

**Historic District Commission
Minutes Of March 15, 2023**

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

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Historic District Commission ("HDC") held Wednesday, March 15, 2023. Mr. Deyer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1) Rollcall

Present: Board Members Gigi Debbrecht, Keith Deyer, Natalia Dukas (arrived 7:07 p.m.), Patricia Lang, Michael Willoughby; Alternate Board Member Mary Jaye; Student Representative Ian Weinberg

Absent: Chair John Henke; Board Members Dustin Kolo; Alternate Board Member Steven Lemberg

Staff: Planning Director Dupuis; City Transcriptionist Eichenhorn

03-12-23

Motion by Ms. Lang

Seconded by Ms. Debbrecht to appoint Keith Deyer to serve as Acting Chair.

Motion carried, 5-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Debbrecht, Willoughby, Deyer, Lang, Jaye

Nays: None

2) Approval of the HDC Minutes of March 1, 2023

03-13-23

Motion by Ms. Lang

Seconded by Ms. Jaye to approve the HDC Minutes of March 1, 2023 as submitted.

Motion carried, 5-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Dukas, Lemberg, Deyer, Lang, Jaye

Nays: None

3) Courtesy Review

4) Historic Design Review

5) Sign Review

6) Study Session

A. Historic Design Guidelines – Deliverable #3 (Update)

PD Dupuis introduced the item.

Katie Cook of KDG was present on behalf of the item.

HDC members' comments were as follows:

- The guidelines would be very helpful for generating conversation moving forward;
- The guidelines were succinct and clear;
- It was useful that the guidelines recommended the preservation of mid-century modern bungalows;
- Laying out the differences between accepted, approved, and unapproved changes with graphics would be helpful to users of the guidelines;
- These guidelines will also help prospective buyers of historic homes understand what changes might be acceptable or unacceptable. This should be mentioned in the introduction;
- The introduction should be broken up a bit more to allow for easier reading, and should hyperlink the summary version so people are aware of it;
- Eco-City should be specifically mentioned a few times in the report. The Eco-City report could also be hyperlinked in the guidelines;
- The picture on page six should be oriented so the top is facing north, the cardinal directions are clear, and the date is clear;
- The flowchart on page 21 should be simplified if possible;
- Photos from historic districts should be labeled as examples;
- If a home is provided as an example of undesirable changes, it should not also be used to show desirable changes elsewhere in the document. It would be more appropriate to select different homes;
- The awnings section on page 56 was well done;
- On page 74, it should be made clearer that cement board would only be acceptable if other more appropriate materials were for some reason impossible to use;
- The reference to slate should be similarly clarified as necessary to use unless prohibitive in order to discourage the use of imitation slate;
- The reference to the Community House on page 20 should be clarified to only refer to the historic portion;
- The new and alternative materials section was helpful;
- The majority of the report was great;
- Three or four of the most important phrases from the hierarchy of historic preservation could be provided with a few graphics at the beginning of summarized version to explain the overall purpose of the documents, in order to make historic preservation feel less imposing;
- Additions with massing greater than the historic building is allowed, even if it is discouraged, and is sometimes the best option to preserve a historic resource. The emphasis should be on architectural sensitivity to the historic context and resource;
- On page 55, the caption should clarify what aspect is being highlighted and whether it was being encouraged or discouraged. If unclear, the image could be replaced with a more clear image; and,
- On page 63, it should specify that the referenced inspections are conducted by the owner.

PD Dupuis stated:

- On page four, the purpose of the guidelines could be put in a separate box to provide more emphasis;

- The table of contents should address historic districts first and historic neighborhoods second to avoid the confusion of the two categories;
- References to legislation and standards should be hyperlinked in the document;
- On page eight, 'historic' should be clarified as locally designated historic resources, and that should be distinguished as different from buildings older than a certain age;
- On page ten, the responsibilities of the City Commission should be listed;
- The information in the flowchart on page 21 needed some updating and the corrections were provided in an email to KDG;
- On page 55, some recommendations for the screening of rooftop units should be added;
- On page 60, some recommendations on accent lighting on commercial buildings should be added;
- The photo on page 64 could likely be replaced with a better example of a historic resource;
- A caption should be added to the graphic missing a caption on page 74;
- The guidelines should be updated to better match the City's style guide;
- If there are any good examples of homes using new and alternative materials in a high-quality manner, it might be helpful to use those to illustrate that section; and,
- Overall, both documents were excellent.

PD Dupuis requested that the fourth deliverable be moved up to the beginning of June, if possible, in order to schedule public engagement for later in June once the document was approved.

Ms. Cook invited the HDC members to forward any further comments to the KDG team via PD Dupuis. She explained the intent of the public engagement meetings.

The HDC members commented on the importance of publicizing these documents once completed and on the importance of reducing the number of teardowns in the City.

7) Miscellaneous Business and Communication

A. Draft Agenda

B. Staff Reports

- 1. Administrative Sign Approvals**
- 2. Administrative Approvals**
- 3. Demolitions**
- 4. Action List**

8) Adjournment

No further business being evident, the HDC motioned to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.



Nick Dupuis, Planning Director



Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist