the training opportunities provided to them at the last meeting. Ms. Nygaard said if we got the grant, the Historic Preservation Commissioner training could be tailored to Lynchburg and wanted to hear what the HPC thought they would find useful to help her make the case in the grant application. The training would be either on a weekday or Saturday and could either be two half days or one full day during the fall. Ms. Nygaard reminded the commissioners that every HPC member must go to a training over a 3-year period.

Everyone agreed it was probably a good idea, especially since trainers will review Lynchburg's ordinances/guidelines and be able to make recommendations. The training will focus on preservation from the perspective of commission work.

Commissioner Lifsey said having the meeting on one day is likely better, especially if other locality's commissioners are joining. Commissioner McSwain mentioned it would be great to collaborate with anyone who would be joining. The commissioners agreed on weekday rather than weekend.

Ms. Nygaard recommended that they ask the trainers for advice on vinyl windows and other modern materials, Commissioner Morris asked if they could send Ms. Nygaard items as they thought of them. Commissioner Spencer-Hester asked to add procedures/processes to the request list. The commission was interested in a session on building public support.

4. NEXT MEETING DAY:

The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2019.

5. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

ATTEST: _____ ATTEST: _____
Secretary Chair McSwain