

**Historic District Commission
Minutes Of May 4, 2022**

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

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Historic District Commission ("HDC") held Wednesday, May 4, 2022. Acting Chair Michael Willoughby called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1) Rollcall

Present: Board Members Gigi Debbrecht, Natalia Dukas, Dustin Kolo, Michael Willoughby; Student Representatives Meghan Murray, Charlie Vercellone

Absent: Chair John Henke; Board Members Keith Deyer, Patricia Lang; Alternate Board Members Steven Lemberg, Cassandra McCarthy

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

Since the Chair and Vice-Chair were absent, PD Dupuis invited nominations for Acting Chair to serve for the meeting's duration.

05-30-22

Motion by Ms. Dukas

Seconded by Ms. Debbrecht to nominate Michael Willoughby to serve as Acting Chair for the meeting's duration.

Motion carried, 4-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Debbrecht, Willoughby, Kolo, Dukas

Nays: None

2) Approval of the HDC Minutes of April 20, 2022

05-31-22

Motion by Ms. Debbrecht

Seconded by Ms. Dukas to approve the HDC Minutes of April 20, 2022 as submitted.

Motion carried, 4-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Debbrecht, Willoughby, Kolo, Dukas

Nays: None

3) Courtesy Review

4) Historic Design Review

A. 148 Pierce – Telephone Exchange Building – Request for Wall Art Installation (POSTPONE)

PD Dupuis requested a postponement of this item to May 18, 2022.

05-32-22

Motion by Ms. Debbrecht

Seconded by Mr. Kolo to postpone the wall art installation review for 148 Pierce to May 18, 2022.

Motion carried, 4-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Debbrecht, Willoughby, Kolo, Dukas

Nays: None

B. 220 Merrill – 220 Restaurant (Detroit Edison Building)

PD Dupuis presented the item.

Zaid Elia, owner of 220 Merrill, was present on behalf of the item.

Ms. Dukas said she did not appreciate the color scheme and synthetic turf proposed for the deck in the context of the Central Business Historic District. She said she had no objection to the dimensions or other aspects of the platform.

The HDC briefly considered postponing the item until more images of the proposed deck were provided.

Mr. Elia stated that he had received positive feedback on the color scheme of the deck while it was up during the relaxation of outdoor dining rules due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He also said that a postponement of the item would be severely detrimental to 220 Merrill.

Ms. Debbrecht said she had no trouble with the color scheme of the proposed deck.

Mr. Kolo said that while he would not personally choose pink for the deck's chairs, he did not see them as lowering the property values in the area. He said that 220 Merrill is part of the community, and that the color scheme reflected the character of the establishment. He said he would be comfortable approving the deck as-proposed.

In order to both address Ms. Dukas' concerns and move the item forward so as not to detrimentally effect 220 Merrill, Mr. Kolo suggested that the HDC ask the Commission to review the proposed color scheme.

Acting Chair Willoughby and Ms. Dukas concurred with Mr. Kolo's suggestion.

Public Comment

Raymond Kares, David Potts, and Rick Willits, residents of 211 Merrill, raised concerns about traffic congestion on Merrill.

Messrs. Potts and Willits also raised concerns about noise on Merrill.

PD Dupuis noted that neither the traffic nor the noise concerns were the purview of the HDC. He noted those issues were discussed at the Advisory Parking Committee, the Planning Board, and would also be discussed by the City Commission. PD Dupuis recommended that Mr. Elia work with the building owner of 211 Merrill to address the residents' concerns.

Mr. Elia stated that he had previously had conversations with some of the residents of 211 Merrill about their concerns and would continue to do so.

05-33-22

Motion by Ms. Debbrecht

Seconded by Mr. Kolo to approve the Design Review application for 220 Merrill – 220 Restaurant – with the following conditions:

- 1. That the City Commission, as part of their discussion, review the color scheme of the proposed platform because at least one of the HDC members had some reservations about it; and,**
- 2. The applicant obtain full approval from the City Commission prior to installation.**

In reply to PD Dupuis, Ms. Dukas confirmed she would like the colors to be more subtle because she was concerned that the color scheme would have a detrimental effect on the Central Business Historic District.

Acting Chair Willoughby noted that the deck's proposed colors do not appear as part of historic paint selections.

Motion carried, 4-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Debbrecht, Willoughby, Kolo, Dukas

Nays: None

5) Sign Review

6) Study Session

A. CLG Grant – Design Guidelines (UPDATE)

PD Dupuis stated that interviews with some of the respondents to the CLG Grant RFP would be scheduled for May 18, 2022.

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**

8) Adjournment

05-34-22

Motion by Ms. Debbrecht

Seconded by Mr. Kolo to adjourn the HDC meeting of May 4, 2022 at 7:56 p.m.

Motion carried, 4-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Debbrecht, Willoughby, Kolo, Dukas

Nays: None



Nicholas Dupuis
Planning Director



Laura Eichenhorn
City Transcriptionist