

**Historic District Commission
Minutes Of February 2, 2022**

151 Martin Street, City Commission Room 205, Birmingham, MI

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Historic District Commission ("HDC") held Wednesday, February 2, 2022. Vice-Chair Keith Deyer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1) Rollcall

Present: Vice-Chair Keith Deyer; Board Members Gigi Debbrecht, Natalia Dukas, Patricia Lang, Michael Willoughby; Alternate Board Member Steven Lemberg

Absent: Chair John Henke; Board Member Dustin Kolo; Alternate Board Member Cassandra McCarthy

Administration: Nicholas Dupuis, Planning Director
Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist

02-08-22

2) Approval of the HDC Minutes of January 19, 2022

Motion by Ms. Dukas

Seconded by Ms. Lang to approve the HDC Minutes of January 19, 2022 as submitted.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Debbrecht, Lang, Deyer, Lemberg, Dukas, Willoughby

Nays: None

02-09-22

3) Courtesy Review

None.

02-10-22

4) Historic Design Review

A. 100 Townsend – Townsend Hotel

PD Dupuis summarized the item.

John Gardner, architect, was present on behalf of the request.

Motion by Mr. Willoughby

Seconded by Ms. Lang to approve the Design Review application for 100 Townsend St. – Rugby Grille – with the following condition:

1. The applicant obtain full approval from the City Commission prior to installation.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Debbrecht, Lang, Deyer, Lemberg, Dukas, Willoughby

Nays: None

B. 320 Martin St. – Birmingham Post Office

PD Dupuis presented the item.

Kevin Biddison, architect, and Sam Surnow, owner, spoke regarding the project.

A number of HDC members raised concerns about the addition's large massing, overhang, and the 'glass hyphen'. There were comments that the mass of the new building seemed to overwhelm the historic building.

Mr. Willoughby disagreed with those comments, saying that the design complemented the historic building in terms of lines and materials. He also noted that the new building would seem much less prominent from the ground than it does from three or four stories up. He recommended the applicants create renderings from the east side of Bates to better illustrate the design.

Ms. Dukas said she would not be opposed to the overhang if it were further stepped back.

In reply to Mr. Biddison, Mr. Lemberg and Vice-Chair Deyer asked the applicant to explore the options of going to the west lot line instead of keeping the overhang.

Messrs. Biddison and Surnow contended that the addition proposal maintains the most historically significant aspects of the Post Office building while only de-emphasizing less historically significant aspects of the building.

Vice-Chair Deyer recommended that the applicant explore integrating the HDC's feedback. He acknowledged that the applicant might ultimately return with the same proposal even after consideration of the HDC's recommendations. He said the proposal seemed close to something the HDC could approve.

Mr. Surnow said he was willing to review the HDC's comments and to meet again with the HDC, stating that his goal is to have the HDC be comfortable with the proposal.

Motion by Ms. Dukas

Seconded by Mr. Willoughby to postpone the Historic Design Review application and the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness for 320 Martin St. – Birmingham Post Office – to March 2, 2022.

Ms. Dukas said the treatment of the west elevation and the community thread park was an excellent addition and more important than whether changes are made to the overhang. She said she would like to see the overhang stepped back if possible.

Mr. Lemberg said the overhang detracted from the project. He said he would be more supportive of the project if it could go further west to the lot line and have a clean break.

Motion carried, 5-1.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Debbrecht, Deyer, Lemberg, Dukas, Willoughby

Nays: Lang

02-11-22

5) Sign Review

None.

02-12-22

6) Study Session

A. CLG Grant – Historic Design Guidelines (Update)

PD Dupuis stated replies to the Request for Proposals would be due March 4, 2022.

B. Bates St. Historic District Signage (Update)

PD Dupuis stated that he raised the Bates Street Historic Signage proposals with the Wayfinding and Gateway Signage Committee and said the Committee was enthusiastic about the proposals.

Vice-Chair Deyer cautioned against clutter in the wayfinding signage.

02-13-22

7) Miscellaneous Business and Communication

A. Pre-Application Discussions

B. Draft Agenda

C. Staff Reports

1. Administrative Sign Approvals

2. Administrative Approvals

3. Demolitions

4. Action List 2022

The HDC endorsed PD Dupuis' proposal for the 2022 Action List.

02-14-22

8) Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Lang

Seconded by Ms. Lang to adjourn the HDC meeting of February 2, 2022 at 8:58 p.m.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Debbrecht, Lang, Deyer, Lemberg, Dukas, Willoughby

Nays: None



Nicholas Dupuis
Planning Director



Laura Eichenhorn
City Transcriptionist