

**HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF AUGUST 24, 2017**  
Birmingham City Hall Commission Room  
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan

---

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Historic District Study Committee ("HDSC") held Thursday, August 24, 2017. Chairperson Gigi Debbrecht called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

**1. ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Chairperson Gigi Debbrecht, Jonathan DeWindt, Patricia Lang, Michael Xenos

**Absent:** Paul Beshouri

**Administration:** Matthew Baka, Senior Planner  
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

**2. APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 10, 2017 HDSC MINUTES**

**Motion by Ms. Lang**

**Seconded by Ms. Debbrecht to approve the Minutes of August 10, 2017 as presented.**

**Motion carried, 4-0.**

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Lang, Debbrecht, DeWindt, Xenos

Nays: None

Absent: Beshouri

**3. 927 PURDY  
Study Committee Report Update**

Mr. Baka recalled that as required by Section 127-5, Establishing Additional, Modifying, or Eliminating Historic Districts, the HDSC prepared a study committee report for consideration by the City Commission with a recommendation to approve the designation request. One of the requirements of Section 127-5 is that the report be sent to the State Historic Preservation Office ("SHPO") for comment before being considered by the City Commission. After a lengthy delay due to staffing issues at the State office, SHPO has sent the City

their comments regarding the report. The comments focus on the format and content of the report rather than the recommendation itself.

On August 10, 2017 the HDSC held a study session to discuss the comments provided by the SHPO. It was agreed that the comments provided should be addressed and incorporated into the report before it is forwarded to the City Commission. Accordingly, the committee agreed to divide the additional research and bring any new information to the next study committee meeting.

The group discussed any changes to the report. Mr. Baka noted that he still needs bios from everybody. Ms. Lang said that after her research she thinks that the home should be named after Almeron Whitehead, considering the number of things he is known for.

Mr. DeWindt said he could not find much on the McBride family, other than they were into hardware. There was nothing about them being involved with the community. Everything he read at the library was about the Whitehead family and how they immersed themselves into the community.

Mr. Baka remarked that Mr. Beshouri had said he didn't find much on Bailey.

Ms. Debbrecht noted that Whitehead owned the home when it was originally on Pierce and kept it until it was sold to Bailey. Mr. DeWindt said the State used Bailey as a name just because Bailey owned the house the longest, but they didn't know all of the background. If more information is added to the report it will become clear why the house has been named Whitehead.

**Motion by Ms. Lang  
Seconded by Mr. Xenos to keep the name Almeron Whitehead associated  
with 927 Purdy.**

**Motion carried, 4-0.**

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Lang, Xenos, Debbrecht, DeWindt

Nays: None

Absent: Beshouri

Mr. Baka said that after receipt of the bios he will put the report together and send it around to the committee members for them to proofread..

**4. 361 E. MAPLE RD.  
De-Designation Request**

Mr. Baka advised that the owner of the property located at 361 E. Maple Rd. has requested that the City Commission consider removing the historic designation of their building as a contributing historic resource within the City of Birmingham. The property owner has submitted an application to the Planning Board requesting to demolish the building as part of a redevelopment proposal.

As required by Section 127-5, Establishing Additional, Modifying, or Eliminating Historic Districts, the City Commission issued a resolution on July 24, 2017 directing the HDSC to prepare a preliminary study committee report on the subject property in accordance with the Code and execute the additional steps outlined in that section in order to make a recommendation to the City Commission.

On August 10, 2017 the HDSC held a study session regarding the request of the property owner. Accordingly, the committee agreed to the assignment of specific tasks related to preparation of the study committee report. It was agreed that each member would attempt to complete their research by the next meeting for further discussion.

Mr. Xenos said he struck out at the Birmingham Library but has not yet been to the Museum. Ms. Debbrecht suggested going to the Bloomfield Twp Library for further information. The Eccentric had no information. She said the owner of the Purdy house would like any further sources of information on his house. Mr. Baka agreed to forward a list of resources for him to check.

Ms. Debbrecht indicated she took some photos of the storefront but plans to take more. Mr. Baka surmised there may be pictures at the Museum.

- Mr. Xenos said he will check the Birmingham Museum;
- Mr. DeWindt agreed to check the Southfield Library;
- Mr. Baka noted he will check the City tax records.

Mr. Justin Zakoff, Dickenson Wright Attorneys, spoke on behalf of the adjacent property owner at 369 and 363 E. Maple Rd. They wanted to register their initial objection to the de-designation of the site:

- The site had had historic value when it was originally designated and that value should not be discounted lightly;
- There is a continuing value in having historic remnants in the City.
- Adjoining property owners bought their sites knowing the property is historic.

Mr. Melvin Kaftan said knowing that, he built his home with windows and everything facing the historic site. He did add a skylight in the living room. He thought the fact that a property is historic should be recorded so that no one buys and then finds out they have a problem.

Mr. Kaftan noted he wanted to purchase the property but it ended up being sold to another buyer. Now they want to de-designate so the land will be worth more. They propose a five-story office building with one floor of commercial, two of office, and two of apartments. He wondered where all the cars will park and thought that for a lot of reasons the building doesn't make sense.

He observed that down the block there is another historic building next to Jos. A. Banks. The owner has told him that as soon as this site gets de-designated he will do the same with his building.

Ms. Lang remarked on the parking problem in Birmingham. The influx of offices into the Downtown area has brought in many more people needing parking as opposed to a retail shop with only a few employees. The City must consider parking in terms of what they are allowing to be built.

Mr. Baka explained all of the properties within a certain distance from the parking structures have been paying taxes for decades to maintain the structures. Even though the system is starting to strain, the Zoning Ordinance still allows new construction.

Mr. Baka said the committee can meet again after it has gathered some additional material.

Next Meeting: 1 p.m. Thursday on a date to be determined.

## **5. ADJOURNMENT**

No further business being evident, the committee members adjourned at 1:36 p.m.