

HISTORIC AREA COMMISSION
1 Municipal Drive
December 9, 2021

Present: Laura Fontana, Chairperson
Justin Day
Mark Chaump
Kevin Wade

Absent: Bill Walters

Also Present: Jeff Bergstrom, City Building Official
Leila Hamroun, Architectural Consultant

Ms. Fontana convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

Approval of the Minutes

A Motion to approve the November 11, 2021, Minutes as presented was made, seconded and unanimously carried.

New Applications

126 East 4th Street – Joanna Smith

An application was submitted to replace a rear top deck with an enclosed porch and replace a lower deck.

The Applicant explained the work to be done and noted that the improvements are at the rear of the house and the footprint of the existing decks will remain the same or be smaller. During discussion Ms. Hamroun clarified that the Applicant is proposing to replace the lower deck and add an enclosed sunroom addition to the upper deck.

Ms. Hamroun stated that if not for the addition of the sunroom, the application could have been reviewed as Tier 1. She noted that the building is non-contributing; the addition is not visible from the public right-of-way; and the proposed work does not add to the volume of the structure. She added that the sunroom is an engineered aluminum structure. In response to a question from Mr. Wade regarding the use of aluminum, Ms. Hamroun reiterated that because the building is non-contributing, the addition is at the rear of the house and is not visible from the public right-of-way, the materials are appropriate.

A Motion to approve the application as submitted was made, seconded, and unanimously carried.

Ms. Hamroun asked Ms. Smith about her experience using the new HAC Application, and Ms. Smith stated that she found completing the application to be very easy, and not as confusing as the old Application.

50 West 4th Street – Maureen Mulrooney

An application was submitted to appeal a Tier 1 review to replace a front entry door with a Heritage Smooth fiberglass door. The Applicant was not present at the hearing.

Ms. Hamroun stated that the application was reviewed as Tier 1 and denied, noting that the Guideline state: “Modern, alternate replacement doors are not appropriate on elevations of contributing buildings or on new additions to contributing buildings that are visible from the public right-of-way.”

During discussion it was noted that the original application was dated November 16, 2021, and action by the Commission is necessary.

A Motion to deny the application as submitted was made, seconded and unanimously carried.

5 Shaw Alley – Brian Thomas, Celest LLC

An application was submitted to replace existing windows and doors in kind and to add a one-story, 375 square foot addition on the rear of the existing structure with a built-up flat roof. Mr. Thomas appeared as the authorized representative for the property owner.

Mr. Thomas stated the property owner wishes to create a small event center at the old Tobin Meat Market site. The proposed scope of work includes adding a 375 square foot addition to the rear of the existing structure to house new handicapped accessible rest rooms and a rear entrance to the building. The addition will have wood windows and doors, and Hardie board siding.

Ms. Hamroun stated the building is contributing, but because the addition is at the rear and is not visible from the public right of way, Hardie board would be an appropriate alternate material. During discussion, the composition of Hardie board was explained.

Ms. Hamroun noted that the plans include a skylight in the addition and Mr. Thomas explained that a low-profile skylight is being proposed. Mr. Thomas also explained the composition of the built-up roof.

Mr. Wade asked if using the rear as a public entrance changes the interpretation of the “public right-of-way”. Ms. Hamroun explained that because the rear entrance is only being used by patrons it is not considered to be the public right-of-way.

Ms. Fontana asked what material would be used for the skylight, and Mr. Thomas explained that it would most probably be aluminum clad; however, that decision had not yet been made. Ms. Hamroun stated the skylight must be low-profile. Ms. Fontana clarified that the Commission will approve aluminum clad for a low-profile skylight.

A Motion to approve the application as submitted, with the exception that the skylight needs further review by the Architectural Consultant and Building Official as Tier 1 was made, seconded and unanimously carried.

Old Business

New HAC Application

Ms. Fontana asked Ms. Marika Levine, City Building & Code Secretary, if she had received any feedback on the new HAC Application. Ms. Levine noted that one applicant had complained that there are now two applications to complete, but overall the feedback had been positive. She added that the time to submit the Application still needs to be changed from 10 days to 14 days on page 2 of the Application. Mr. Bergstrom stated he would edit the online form.

Ms. Fontana noted that the new HAC Application does not include a space for Commission notes. Ms. Hamroun stated that a back page for notes will be added to the Application.

EV Charging Stations

Ms. Fontana met with representatives from MSC, the Trustees, the City, and the Planning Commission regarding the location of EV charging stations. A second charging station was installed at the 3rd Street Parking Lot and one will be installed in the 2nd and Chestnut Street Parking Lot.

Additional locations for the remaining six chargers were discussed, including: the Post Office, the Senior Center, the old recycle area at the end of 4th Street, Pizza History (removing the handicapped spaces and installing a charging station), and Susi Park in Shawtown. During discussions it was indicated that the Trustees wanted a charging station installed in a City-owned parking lot before they would approve another installation in a Trustee-owned parking lot.

Ms. Fontana stated that because more residents with on-street parking have electric vehicles, sidewalk safety is becoming an issue and there needs to be conversations about how to accommodate on-street charging options.

Mr. Wade reiterated his previous suggestion that an EV charging station “corral” be established, and Ms. Fontana noted that she did bring that suggestion up during the meeting.

EV Charging Fees

Ms. Fontana noted that MSC has implemented a charging fee. Mr. Day stated that MSC is charging a \$0.30/kwh to charge an electric car. He noted that a parking fee was applied by Sema Connect, but MSC has removed that fee until an idling fee system can be properly implemented. Mr. Day suggested that there might be an opportunity for MSC to implement a membership program for residents to receive a discounted charging rate. Ms. Fontana also noted that the enforcement of non-charging vehicles parking in an EV charging station parking space (aka “icing”) was also discussed.

Grant Funds

Ms. Hamroun stated that another CLG Grant will soon be available and asked the Commissioners to consider ideas to take advantage of grant funding. Mr. Wade suggested providing information to potential home-buyers in New Castle about owning a home in a Historic District as an idea for grant funds.

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There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Fontana called for a Motion to Adjourn.

A Motion to adjourn was made, seconded and unanimously carried, and the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer*