

BIRMINGHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF AUGUST 15, 2018
Municipal Building Commission Room
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Historic District Commission (“HDC”) held Wednesday, August 15, 2018. Chairman John Henke called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Present: Chairman John Henke; Board Members Adam Charles, Michael Willoughby; Alternate Board Members Kevin Filthaut, Dulce Fuller

Absent: Board Members Doug Burle, Vice-Chairman Keith Deyer, Natalia Dukas; Student representatives Grace Donati, Ava Wells

Administration: Matthew Baka, Sr. Planner
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

08-27-18

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
HDC Minutes of July18, 2018

Motion by Mr. Willoughby

Seconded by Chairman Henke to approve the Minutes of the Historic District Committee meeting of July 18, 2018 as presented.

Motion carried, 5-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Willoughby, Henke, Charles, Filthaut, Fuller

Nays: None

Absent: Burley, Deyer, Dukas

Chairman Henke cautioned the petitioner that four affirmative votes are needed to pass a motion. Since only five of the seven board members were in attendance, they could postpone their hearing to the next meeting when a more complete board may be present. The petitioner agreed to go forward this evening.

08-28-18

HISTORIC DESIGN REVIEW
277 Pierce
Varsity Shop

Request for Extension Downtown Birmingham Historic District

Mr. Baka recalled that on July 19, 2017, the above-captioned property was granted Historic Design Review approval by the HDC to construct a new five-story mixed-use building. This project was also approved by the Planning Board as it is located in the Central Business Historic District.

The Zoning Ordinance provides that a Design Review is valid for one year from the date of approval. Accordingly, on July 19, 2018, the applicant requested an extension of the Historic Design Review for 277 Pierce for one year, as they require additional time to obtain tenants to occupy the new building.

On July 25, 2018, the Planning Board granted a site plan extension of six months, with the following conditions:

- Applicant agrees to immediately register the existing building as a vacant building with the Building Dept.; and
- Applicant also obtain an approval for an extension of the Historic Design Approval from the Historic District Commission. Accordingly, the applicant is now requesting a design review extension for the Historic Design Review by the Historic District Commission.

Ms. Eavan Yaladoo from Saroki Architecture explained the Planning Board granted an extension to February 23 for the site plan approval. They plan to apply for a Building Permit in the next few months and start demolition/construction in the Spring.

Motion by Mr. Willoughby

Seconded by Mr. Charles to grant a six-month extension to February 23 for 277 Pierce to be consistent with the decision of the Planning Board.

Motion carried, 5-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Willoughby, Charles, Filthaut, Fuller, Henke

Nays: None

Absent: Burley, Deyer, Dukas

08-29-18

STUDY SESSION

Signage Standards

Standard Sign Standards

Mr. Baka discussed the two sets of standards that are used to regulate signage throughout the City. There is the Standard Sign Ordinance which governs most of the City, and the Overlay Sign Ordinance that regulates signage on buildings that were constructed under the Downtown Overlay development standards.

The amount of signage permitted by the Standard Sign Ordinance provisions is based on the amount of building frontage. The width of the building determines the amount of square footage that can be used for signage. The allowable signage can be divided among any of the building tenants regardless of which floor they are located on, provided that they meet all other provisions of the Sign Ordinance.

Overlay Sign Standards

In contrast to the Standard Sign Ordinance, the Overlay Sign Regulations do not limit the amount of signage or number of signs. Instead the number of signs permitted is dictated by the number of entrances and only tenants whose primary square footage is located on the first floor may have a sign. In addition to the differing restrictions listed above, there are also subtle differences between the two ordinances which make interpretation confusing for business owners and sign companies.

Over the past year the Board of Zoning Appeals has heard several variance requests for exceptions from the Overlay Signage Standards. The primary cause of these requests has resulted from the difference between what is permitted by the Standard Sign Ordinance and the Overlay Sign Ordinance. The two provisions of the Overlay Sign Ordinance that have initiated the majority of the variance requests are the following;

- The number of signs permitted determined by the number of entrances;
- Signage for upper floor commercial tenants is prohibited;

The commercial tenants on the upper floors of buildings developed under the Overlay are not currently permitted signage as they otherwise would be if they were located in a building governed by the Standard Ordinance. In addition, the limitation of one sign per entry does not take into consideration businesses that occupy a corner space.

Window Signage

Window signage in the City of Birmingham is currently limited to 12 sq. ft. per frontage (façade facing a street) or 18 sq. ft. per frontage on Woodward Ave.

The window signage throughout town is inconsistent and often exceeds the allowable amounts permitted by ordinance. While Code Enforcement is sent out periodically to site specific complaints and the Planning Division sends out literature to all businesses in town on a regular basis, the problem persists.

On June 18, 2018 at the joint meeting, the City Commission and Planning Board discussed the issue of signage standards. There was consensus that the Sign Ordinance should be studied and amended as deemed appropriate.

Chairman Henke thought that window signage is more of a compliance issue than the Ordinance itself. He requested a strike-out copy of the Window Signage Ordinance for the next meeting.

08-30-18

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Staff Reports

-- Administrative Approvals

- 260 W. Brown - Add breezeway and repair front porch.
- 1876 Northlawn - Replacing five (5) existing windows with five (5) double-hung windows into existing inserts. Replacing fence to match historic photos.
- 539 S. Bates - Screened porch floor is raising 7 in. so the porch doors and windows will also be raised 7 in.
- 300 W. Merrill, Baldwin Library - Replace Laser Engraver Exhaust and Idea Space Exhaust.
- 223 S. Old Woodward Ave., Untied - Repurpose wall sign and add two (2) pocket banners, one front and one in back.
- 220 Merrill - Replace diamond plate entry ramp with concrete.

-- Demolition Applications

- 875 Vinewood
- 2379 Yorkshire

B. Communications

-- Commissioners' Comments

08-31-18

ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, the Commissioners motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

Matthew Baka
Sr. Planner